

Tani Talks Life (TTL):- the shiur where we talk a topic per session with some practical lessons

Tonights topic is “Shine A Little Light In Your Life”

All podcast on all podcast forums except TTD on shiurenjoyment.com

Shout out to Jake W. & Eli N. for all their help

For yeshuah or zechus for anyone who needs it

G-d willing the next shiur will hopefully be in a few weeks, hopefully chol hamoed Sukkot, due to the jewish holidays all throughout September

Have you ever heard that one light can banish the darkness? Well it for sure is true. Did you ever hear about the exhibit in Yad Vashem that gets reflected all around a person? It is the Children's memorial at Yad Vashem. One candle is reflected in mirrors as it's light is shed all around you.

The power of even one candle is fascinating. Hence, the power of one individual's light as well, their candle, their Neshama, is also astronomical.

The power of a light, one candle is truly amazing. As the high holidays and sukkot are almost upon us, it is interesting to think about what the candles do for us on each shabbat and each holiday that are ushered in with candles, and are used to remember the neshamos that were lost when we light them in preparation for on the days we say yizkor.

Why do we light candles to signify the start of the holiday and of Shabbos? What is the point, and What feelings are the candles supposed to give?

For me, When my wife lights our candles in our house, I feel a metaphorical feeling permeating the house, almost like an invisible blue light traverses the house to bring in the calm and the wonders of shabbat or the holiday with its peace and calm. No matter how crazy the day, and I'll tell you rev shabbat or rev yom tov is always the craziest, busiest, you name it—I feel a sense of calm and peace permeate the home when those lights are lit, I feel the presence of the metaphorical blue light travel throughout the home. This is really a fundamental purpose of the candles— to bring shalom bayit in the home. Additionally, as I learned in my online semichah program during this past year, lighting the candles on shabbat especially signifies the two aspects of shabbat—remembering and honoring the shabbat, hence two candles. It further signifies the married couple, a candle for husband and one for wife, and there is a very prevalent minhag/custom to add a candle for each kid in the family, so henceforth BH in our family we light five. The essence of the mitzvah though is to light two, so many people when away from home light two.

There's a story in the gemara about Rabbi Akiva from Berachot 60b

The Gemara relates: Like this incident, when Rabbi Akiva was walking along the road and came to a certain city, he inquired about lodging and they did not give him any. He said: Everything that God does, He does for the best. He went and slept in a field, and he had with him a rooster, a donkey and a candle. A gust of wind came and extinguished the candle; a cat came and ate the rooster; and a lion came and ate the donkey. He said: Everything that God does, He does for the best. That night, an army came and took the city into captivity. It turned out that Rabbi Akiva alone, who was not in the city and had no lit candle, noisy rooster or donkey to give away his location, was saved. He said to them: Didn't I tell you? Everything that God does, He does for the best.

It turned out he had one candle to banish the darkness and at night, it blew out by a strange wind, leaving him in the dark. In the end, losing his possessions and candle saved his life as bandits went through the woods to the nearby town and had they seen him they would have killed him.

The point being even one candle can banish the darkness.

The question is how can we shine a little light in our lives? It all starts with lighting and thinking about the candles on shabbat and holidays. Especially Chanukah, which is my personal all time favorite holiday of the entire year.

Candles are one of the only things that don't diminish when passed on to something else (there's an actual source for that later, IYH). A candle's flame is no less strong whether it lights its own candle, another candle, or hundred of candles, provided it doesn't burn out.

We should think how we can light our own souls, how we can bring light to others and stay aflame ourselves, realign we won't be diminished at all as well by helping others and those around us—especially as we start the new year in just a few days.

Aish.com points out with Lori Palatnik

It seems there is something special about the act of lighting Shabbat candles. It is a touching picture: the woman bent over the flames in prayer, a kerchief covering her head.

One of the strongest symbols of the Jewish people, candle lighting encompasses what is central in Judaism: the Jewish home.

It is a moment steeped in tradition, as one may remember one's own mother lighting... or one's grandmother... or the Jewish women who have been lighting candles every Friday night for 4,000 years. It is a powerful link to Jews everywhere; one that, until recently, remained unbroken in every home, in every land.

Customs vary, but in a family there are always at least two candles burning: one for the wife, and one for the husband -- a symbol of Shalom Bayit (peace in the house). Many add one candle for each child, as each is an additional blessing, each a source of new light coming into the world.

It is how the Shabbat begins, with special light; special understanding as to who we are and why we are here. For Shabbat is our time to connect with God; when we stop creating in order to recognize that there is a Creator. The entire week we are caught up in a hectic pace, where it is easy to think only of personal accomplishments and individual achievements.

Yet, once the candles are lit, it is time for love of God; remembering that everything is from Him. It takes but a few seconds to do, but it is by far one of the deepest expressions of the Jewish soul: to recognize the Almighty and appreciate this special gift that He has given to us all -- a gift we call Shabbat.

