

A Final Chanukah Thought

written by Yossi Katz

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As we gaze at the lights of the Menorah for a final time tonight, we must think about taking something along with us in the cold winter months that lay ahead. Who are we to turn but to Rebbe Nosson for his advice?

Rebbe Nosson asks a fundamental question, what is the difference between the Shabat candles and Chanukah candles? We know that one cannot make the blessing on the Shabat candles unless he has enjoyment from the light, however in regards to the Chanukah light we say after the blessings: "These candles are holy; we have no permission to benefit from them – only to gaze at them."

Rebbe Nosson explains that these two holidays have a very different nature. Shabat represents Olam HaBah/The World to Come and every Friday the world is elevated from its physical place. Therefore a person is allowed to enjoy himself according to his spiritual delight. Chanukah is completely different. The world doesn't go through any spiritual transformation whatsoever; in fact the nights of Chanukah are the darkest nights of the year. Chanukah occurs in the middle of the week, at the start of the cold winter. This Rebbe Nosson explains was the great Chanukah miracle – that at this specific time HaShem would send down a light which is described as being from the Ohr HaGanuz – the Great Light that

was put aside and saved at the beginning of creation for the Great Tzaddikim at the end of time. We are not yet worthy of “using” this light and may only gaze at its great holiness.

So this is why according to the letter of the law one candle per household is sufficient. With one candle the entire household can gaze and remember that HaShem has sent down this lofty light in this time to represent the continuation of the Torah and Mitzvot even in the darkest of times and even today.

But Mehadrin – the better suggestion is that every person lights their own candle. It is not enough to see the “big picture” of the miracles HaShem does for the Jewish People but each and every one of us must see that HaShem does miracles with themselves. Yes I must light my own candle and I must realize that HaShem does miracles for me. HaShem has allowed me to kindle the light and to see this great light with my own two eyes. Can there be a greater miracle; that I should merit to gaze at this awesome light?

When a person comes to this realization they must move forward – Mehadrin Min HaMehadrin – the best of the best is to add a light every night. Now that I realize that HaShem shines down to me even in my place – wherever that is, I must rediscover HaShem every day in new ways because HaShem is always performing miracles and reveling Himself to me. As HaShem recreates the world every day, so does He do new kindness with each and every one of us, revealing Himself to us over and over.

May we all merit tonight as we gaze at these great lights for the final time to internalize this great miracle that HaShem has done with each and every one of us and to continue to add light everyday of our lives, Amen.