

Dvar Torah for Post-Chanukah

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Based on *Sichot HaRan (Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom) #1*

By Ozer Bergman

Multiple-Choice Quiz:

Are your Chanukah candles still burning?

- A) No
- B) Yes
- C) Don't know
- D) Unable to answer

The correct answer is any and all of them. Allow me to explain. Your physical Chanukah candles have certainly burnt out by the time you read this. So (A) is correct. If you lit Chanukah candles then yes, they are, because finding that small jar of happy-Jewishness will keep you going and glowing for a little while, at least for as long as it takes to read this dvar Torah, I hope! So (B) is also correct.

(C) is also right. After all, in addition to never knowing if our *teshuvah* (return to Hashem) has been accepted (*The Aleph-Bet Book, Teshuvah A:74*), it's not till we find our selves in a darker-than-usual situation, when we need to summon up that special Chanukah luminosity, do we discover how much spiritual energy we invested into the candle lighting (and the rest of Chanukah as well).

Finally, the mature Jewish worshiper knows that he cannot answer. Why? Rebbe Nachman shares with us the following:

King David said, "For I knew that God is great, our Master more than all gods" (Psalms 135:5)...*"I knew"*—in past tense, because the sensation of God's greatness that shines and inspires one today is ineffable, impossible for the mouth to utter.

The Rebbe goes on to say that even to oneself it cannot be put into words. The only way to have, and maintain, this sensation is heart-work. This is what the Zohar (1:103b) means when it comments on the verse in Proverbs (31:23), "Her husband is known at the gates"—Each person experiences God only in proportion to the gates he makes in his heart. Although no person can ever know God Himself, the more one meditates on God's greatness, the more one experiences Him.

Are *my* Chanukah candles still burning? All of the above.

agutn Shabbos!

Shabbat Shalom!

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