Listen to this story *From: Fear No Evil, by Natan Sharansky (New York: Random House, 1988, pp. 306-308.)*

In December 1980, Natan (Anatoly) Sharansky's was spending his ninth Chanukah in Soviet Prison. Sharansky was serving in a Siberian labor camp as a Prisoner of Zion. In his ongoing efforts to retain his Jewish identity under the cruelest of conditions, he fashioned a small wooden Chanukah menorah, with which to light the Chanukah candles. On the sixth night of Chanukah, the authorities confiscated the menorah. "A camp is not a synagogue. We won't permit Sharansky to pray here," they said.

What follows is Sharansky's account of his response:

"I was surprised by the bluntness of that remark, and immediately declared a hunger strike. In a statement to the procurator general, I protested against the violation of my national and religious rights, and against KGB interference in my personal life...

I was summoned to Major Osin's office two days later, in the evening. Osin pulled a benevolent smile over his face as he tried to talk me out of my hunger strike... Osin promised to see to it personally that in the future nobody would hinder me from praying, and that this should not be the concern of the KGB.

"Then what's the problem?" I said. "Give me back my menorah as tonight is the last evening of Chanukah. Let me celebrate it now, and taking into account your assurances for the future, I shall end the hunger strike."

But a protocol for its confiscation had already been draw up, and Osin couldn't back down in front of the whole camp. As I looked at this predator sitting at an elegant polished table wearing a benevolent smile, I was seized by an amusing idea.

"Listen," I said, "I'm sure you have the menorah somewhere. It's very important to me to celebrate the last night of Chanukah. Why not let me do it right here and now with you!"

Osin thought it over and promptly the confiscated menorah appeared from his desk. He summoned Gavruk, who was on duty in the office, to bring in a large candle.

"I need eight candles," I said. (In fact, I needed nine, but when it came to Jewish rituals I was still a novice.) Gavruk took out a knife and began to cut the candles into several smaller ones.

I arranged the candles and went to the coat rack for my hat, explaining to Osin that during the prayer he too must stand with his head covered and at the end say 'Amen.' He put on his major's hat and stood. I lit the candles and recited my own prayer in Hebrew which went something like this: "Blessed are You, God, for allowing me to rejoice on this day of Chanukah, the holiday of our liberation, the holiday of our return to the way of our fathers. Blessed are You, God, for allowing me to light the candles. May You allow me to light the candles many times in your city, Jerusalem, with my wife Avital, and my family and friends."

I added, "And may the day come when all our enemies, who today are planning our destruction, will stand before us and hear our prayers and say 'Amen'."

"Amen," Osin echoed back.

What a powerful way to fight back and light up a life. What strength of spirit and character seen here in Natan Sharansky's story from his life.

We too must use our lights on shabbat and holidays to infuse spirituality into our lives and use our own inner flames to light up ourselves, our surroundings, and those around us.

Aish.com points out with Rebbetzin Weinburg

The light at the end of the tunnel is bright -- it breaks the darkness. Shabbat also breaks the darkness. It is not just a day when we stop working. Shabbat is the Day of the Candles, the Day of Light, the day when we clearly see our purpose in this world. Shabbat is the day on which we see we have a soul.

The soul itself is called a candle -- the candle of God (g-d willing we will see that source too later IYH). It is the light of the world. It infuses spirituality into the body and into all materialism. Without this spirituality, the world would be in a state of darkness. It is the soul that connects human beings to God. Similarly, Shabbat is the soul of the week. Without Shabbat, the world is a body without a soul.

Shabbat also gives us an extra soul—a Nechama yeseirah. You can almost feel the extra soul on shabbat, permeating your being, if you look for it and cultivate it. During the rest of the week, one soul is powerful enough to receive the available holiness. But we need two souls to handle all the extra holiness that enters the world on Shabbat.

It is all too easy to ignore the extra soul and the extra spirituality that is available every Shabbat, and to spend the day just eating and sleeping. We need to ask ourselves, Is this the most efficient use of an extra soul?

The author once heard it said that it's much easier to overcome internal conflicts on Shabbat than all week, because during the week the odds are one against one -- one body versus one soul. But on Shabbat, it is two against one -- two souls versus one body. On Shabbat we have a real chance to be more in control.

The candles draw us to each other, and they draw us to God. Our soul is drawn to Him and vice versa. Shabbat is a love song. It is romance. It is a date between God and us. (Remember, on Shabbat, don't concentrate on your food -- concentrate on your date with Hashem!)

Shabbat candles also create peace in the home. How? People enjoy the Shabbat food more with the added light. And there is something deeper. Candles connect people on a spiritual level. Souls don't fight. Bodies fight. Candlelight evokes a soul connection between people, which creates real peace in the home.

Shabbat reminds us that there was a creation and a Creator. Just as Shabbat comes after six days of work, our ultimate connection to God comes in the World to Come -- after years and years of work! This is clarity. This brings sanity.

Human beings ask, What are we living for? The light of Shabbat answers, For an eternity of light, warmth, and closeness to our loving God.

