



Bet Horaah

בית הוראה

Shaare Ezra

שערי עזרא

Parshat Mekatz

Zmanim for New York:

Candle Lighting: 4:14pm

Shabbat ends: 5:19pm

R"Y: 5:46pm

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שליט"א. Shaare Ezra feels that proper Halachic guidance should be accessible to everyone, therefore we offer the community the opportunity to call, text, WhatsApp, or e-mail any halachic questions they may have, through the Bet Horaah, where qualified, trained and ordained Rabbis are available to answer your questions in English, Hebrew and Russian.

Shaare Ezra is from the community—for the community.

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Blessings to our generous donor for allowing the continuation of our newsletter to be available around the NY tristate area, Monsey, Miami, and more. May he and his wife merit to see much Nachat from their children and see them grow to be big Talmidei Chachamim!

THE EXTRA CANDLE RABBI SHAY TAHAN

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SUBJECT RABBISHAYTAHAN

Our Sages taught: The basic mitzvah of Hanukkah is to have one light kindled each day, by the head of the household, for himself and on behalf of his household. The *mehadrin*, i.e., those who are meticulous in the performance of Mitzvot, kindle a light for each and every one in the household. And the *mehadrin min hamehadrin*, those who are even more meticulous, adjust the number of lights daily. Beit Hillel say: On the first day one kindles one light, and from there on, gradually increases the number of lights until, on the last day, he kindles eight lights. (Shabbat ב, כא).

The Gemara tells us that we are only obligated to light one Chanuka candle each night and the extra candles are considered "Hiddur Mitzvah", meaning an enhancement of the Mitzvah or beautification of the Mitzvah.

The question is which candle is the one that is the main/basic Mitzvah which Chazal called: מצות חנוכה- נר איש וביתו, and which one is the Hiddur which is called: מהדרין?

For example, on the second night we light two candles, but which one of the two candles is the main Mitzvah and which one is the Hiddur, is it the left one or the right one?

There are a few very interesting approaches to this, as it comes out to be a three-way Machloket.

The Shulchan Aruch (סימן תרעו ס"ה) says that one should always light the candle which is on the farthest left first and then light the one to its right, because Chazal said that one should always go from left to right: "כל פינות שאתה פונה לא יהא אלא ימין דרך", which means that one first lights the Hiddur candle. The Vilna Gaon

wrote that it's not correct to ignore the main candle and light the Hiddur first, thus one should light starting from his right and continue to the left.

It is clear from here that the opinion of the Vilna Gaon is that the candle on the right is the main mitzvah. There is a dispute however, as to what the opinion of the Shulchan Aruch about this is. The Biur Halacha (ד"ה

wrote that the Shulchan Aruch also agrees that the main candle is the right one, but he still feels that one should start with the Hiddur for two reasons: one is since Chazal instructed to go from left to right, and second because it's more important to light the Hiddur first since it shows and demonstrates the days of the miracle.

Chacham Ovadia (חזון עובדיה דף לג) on the other hand brought down several



THE EXTRA CANDLE

poskim (קובץ המועדים, אבן ישראל, צמח צדק) who felt that the left candle is the main one and the others to its right are the Hiddur.

Therefore, there are three opinions: the Vilna Gaon holds the right candle is the main candle and it is most important as well, hence you start with that. The Shulchan Aruch according to the Biur Halacha holds that although the main candle is the right one, the most important candle is the left one, since it demonstrates the days of the miracle. Finally, Chacham Ovadia brought that the left candle is the main and most important candle.

According to those who hold that the Hiddur candle is as important as the main candle (or even more), we can understand what some poskim wrote (Rav Akiva Eiger תנינא יג, מנחת שלמה ח"ב סי' נג אות ב', משנ"ה ח"ז פט) that one who forgot to say the Bracha on the first candle can still say it on the Hiddur.

One may ask, from the fact that Askenazim light candles, with a Bracha, corresponding to the amount of people living in the house which is also considered a Hiddur, we see that you say Bracha on the Hiddur. Therefore, let the same thing be applicable to our case? The answer is that each person says a Bracha since he had in mind not to fulfil his obligation with the person lighting the Menorah first (בת"ס הל' חנוכה ורע"א תנינא) (מעיךר הדין מצינו).

A similar case is that of a person who started off with only one candle to light, and after lighting received more candles for the Hiddur, does he say a Bracha on the Hiddur candles? The Pri Chadash (סימן תרנז) held that no Bracha is said since those are only Hiddur candles, but the Eliya Raba wrote that one should say the Bracha on the Hiddur candles.

But how would one be able to say the words of אשר קידשנו במצותיו להדליק נר חנוכה, that we are commanded to light the candles, if we are only commanded to light the main candle but not the Hiddur? The answer is that since we accepted to light in accordance with the best Hiddur way, it became as important as the main candle.

