



A CHANUKAH LESSON

A Beacon of Light

RABBI MICHAEL SOROKA



AL HANISSIM IS A PRAYER COMMEMORATING THE miracles that took place on Chanukah (minus the miracle of the oil—which is a topic for a different time and more space). In it we thank Hashem for delivering

...The strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few.

However, the list goes on:

...The defiled into the hands of the pure, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, and sinners into the hands of those who engage with Your Torah.

Why are these mentioned? How do they illustrate the miracle of our victory?

In the physical world, it is easier to de-

stroy than to build; consider wrecking balls, the time it takes a child to “redecorate” the house, or the need for a six-month diet after eating Chanukah latkas and donuts. One way to describe sinners is “scornful”—all it takes is one snide comment to destroy a reputation or shrug off words of rebuke.

We find parallels in the metaphysical realm, as well. When tum’a, defilement, comes in contact with purity, the pure becomes defiled. The Talmud says similarly:

Words of Torah are hard to acquire, but they are easy to destroy as a glass. (Chagiga)

Powerful enemies come in two forms: conventional and guerilla. To overcome the Hellenists, we needed miracles on two fronts.

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A HALACHA FROM THE PARASHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 677) rules that one may not derive any personal benefit from oil or wicks left over from the Chanukah candles. They must be properly disposed of. However, there is a lot of discussion among the authorities as to which scenario this refers to.

Everybody agrees that oil that was set aside for Chanukah candles but was ultimately not used, is entirely permissible for personal use. (M.B. 773:21) Additionally, leftover oil from the first seven nights’ candles can and should be used for lighting on subsequent nights.

What remains unclear, though, is if these requirements only apply when the candles were extinguished within thirty minutes of when they were lit.

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Rabbi Preis speaks at our Chanukah Learning Program this past Sunday



THIS WEEK IN JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

On **26 Kislev, 5678** (1917), General Edmund Allenby, commanding general of the British Expeditionary Force in the Middle East during World War I, entered the Old City of Jerusalem—two days after the Ottoman Empire surrendered it, in the Battle of Jerusalem. Allenby famously walked on foot through the Jaffa Gate, instead of traveling by horse or vehicle, to show respect for the holy city. This was the first time in almost 700 years that Jerusalem was not under Muslim control, and it ended the Turks’ nearly-400-year reign. Britain would remain sovereign until 1948. 🕒

A RIDDLE FOR YOU

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When is a non-Kohen called first to the Torah, in the presence of Kohanim?

The answer will appear next week’s edition.

LAST WEEK’S RIDDLE:

Q There is a date in the Jewish calendar when on some years we say *Hallel*, and on other years we say *Tachanun*. Which date is it?

A The third of Teves. Some years Kislev has 29 days, and other years it has 30. When Kislev has 29, 3 Teves is the last day of Chanukah, on which we say *Hallel*. When Kislev has 30 days, 3 Teves is the day after Chanukah, and we say *Tachanun*. 🕒

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A HALACHA FROM THE PARASHA

(CONTINUED)

Since a half hour is the essential, minimal amount of time that the candles must burn, it makes sense that, in such a case, the oil is considered designated for the mitzvah and cannot be used for personal use. (M.A. 678:10)

Some authorities, however (e.g. *Bach*, end of 678), maintain that any leftover oil must be treated with sanctity, and a person may only use the oil that remains after a half-hour of burning if he explicitly stipulated that only the minimum amount of oil for the basic requirement should be designated for the mitzvah.

Mishnah B'rurah (672:7) suggests that someone who may want to use the remaining oil should make such a stipulation before lighting his menorah on the eighth night. Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetzky adds (*Kovetz Halachos*, p. 217) that it is enough to think this, in one's mind—it doesn't need to be articulated verbally.