Shabbat is the goal of the week, not merely a rest stop to prepare for the coming week. In truth, we work all week long for this day of pleasure. There is even a tradition to count the days in anticipation of Shabbat. "We're getting there... We're almost there... We're here!" It's like a bride counting the days to her wedding -- not because the wedding will mark the end of her preparations, but because it is the goal. That's what we also should think about when we say the shir shel yom every day—it revolves around shabbat—haymow yom rishon lashabbat, hayom yom sheni lashabbat, etc. living as revolving around shabbat.

We should realize what a blessing it is to have shabbat and the candles should remind us weekly what are we burning for? What are we yearning for? What is our passion our purpose? As we usher in the new year think about how to go about this.

Aish.com points out as an inspiring quote, that It is noted that Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, the founder of the mussar movement, once said “**As Long As The Candle Is Still Burning, it is possible to work and to repair**” other versions point out , as depicted by Dr. Miller on aish.com,

As long as the candle is still burning, it is still possible to accomplish and to mend. – Rabbi Yisrael Salanter

Where did this quote come from?

One night, Rabbi Salanter was walking home, past the home of a shoemaker. Despite it being very late, he observed the shoemaker was still busy, **working by the light of a single candle (again a single candle being strong enough even late at night to banish the darkness, so too one soul can banish the darkness around us).** “

Why are you still working?” Rabbi Salanter asked him. “It is very late and soon the candle will go out.”

The shoemaker replied “As long as the candle is still burning it is still possible to accomplish and to mend shoes.” In his wisdom, Rabbi Salanter realized this message is true for all of us. **As long**

as the candle is still burning, it is still possible to accomplish and to mend. It's never too late to change. There's always what to accomplish as long as the Nechama burns within us and we have life each day, there is still much to accomplish, much to do, much to fix.

Rabbi Packouz points out on aish.com

Many years ago in Israel there lived a couple with a little girl. Because the mother was afraid to have her daughter travel via public transportation, they sent her to a nearby religious school though they were not religious. There the girl learned of the beauty of Torah and the beauty of Shabbat. Incessantly the girl would ask her mother to light Shabbat candles and the mother promised, but didn't do it. She would get home late or be out with her husband, but never got around to lighting.

The girl decided that she would light them herself. She went to the corner store and asked the storekeeper for two candles. Knowing that hers was not a religious family, the storekeeper figured that she must want *yahrzeit* candles (memorial candles lit on the anniversary of the passing of one's closest relatives) since even the most non-religious Jews light them. When Friday night came her parents were out, so the little girl lit the two candles before the sun went down.

When her parents returned they were shocked to see the two *yahrzeit* candles lit. They woke up their daughter to ask the meaning of the two candles. The daughter sleepily replied, "Since you wouldn't light for me, I lit for you."

We don't know the end of the story. Did her mother light for her from that point on? We sure hope so!

If parents want their children to love being Jewish and eventually to marry someone Jewish, they have to give their children a warm Jewish home. Your actions and attitudes are your children's heritage. If you love Judaism and live it, likely so will your child. Shabbat is essential and probably the best place to start.

Parents are often puzzled why their children don't have the same feeling for Jews and Judaism that they do. The answer is simple: emotions and feelings do not transfer in the DNA. We are a product of our experiences; that's why we feel and believe as we do. Speaking philosophy and intellectual appreciation do not touch the heart of a child and do not transfer a love of Judaism to the next generation. If we want our children to feel positive about being Jewish they have to see it in the home, sense the joy and partake in it themselves. Kids learn far more from the actions they see than the words they hear.

Do as I do not as I say is really how it goes in life. My kids need to see me clean up, pack up, cook, get ready for shabbat, and they too will want to be involved. Often the kids help me prepare the food for shabbat, especially the butternut kugel!

If someone is on the path to being inspired, Start with the shabbat candles—have the kids help you set them up and let them watch (if not past bedtime) the beauty of the candles and their glow, Their souls will be sure to be inspired.

Rabbi Leff points out on aish.com

Why do we signify Shabbat's entry by lighting up the lights?

Imagine yourself going into the kitchen in the darkness of the night looking for a midnight snack. The lights are off and you cannot see anything in the room. It's so dark, you can't even find the light switch. You can't see or access that snack you desire, even though it's sitting right there. The food is ready to be eaten, but as far as you are concerned it doesn't exist, because you are steeped in darkness.

What happens when you find the switch and turn on the lights? A brand new room, midnight snack included, emerges.

Our Sages refer to the physical world as darkness. Spirituality is present in the world around us but it can be very difficult to find. All too often we're in a dark room. On Shabbat we turn on the lights and see the spiritual dimension that has always been there.

When we light candles welcoming the Shabbat, the spiritual light of the world turns on. Now we can see what we truly yearn for -- holiness, meaning, and sanctity.

When we light the Shabbat candles, we turn on the lights of our soul and spirituality becomes clear. We feel God's presence and His involvement in our lives with the appearance of the Shabbat Queen.

On Shabbat, we don't merely physically rest. We take a mental break from our busy and stressful workweek. We increase our serenity; our prayers, our song, our Torah studies, and our kindness. All become energized.

With the lights on, we are inspired to live, to learn, to love. We spend time with our children, our families, the most important people in our lives.