We can learn this from the observation of the Or Letsion (ח"ד עמוד רלח) who tried to understand why it is that the Shulchan Aruch omitted the laws of the Gmara that the main Mitzvah is to light just one candle, and spoke only of how one should light the Mehadrin Min Hamehadrin.

He answers that since lighting with accordance of the day became the common custom, one can't light just one to fulfill the Mitzvah of מעיךר הדין מצינו.

AL HANISSIM

In Birkat Hamazon and the Amidah prayer on Chanuka we add the words:

ואתה, ברחמיך הרבים, עמדת להם בצת צרתם: רבת את ריבם ונתת את דינם נקמת את נקמתם. מסרת גבורים ביד חלשים, ורבים ביד מעטים, וטמאים ביד טהורים, ורשעים ביד צדיקים, וזדים ביד עוסקי תורתך.

Which means we thank Hashem for the Chanuka miracle that the Hashmonaim defeated the Greeks. And we count the miracles:

1. The weak defeated the strong.
2. The few defeated the many.
3. The pure defeated the impure.
4. The righteous defeated the wicked
5. Those who were learning Torah defeated the evil.

Upon seeing this, one might ask that we can understand that it is a miracle that the weak defeated the strong and the few defeated the many, since normally the strong and the many win. But what is the miracle of the righteous defeating the wicked and that people who were learning Torah defeated the evil? Why can't they win the war naturally?



The answer is that the way the wicked operate a war is very different than the way the righteous do. Upon fighting a war, the wicked kill anyone who is in their way, flattening cities and destroying anything that they see; of course fighting in such a way makes winning easier! But the righteous fight a war with much scrutiny, they make sure not to hurt those who aren't involved, including women and children, and even look to save them. Fighting a war this way makes it hard and much more dangerous and therefore needing a miracle to win such a war.

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AL HANISSIM

But the biggest insight is at the end of the paragraph, the miracle of those who learn Torah who defeated the evil. What this means is that those who learn Torah didn't even go to fight the war but rather they were still learning Torah while the army was fighting the war! Those words come to inform us that it wasn't the warriors who won the war on the battlefield; it was those who were learning Torah at that very time that caused the warriors to win.

Now imagine this, the soldiers come back from the war and everyone are hugging and kissing them for their contribution, while ignoring the Torah scholars and maybe even despising them, not realizing that they were the ones that won that very war and the soldiers were only doing the Hishtadlut, an effort to be able to bring out the miracle.

As Chazal explained (מכות יא):

"עומדות היו רגלינו בשערך ירושלים" (תהלים קכב): מי גרם לרגלינו שיעמדו במלחמה? שערי ירושלים שהיו עוסקים בתורה. (תוספתא סוטה יא)

"עומדות היו רגלינו בשערך ירושלים" (תהלים קכב): אפשר לומר כן? אלא מי מעמיד רגלינו במלחמה- בתי דינין של דוד שיושבים בשערי ירושלים

This miracle was not relevant only at the time of the Hasmonaim, but this happens today as well-while the soldiers fight for our safety, the real success they have is credited to the Torah scholars who sit day and night to learn our sweet Torah.

May Hashem help us on this holiday of lights to light up and open our eyes to see and realize that all the good in the world is due to those scholars and help us respect them properly.

CHANUKA PREFERENCES

שלחן ערוך ומשנה ברורה סימן תרעה FROM:

If one has only one candle and it's Shabbat Chanuka, should he light it for Shabbat or Chanuka?

He should light it for Shabbat since we want to maintain the peace in the house and when it's dark there is no peace. (שבת כג)

Today that we light the menorah on the table inside the house, should one still light that single candle for Shabbat?

Some say that when the Menorah is lit on the table one should use the candle for Chanuka and in such scenario it's not needed to light it for Shabbat since there is already light in the house. Moreover, one may benefit from the light of that Menorah.

What about today's times, that the homes are lit with electricity?

Some are of the opinion that especially in our times, since the homes are lit with electricity, one should use the single candle for Chanuka.

If one has two candles, should he light them both for Shabbat candles?

No. he should light one for Shabbat and the other for Chanuka. Although it is very important to light two candles for Shabbat but lighting for Hiddur takes preference.

What if he has three candles and it's the second night of Chanuka?

He should light one for Shabbat and two for Chanuka.

What about four on the third night?

Same, light one candle for Shabbat and three for Chanuka.

If one has just enough money to buy either a Chanuka candle or wine for

Kiddush?

Chanuka candle.

If one has money to buy either Shabbat candle or wine?

Candle comes first and he should say Kiddush on bread.

What if one has only enough money to buy either



CHANUKA PREFERENCES

שלחן ערוך ומשנה ברורה סימן תרעח FROM:

a Challa or Shabbat candle?

He should buy Challa.

What about if he has enough to buy either for a Chanuka candle or for wine for Havdala?

Chanuka candle.