Lastly, one does not actually need to burn these leftovers. Oil can be poured down the sink, in a non-degrading manner, and wicks can be wrapped up in plastic and then disposed of. (*Kovetz Halachos* p. 210) Leaving menorah leftovers around the house is not recommended, even if one intends to use them next Chanukah, since one may come to use them by mistake for personal (non-mitzvah) purposes. (M.B. 778:19) 

CHANUKAH PONDERABLE

RABBI MICHAEL SOROKA

The Talmud (Shabbos 23b) says that Shabbos candles take precedence to the menorah. However, the Talmud also says (P'sachim 99b) that, while someone with no money is exempt from lighting Shabbos candles, he must sell the shirt off his back to pay for Chanukah candles. That being the case, what should a man with just the shirt on his back do for Shabbos Chanukah?

- Sell his shirt for Shabbos candles.
- Sell his shirt and buy Chanukah lights.
- Keep his shirt.

—Or is there “D,” a fourth option? 

At the Kollel

EVERY DAY

EVERY WEEK

Sunday *Free brunch!*

Boys' Learning Program

for fourth, fifth, & sixth graders—
Mishnayos (Mas. Pe'ah and Sukkah),
and Sh'muel I

Rabbi Moshe Fuchs
and Izy Newmark..... 9–10 AM
*Parents who are interested can e-mail
Rabbi Fuchs—splashwen@gmail.com*

Beginner's Gemara (Maseches Sukkah)

Rabbi Ezra Stettin..... 9:10–10 AM

Beginner's Halacha & More (skills-building)

Rabbi Moshe D. Zeffren.. 9:30–10:30 AM

Shivti (Self-contained learning, geared toward practical halacha)

Rabbi Avrohom Weinrib..... 10 AM–noon

Monday

  **Torah Treasures for Seniors at the Mayerson JCC**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 10:30–11:15 AM

Tuesday

  **Partners in Torah at the Mayerson JCC**
Rabbi Michael Soroka..... 8 PM

Wednesday

  **Downtown Lunch-n-Learn at Strauss & Troy**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 12–1 PM

Thursday

  **Halacha**
in the former Back Office
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann..... 9:10–10 PM
Homemade refreshments served.

KEY:  Beginners  Intermediate  Advanced  for men and women

Chavrusos are available for private and group learning—
speak to Rabbi Chaim Heinemann! weekdays noon–1 PM • Sun.–Thurs. 8–9:45 PM

DAVENING TIMES CAN BE FOUND AT CINCYKOLLEL.ORG/MINYAN-SCHEDULE/

GREAT ACTS OF SIMPLE PEOPLE

Ben Freeman, of Los Angeles, a devoted only child, refused to send his elderly mother to a nursing home. Though the costs were astronomical, he arranged for her to live in his house, with all of the medical equipment and attendants that entailed. He spent all of his savings, and he labored intensely.

When his mother eventually passed away, Ben was determined to carry out her wish of burial in Israel.

During the preparations, Ben learned that California state law required a body to be drained of its blood and injected with chemicals before it could be transported overseas. Ben quickly contacted the head

mortician. He tried to explain that Jewish law forbids such a procedure, but the mortician said there was nothing he could do.

In desperation, Ben took out his keys and announced: “Sir, I have spent all my money caring for my mother. All I have left is my house. If you work out a way to transfer my mother without her being mutilated, you can keep my house!”

The mortician was taken aback. Seeing how much it meant to him, the mortician said, “You keep the house. I’ll do it for you.”

The mortician was so inspired that he later lobbied the California legislature to change the law, to make it easier for Jews. 

A Beacon... CONTINUED

They were many and powerful. They also were an enemy who approached in the dark and used the power of deception to attack our values. Our Sages say that Greece is symbolized by darkness. The Greeks attempted to darken us, too, through the power of tum’ah, extinguishing the light of Torah.

That required an entirely different type of miracle—one of *light*. Even a single flame will light up the darkness. That light is our Torah, represented by the candles. We ask Hashem every day to enlighten our eyes with His Torah! Even during our exile, which sometimes is dark, the Torah is always there to light up the darkness of the world. 