With the lights on, we realize that there's no such thing as 'not having time for something important' -- we must make the time. We all make time for things we recognize as being crucial. When was the last time you went without eating an entire day? We need to learn to see what are truly the crucial things in life .

On Shabbat, we internalize the idea that sometimes we're so busy driving that we don't stop for gas, and then we run out of gas and burn out the car.

On Shabbat, we rejuvenate and reconnect so we can inspire others. With the lights on, we understand that while sometimes 'it is what it is,' we have the ability to change what it is and to make it better.

On Shabbat, God always leaves the light on for us.

Make sure the light in your life, the light in your soul is aflame and turned on. Soak in the light within and around you to truly grow in spirituality and make good big changes this new year, as it approaches us speedily in a few days.

The Talmud in shabbat says "One man's **candle** is a light for many."

You can be that one candle that ignites many around you. How can you go about doing so?

From aish.com with Lauren Shapiro

The Havdallah candle, with its many strands woven together, is a complex symbol of Jewish heritage. The various threads – the mundane and the spiritual, the past and the future – come together to ignite a single burning purpose: the continuation of Jewish life. It also represents a family, in the way that the many individuals are intertwined to unite as a single flame that is brighter, stronger, and more enticing than the several smaller parts.

But now here's the catch: performing the closing ceremony only makes sense if we've kept the Shabbat. It's entirely appropriate. The first thing God did during the Creation was to create light; the last thing He did was to rest (Shabbat), so the two have forever been linked. **The Shabbat is seen in with candles, so it is fitting that it is seen out with candles.**

The author, Lauren Shapiro explains that As a married woman, she now lights her own candles on Friday nights. Both the ritual and the spiritual aspects appeal to the author, especially the magnificent silver candlesticks from her grandmother, the ancient words, uttered by generations of Jews, inviting peace and holiness into our homes and our lives.

Nowadays it is all too easy to take for granted the power that light (in its various forms) plays in our lives. Shabbat is a constant reminder to be grateful for these things.

Shabbat is a time to think about the things that bring real light into our lives.

Firstly, with no electricity (and of course that means no TV, DVD, VCR, or PVR, no computer, no car, no cell phone, no light available at the flick of a switch), we are left to contemplate life without these conveniences and to appreciate them. And we are left feeling less powerful and haughty than our modern lives allow us to believe we are.

Secondly, the Shabbat is a time to think about the things that bring real light into our lives – like family, friends, nature, and knowledge. And God. Without these, all the conveniences in the world couldn't give our lives meaning. This in itself is a gift well worth accepting.

Fulfilling shabbat the right way isn't easy, but the rewards are great. The load may seem heavy, but the Havdallah candle reminds us that to carry it is light. As the symbolic light at the end of the tunnel, this special candle has bound the Jews together through centuries and it stands as a testament to our faith.

The chalets usher sin and usher out the shabbat. Some have an idea to light two tea lights after havdala to extend shabbat a little in the the week—which we actually try to do bli neder. The candles shows how we need to burn bright doing the jewish way of good deeds, torah, mitzvos, and Chessed in our own lives to make the world a little brighter.

From aish.com with nesanel safran

"I've got it ..." Steve backpedaled to catch the high, spiraling football his friend, Jon had lobbed his way. "I've got it ... I've got it ... yuck!!!" the boy groaned, realizing he'd stepped on a paper bag filled with greasy food trash somebody had dumped on the public playground.

"That's gross!" Steve declared. "There's garbage everywhere. How can people just trash this place like this?"

"Yeah, I know what you mean," Jon agreed. "The mess really takes the fun out of being here. I wish ..." Even as he was speaking, a kid sipping a soda walked by and casually tossed his empty can just feet from where they were standing and continued merrily on his way.

The two boys stared at each other, amazed.

"Enough is enough!" Steve steamed. "I'm gonna change things around here, starting now!"

"What are you going to do?"

"What am I gonna do? I'm gonna go scream at that kid to pick up his mess!"

But Jon dismissively waived his hand. "It won't work," he said.

"Wanna bet?" said Steve. "If the kid doesn't pick it up, I'm gonna make sure he wears it as a hat!"

"No, what I mean," Jon went on, "is that screaming at people will only make the situation worse. Even if the kid does pick it up this time - he'll go out of his way to do the same thing tomorrow, when you're not looking."

"So what do you suggest," Steve asked, flailing his hands. "Do nothing and allow this playground, this whole neighborhood, to stay one big, disgusting mess?"

"Not at all," Jon said. "I'm all for action. Just that it's Chanukah-time now. You know, a time of light. So how about instead of fighting the darkness of people's bad trash habits, we'll add some light instead?" With that, he bent down, picked up a candy-wrapper, three cigarette butts and a doll's head, and carried them over to the nearby - practically unused - trash can.

"There. The playground's a little cleaner," he smiled, wiping his hands. "Let's go get some more."

Steve stood with his arms folded, watching Jon - who had fashioned a makeshift trash picker-upper from an abandoned board with a nail sticking out of it - go around the park, snapping up trash and dumping it in an empty plastic bag he'd found. He thought Jon had gone nuts, but soon - he didn't know why, but the kid's enthusiasm was contagious and Steve too grabbed a similar board and began his own rounds.