Which candle is more important on the Menorah?
Is it the main one or the Hiddur?

Refer to the Halacha on the previous page.

עץ האשוח

משום איסור של בחוקותיהם לא תלכו. אולם אחר שהעלה הרב שמואל ווזנר זצ"ל בשו"ת שבט הלוי להתיר סיים וכתב שכל זה הוא מעיקר הדין אולם מצד ההנהגה הנכונה יש ודאי להמנע מלהעמיד את העץ ואם קשה לו להישמט מחמת הדיירים שדורשים להעמיד את העץ על פתח הבניין יאמר לגוי הממונה על תחזוקת הבנין שיעשה כטוב בעיניו.

ולפי הנ"ל ודאי שאין מן הראוי להעמיד עץ טמא זה בסמוך למנורה הטהורה שכל כולה נועדה להאיר את החושך הרוחני שהעץ מסמל.

ובאמת שהלב נחמץ למשמע הדבר הנורא הזה שעם הקדוש, הריהו עם ישראל יתן בחוצותיו דברי הבל שאין בהם ממש ועוד שבשם הדת שמסמל העץ הזה נרצחו באכזריות רבה רבבות רבות מעמינו בני ישראל, השם ינקום דם עבדיו השפוך, וזאת על אף שעושים כן על מנת להתייפף ולהתחנף בפני אומות העולם.

שלום לכבוד הרב. רצינו לברר דבר שראינו באונברסיטה בו אנו למדים. בזמן ימי חג החנוכה האחראים במקום מושיבים מנורת חנוכה גדולה ליד עץ האשוח, והסיבה היא כדי לכבד את כל הדתות, ורצינו לדעת שני דברים. ראשית, האם מותר בכלל להעמיד עץ אשוח שמסמל את דת הנצרות. ושנית, אם כבר מעמידים עץ טמא שכזה האם מותר להעמיד את המנורה לידה?

שלום וברכה לשואלים הנכבדים.

אוי לנו שאנו חיים בדור כזה, שלא רק שכל העולם מבזה אותנו אלא אפילו אנשים מעמינו לא מכבדים את עצמם עד כדי כך שהם מניחים סמלים של דתות עובדי עבודה זרה כהנצרות בשערי מקומות לימוד וכיוצא בזה, ויש לדעת שדברים אלו הם טמאים ומשוקצים מאוד וגורמים לצעירי הצאן טשטוש במושגי יסוד של ההבדלה בין ישראל לעמים.

תחילה נדון לגופה של השאלה ולאחר מכן מצד ההשקפה הנכונה. הנה בדין זה כבר דנו הפוסקים (שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"י סי' קלב) להתיר מעיקר ההלכה לבעלי חנויות ובעלי בניינים להעמיד את העץ בפתח השער על מנת למשוך קונים לחנות וכן לרצות את דיירי הבניין הנכרים, וזאת כיון שלא נאסר העץ הנ"ל כי הוא לא נעבד ולא הוקרב לעבודה זרה, וכל כולו נעשה ללא שום קשר לעבודה זרה אלא רק על מנת לעטר ולקשט את ביתם לקראת יום אידם (שו"ת בית אבי יו"ד סי' צט), ולכן אין הוא מהדברים המיוחדים לעבודה זרה שנאסרו (יו"ד סי' קנא).

אולם יש עדיין לדון באיסור תורה של "בחוקותיהם לא תלכו", שעניינו כמו שכתב בשולחן ערוך (יו"ד סימן קעח): "שאין הולכין בחוקות הגוים ולא מדמין להם", ונתן שם דוגמאות לזה כגון "שלא יבנה מקומות כבנין היכלות של עבודת כוכבים כדי שיכנסו בהם רבים כמו שהם עושים", ולכן יתכן שגם העמדת אילנות אלו נכנס תחת איסור זה.

אלא שהרמ"א שם נתן שני אופנים בשם המהרי"ק לאיסור זה של בחוקותיהם לא תלכו: אופן ראשון הוא לעשות דבר שנהגו הגוים לעשותו בדרך פריצות, וכגון אלו שנהגו ללבוש מלבושים אדומים וכדומה לזה ממלבושי הפריצות, אבל דבר שנהגו לתועלת כגון אלו שדרך ללבוש בגדים המיוחדים לרופאים מותר ללבושם וכן שעושין משום כבוד או טעם אחר מותר. ואופן השני הוא לעשות דבר שנהגו הגוים לעשותו ללא טעם וסיבה הנובעת ולכן יש לחוש שיש בו שמץ עבודת כוכבים מאבותיהם.

העולה מדברינו שכיון שאין בעץ האשוח משום אחד משני תנאים אלו, שהרי אין בו משום ענין פריצות וכן ידוע שטעמו הוא רק לקשט את ביתם ואין בו שמץ עבודה זרה, לכן אין בו

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