They were too busy to notice, but soon a small group of kids had gathered around to watch the unusual sight of people cleaning up a mess instead of adding to it.

"You're welcome to join us in 'Project Light,'" Jon beckoned them with a friendly wave.

It wasn't long before the spectators turned into participants. One kid had run home to get trash bags, another gave out rubber gloves. Even the kid who had tossed out the soda can had joined in.

Soon 'Project Light' spread beyond the park into the neighborhood sidewalks and alleyways and by the end of the afternoon, the kids and the smiling grateful adults, could hardly recognize their newly-cleaned neighborhood.

"We'd better get home. It's getting dark out and we have to light Chanukah candles," said a tired, but happy, Jon.

"Hey, right," smiled Steve. "I hadn't even noticed it was getting dark outside since, thanks to you, we've been adding so much light."

It all starts with you, and it all starts with small even seemingly insignificant actions. Add a little light instead of darkness. Use your candle, your power, your abilities, to make change and to do good, as in the story, who was gonna clean up if not the boys of the story, who then inspired those around them to do good? As *pirkei avot* teaches, one of my favorite quotes, BMAKOM SHEEIN ANASHIM HISHTADOL LIHIYOT ISH—where there is no person, no man stepping up, you need to be that man and step up and do it.

Shine a little light by being a light to others, to visit and cheer up even one sick person in a hospital, as in another story from *aish.com* with *nesanel yoel safran*, from the viewpoint of the main character—

The van would be turning into the hospital parking lot any minute and I had absolutely no idea what I was going to say. When the school social worker first came around looking for volunteers to go visit the sick kids in the local children's hospital I figured I'm a pretty upbeat kind of guy and if I could spend an hour and cheer up one of these poor kids who were stuck in the hospital, why not?

But as we got closer, I got more and more nervous. After all, any kid who was so sick he had to be cooped up long term in a hospital ward was bound to be really down and depressed - how could I possibly say anything that would make him feel better?

I and the other volunteers got out of the van, and they told each of us which patient to visit. Mine was a kid named Jonnie Green in room 706. It said on the paper that he had been in a bad car accident and had already been in the hospital for more than three months! Boy, was he bound to be down. I only hoped I wouldn't make him feel any worse.

I nervously approached the room, but when I got there, I breathed a sigh of relief. It seemed like the patient wasn't there. There was just some kid sitting there, about my age wearing a sports T-shirt and a baseball cap, laughing out loud as he read a comic book. Must be the guy's brother or another volunteer, I figured.

I walked in. "Um, I'm looking for Jonnie Green. Are you also here to visit him?"

The kid turned to me with one of the brightest smiles I ever saw. "Yeah," he said with a laugh, "but I get to visit him every day, and nights too!"

Huh? I walked closer and started getting confused. Why was this visitor sitting in a wheelchair? "Oh, wait a minute, are you...I mean..."

He stuck out his hand, with an I.V. tube sticking out of it, "Jonnie Green, in the flesh. And who do I have the pleasure to be meeting?"

I introduced myself and we began to talk. I had prepared a whole 'cheer-up' speech to say, but never got around to it. It seemed Jonnie was also a Patriots fan, and once we got talking

football and all sorts of other regular stuff, I would have almost forgotten that I was in a hospital room if a nurse or doctor didn't come in every once in a while to give Jonnie a pill or check his blood pressure.

"Lunch time Jonnie!" announced a tall nurse as she wheeled in a tray of steaming food. "Should I help you?"

"Thanks Sheila," he said with his thousand-watt smile, "but I think I'll be okay, I have a friend here today."

He looked at me and smiled. "Um, Gary, do you think you could give me a hand getting to that sink over there?"

"Sure, tell me what to do."

He handed me his crutches and I held him up by the arm as he slowly made his way across the room. I could hear him groaning in pain with each step, yet the smile never left his face.

"Jonnie," I said as we walked, "How do you do it? How are you able to keep yourself 'up' and smiling in spite of everything you went through, and are still going through?"

He gave me a funny look, as he bent to wash his hands. "You got it all wrong, Gary. I'm like this *because of* everything I went through."

He must have seen the shock on my face, "Please just help me get back over to the wheelchair and I'll explain."

"Before the accident I was just a regular kid, and not a very cheerful one either. In fact you could say I was pretty down on life. Then one day we were just out on a family trip and the next thing I knew I woke up in this hospital. I had broken a lot of bones and first I could barely move, or even talk, and the doctors didn't know if I ever would, either. Um, could you please help me lift up the drink, if I do it alone I'll end up wearing it," he laughed.

"Like most people, I had been moving my hand without thinking about it all my life and it was no big deal, right? But you know, the first time I was able to move my hand after the accident I felt a high like I had won an Olympic gold medal. I realized what an amazing gift it was to be able to move your hand, or even have one. It's still not 100%, but you should have seen me a couple of months ago."

I helped him lift the cup and felt my hand start to tingle as Jonnie continued. "Then I started seeing other things different too. "I used to complain if my mom didn't make exactly the food I liked, but then I discovered what a gift it was to be able to eat *anything*. You know at first I could only drink a little water, and had to 'eat' everything through this tube in my arm! Now as you can see, I'm up to soup and ice-cream!"

"Doin' okay Jonnie?" asked the nurse, popping in head.

"Great!" he smiled, "I have excellent help." I blushed as he went on. "I had always been kind of grumpy and a loner at home, but here all the nurses I needed to help me with every little thing made me realize what a gift it was to have other people around who were willing to help."

I gulped as I remembered the not-so-nice parting comment I had made to the hard-working serving lady about the lunch in school that day.

"I'm not telling you it's been easy, Gary—it hasn't, but in a way this accident has been the best thing that could have happened to me. One thing I do know, at least as far as my attitude goes, I'm way healthier now than before I got here."

'ALL VISITING STUDENTS PLEASE RETURN TO THE MAIN LOBBY' came the announcement crackling over the intercom. The time had flown, and as I looked into this amazing kid's glowing face, I could see that he meant every word he said. We shook hands and made plans to see each other again.

I got back out to the van and the social worker turned to me, "Hey Gary, how did the cheer-up visit go?"

"Great, the kid really cheered *me* up a lot." I smiled. I thought he would be surprised, but he looked like he understood exactly what I meant.

Even one visit to a person who is in not great shape can change your life and their life for the better. Taking your candle to make the world shine a little brighter doesn't have to be an earth shattering thing. Small steps, small actions can make all the difference in the world to make it look much more light.

And here's one last story about a simple way to shine a little light to the world, from aish.com with nesanel safran:

It all started when Andy was playing in the parking lot behind his family's condo. He noticed a kid he knew from the building walking his bicycle in the direction of the big blue dumpster at the corner of the lot. Andy did a double take as he watched the boy calmly lift the bike up over the mouth of the dumpster.

"Hey, what are you doing?!" Andy cried out.

The boy looked his way. "I'm just trashing this old bike," he said. "My dad just got me a new 15-speeder for my birthday."

The bike didn't look so old to Andy, and it certainly didn't look like trash. "Is there anything wrong with the bike?" he asked.

The boy, feeling a bit on the defensive answered, "Well ... er ... one of the tires is flat, and the seat is loose. I just don't need it anymore," he added.

Andy shook his head. "What a waste of a good bike," he thought. Since he didn't need a new bicycle he was about to go back to his game when a thought struck him. He remembered seeing in the paper that a local group was conducting a 'toy drive' and asking people to donate used toys and games to needy children. "Hey do you mind if I take the bike?" he asked.

The boy shrugged. "Be my guest," he said. "As far as I'm concerned it's trash."

Andy wheeled the green three-speed bicycle to the side of his house. He ran in to get a couple of tools that his dad always let him borrow. A few turns of a wrench later, and the bike was as good as new!

Meanwhile Andy's friend Rob had been curiously watching him at work. When Andy told him his plans for the newly-repaired bike, Rob got very excited. "What if I tell you where there are about 100 bikes we can fix up and give to needy kids?" he said brightly.

Andy looked up as his friend explained. "My dad owns, 'Herman's Second-Hand City.' It's a big salvage company. He has all kinds of used and broken-down stuff there. Just yesterday my dad pointed to this huge pile of broken bikes he has and mentioned that he doesn't know what to do with them since nobody wants to buy them. I'm sure if we tell him that we want to fix them and give them to those kids he would be happy to let us."

Andy loved the idea and when his friend called him back to tell him that his dad agreed, they planned to meet early the next morning. With tools in hand, the two friends approached the big tangled pile of bicycles and started to pull them apart. Surprisingly a lot of them were okay and just needed some air in the tires. Many others they were able to fix up with a few simple 'transplants.' A tire from here, a handle-bar from there.

When Mr. Herman saw how into it the boys were, he brought them a few cans of spray paint that really made the repaired bikes shine like new. By the end of the day, the boys had redeemed nearly 20 bikes from the trash!

Mr. Herman called up the toy-drive group which was delighted to send out a truck to pick up the bikes. The local newspaper even sent a reporter to write up a story about it.

The next day Andy felt really good when he saw the picture of him and Rob in front of the bikes under the headline: **YOUNG HEROES TURN BROKEN BICYCLES INTO RE-CYCLES.**" He realized how much good he had prevented from going to waste.

When we think about the candles and how it ushers in the special day whether it be shabbat or holidays, we should think about how to shine a little light into the world with whatever we can do. It doesn't have to be outlandish, it doesn't have to be anything crazy, but we should do what we can in any small way to make the world a little more good, a little more light. Shine a little light in your life, taking a cue for the candles we see weekly and on holidays about how to light up our surroundings.

Let's look at some other sources.

Proverbs 20:27

גַּרְהִי נְשִׁמַת אָדָם הַאֵשׁ כְּלִי־חַדְרֵי־בָטָן:

The lifebreath of man is the lamp of the LORD

Revealing all his inmost parts.

(Proverbs 6:23).

“**Ki ner mitzvah v'Torah ohr**, the mitzvah is a lamp and Torah is the light”

PTC. Our whole existence, our whole fabric and framework of being religious Jews is to light up our lives and to light up the world with good and with spreading the flames of kindness

Shabbat 25b

We learned in the Mishna that Rabbi Yishmael says that kindling a lamp on Shabbat with tar is prohibited. The Gemara asks: What is the reason for this? Rava said: Because its odor is bad the Sages issued a decree prohibiting the use of tar, lest one forsake the light and leave. Abaye said to him: And let him leave. What obligation is there to sit next to the light? Rava said to him: Because I say that kindling Shabbat lights is an obligation, and one is required to eat specifically by that light in deference to Shabbat...

Shabbat 23a

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: All the oils are suitable for the Hanukkah lamp, and olive oil is the most select of the oils. Abaye said: At first, my Master, Rabba, would seek sesame oil, as he said: The light of sesame oil lasts longer and does not burn as quickly as olive oil. Once he heard that statement of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, he sought olive oil because he said: Its light is clearer.

PTC. Make sure to avoid materials for the candles that are ill smelling, ill looking, or ill fitting for the candles, and for our lives at large. Don't do actions or behaviors that are ill smelling or ill looking as well, as we are supposed to enjoy the light of the candles and produce good light for our deeds and lives for the world.

Mishneh Torah, Shabbat 5:1

The lighting of Sabbath lights is not of free choice, to light or not to light as one chooses, nor is it the kind of religious performance that an individual is not called upon to make a special effort to render, such as preparing an eruv in courtyards or washing the hands before eating. It is rather a duty, binding on men and women alike; they are obligated to have lamps burning in their homes on Sabbath eve. Even if one has nothing to eat, let him go begging at the doors, buy oil, and light a lamp, forming an integral part of Sabbath delight (oneg shabbath)...

Vayikra Rabbah 31:4

Another interpretation of "Command the Children of Israel" (Leviticus 24:2): Bar Kapparah opened [his discourse]: "It is You who light my lamp" (Psalms 18:29) - the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Adam, "Your light is in My hands and My light is in your hands." Your light is in My hands, as it is stated (Proverbs 20:27), "The lamp of the Lord is the soul of man"; and My light is in your hands, as it is stated (Leviticus 24:2), "to light a continual lamp." Rather, the Holy One, blessed be He, said, "If you light My lamp, I will certainly light your lamp..."

PTC. It is our duty, our obligation to light the candles and to light up the world with light and with goodness. What can you do to help contribute light to the world? Think of your talents and abilities and use them for good and light up your surroundings!

Sanhedrin 32b

The Sages taught: When the gentile authorities issued decrees outlawing observance of the mitzvot, members of Jewish communities devised clandestine ways of indicating observance of mitzvot to each other. For example: If one produces the sound of a millstone in the city called Burni, this is tantamount to announcing: Week of the son, week of the son, i.e., there will be a circumcision. If one displays the light of a lamp in the city called Beror Hayil, this is tantamount to announcing: There is a wedding feast there, there is a wedding feast there.

PTC. Some times our lighting of the flames and lighting up the world may seem to be at great risk and needs to be done in a safe and cautious way. Make sure to be wise in how you light your candles and light up the world around you.

Shabbat 119a

Rav Huna kindled lamps in deference to Shabbat. Rav Pappa spun the wicks for the Shabbat lamp. Rav Hisda cut the beets in preparation for Shabbat. Rabba and Rav Yosef cut wood. Rabbi Zeira prepared thin sticks for kindling.

Shabbat 119b:3

A Beraita taught that Rabbi Yossi bar Yehudah said: two ministering angels escort a person from the synagogue to his home on erev Shabbat: one good and one bad. And when he comes to his house, if he finds that the candles are lit and the table is set and his bed is made, the good angel will say: "May it be the will of God that it should be this way next Shabbat as well." And the bad angel is forced to answer "amen" against his will. —hence the idea of shalom aliechem where we mention the angles of shabbat

PTC. Make sure to usher the Shabbos in with your being involved in it in whatever way possible—such as helping with cooking, helping with cleaning, helping setting up the table and the candles—be involved so the good angels can come to your house and bless it as well as so you can usher in a beautiful, restful, peaceful Shabbos (as well as holidays).

Rashi on Numbers 8:2

Why is the section dealing with the menorah juxtaposed to the section dealing with the (dedication of) princes (of each tribe)? Because when Aaron saw the dedication of each prince his mind grew weak as he was not among them in the dedication (process/ceremony) not him and not his tribe. So, The Holy One, Blessed be God, smiled (and said) "Your (task) will be grander than theirs, for you will light and tend to the candles (of the menorah).

Rabbeinu Bahya, Shemot 19:3:1

This is why it is incumbent upon a woman to pray to G'd at the time she lights the Sabbath candles, a commandment which is especially addressed to her, that He may grant her children who will learn Torah...The merit acquired by lighting the Sabbath candles which provide physical light helps her children to become Torah scholars.

PTC. The lighting of the candles is a real zechus and privilege and is a powerful thing. Remember to honor the candles and do it in the best way possible.

Orchot Tzadikim 18:4

For wisdom is like fire, which never dims even if you light many candles or another fire from it.

Rashi on Ecclesiastes 2:10:1

...like a candelabrum from which many candles are kindled, and none of its light is diminished.

PTC. One never loses out by lighting a flame from a candle to another one, it never dims or dimities or grows weaker. So too one never loses outlay kindling another's soul bringing them closer to torah or by doing Chessed or Tsedakah or good for another—you will not lose out and you will not diminish—on the contrary, you will only gain and get stronger!

Likutei Moharan 21:1:2

“When you raise up the candles, [the seven candles shall shine toward the face of the menorah]” . Rashi explains: The flame shall rise up on its own.

PTC. Help people by teaching them torah and support them however you can til they can become self sufficient whether with money, job, learning, or things similar.

Legends of the Jews 4:2:39

In order to do something meritorious in connection with the Divine service, he carried candles, at his wife's instance, to the sanctuary, wherefrom he was called Lipidoth, "Flames."...Deborah was in the habit of making the wicks on the candles very thick, so that they might burn a long time. Therefore God distinguished her.

Legends of the Jews 3:3:121

Nay, I commanded you to light the candles in the sanctuary that I might distinguish you and give you another opportunity of doing a pious deed, the execution of which I will reward in the future world...by letting a great light shine before you; and, furthermore, if you will let the candles shine before Me in My sanctuary, I shall protect from all evil your spirit, 'the candle of the Lord.'"

Legends of the Jews 3:4:77

When the seventy elders were appointed, and the spirit of the Lord came upon them, all the women lighted the candles of joy, to celebrate by this illumination the elevation of these men to the dignity

Sefer HaMiddot, Peace 1

The Shabbat candles increase peace.

Sefer HaMiddot, Children, Part I 54

Through Channukah and the candles of Shabbat, one will have sons who will be Torah scholars.

PTC. The candles can increase peace in the home and be a merit for the whole family. Make sure to be involved in the mitzvah in whatever way possible.

Teshuvot Maharshal 46:2

The statement of the Talmud referred to applies only to acts of religious significance, as providing food, drink, clothes, or candles for the Sabbath.

English Explanation of Mishnah Shabbat 2:1:2

They may not kindle with cedar fiber, uncarded flax, a raw silk, a desert wick, or seaweed, The list in this section is of material which may not be used for wicks in lighting the Sabbath candles.

PTC. Use only the best for your candles and for your mitzvos in general—don't do it halfway—be sure to put in your all and elevate mitzvot doing them in a superb and beautiful manner as much as possible.

PTC.

-Our whole existence, our whole fabric and framework of being religious Jews is to light up our lives and to light up the world with good and with spreading the flames of kindness

-Make sure to avoid materials for the candles that are ill smelling, ill looking, or ill fitting for the candles, and for our lives at large. Don't do actions or behaviors that are ill smelling or ill looking as well, as we are supposed to enjoy the light of the candles and produce good light for our deeds and lives for the world

-Some times our lighting of the flames and lighting up the world may seem to be at great risk and needs to be done in a safe and cautious way. Make sure to be wise in how you light your candles and light up the world around you.

-Make sure to usher the Shabbos in with your being involved in it in whatever way possible—such as helping with cooking, helping with cleaning, helping setting up the table and the candles—be involved so the good angels can come to your house and bless it as well as you can usher in a beautiful, restful, peaceful Shabbos (as well as holidays).

-The lighting of the candles is a real zechus and privilege and is a powerful thing. Remember to honor the candles and do it in the best way possible.

-One never loses outlay lighting a flame from a candle to another one, it never dims or dimities or grows weaker. So too one never loses out by kindling another's soul bringing them closer to torah or by doing Chessed or Tsedakah or good for another—you will not lose out and you will not diminish—on the contrary, you will only gain and get stronger!

-Help people by teaching them torah and support them however you can til they can become self sufficient whether with money, job, learning, or things similar.

-The candles can increase peace in the home and be a merit for the whole family. Make sure to be involved in the mitzvah in whatever way possible.

-Use only the best for your candles and for your mitzvos in general—don't do it halfway—are sure to put in your all and elevate mitzvoth doing them in a superb and beautiful manner as much as possible.

Wrap-up

The candles signify for us the burning of the soul within and how we can ignite those around us. Make sure to be involved in whatever small way you can to shine a little light in your life and in the lives of those around you. Even visiting one sick person, cleaning up a park, or recycling perfectly good bicycles can shine a light to people around you. Holding the door for others, being a mensch on the phone or in the line at a store can make all the difference. As we approach the new year in just a few days, and we all sit in Shul together regardless of job or position or rank in life, we are all one nation needing to light up and make the world better. Start new good habits for the year, think of ideas to implement for good this coming year, and think how to bring more candles , more flames, more good to the world around us. Use your light within you to light up the world around you. The world will be much better as a whole for it.

This has be the TTL, the shiur where we talk a topic per session with some practical lessons, join us gd willing next time in a few weeks hopefully on chol hammed Sukkot for the next topic installment IYH BN and have a good night.