

Lights, Chanukah, Action!

Source Sheet by Effie Klein

עובדיה א':י"ח

וְהָיָה בֵּית-יַעֲקֹב אֵשׁ וּבֵית יוֹסֵף לְהִבָּהּ וּבֵית עֵשָׂו לְקֶשֶׁת וְדָלְקוּ בָהֶם וְאַכְלוּם וְלֹא-
יִהְיֶה שָׂרִיד לְבֵית עֵשָׂו כִּי יְהוָה דִּבֶּר:

Obadiah 1:18

The House of Jacob shall be fire, And the House of Joseph flame, And the House of Esau shall be straw; They shall burn it and devour it, And no survivor shall be left of the House of Esau —for the LORD has spoken.

בבא בתרא קכ"ג ב:ב'

בעא מיניה ר' חלבו מר' שמואל בר נחמני כתיב (בראשית ל, כה) ויהי כאשר ילדה רחל את יוסף וגו' מאי שנא כי אתיליד יוסף אמר ליה ראה יעקב אבינו שאין זרעו של עשו נמסר אלא ביד זרעו של יוסף שנאמר (עובדיה א, יח) והיה בית יעקב אש ובית יוסף להבה ובית עשו לקש וגו'

Bava Batra 123b:2

§ **Rabbi Helbo asked Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani: It is written: “And it came to pass, when Rachel gave birth to Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban: Send me away, that I may go to my own place, and to my country”** (Genesis 30:25). **What was different when Joseph was born, that Jacob decided only then to return home?** Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani **said to him: Jacob our patriarch saw prophetically that the descendants of Esau will be delivered only to the hand of the descendants of Joseph, as it is stated: “And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for straw, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them”** (Obadiah 1:18). Jacob had left Eretz Yisrael to escape Esau, but he now felt

confident that he could return without endangering his family.

רש"י על במדבר ח':ב'ב'

בהעלתך. על שם שֶׁהַלֵּהב עוֹלָה, כְּתוּב בְּהַדְלָקְתָּן לְשׁוֹן עֲלֶיהָ, שְׁצַרְיָךְ לְהַדְלִיק עַד שֶׁתֵּהָא שְׁלֵהֶבֶת עוֹלָה מֵאֵלֶיהָ (שבת כ"א), וְעוֹד דָּרְשׁוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ מִכָּאן שֶׁמֵעֲלָה הִיָּתָה לְפָנֵי הַמְנוֹרָה, שֶׁעֲלֶיהָ הִפְהוּ עוֹמֵד וַיִּמְטִיב (ספרי):

Rashi on Numbers 8:2:2

ךָהעלתך lit., WHEN THOU MAKEST [THE LIGHTS] RISE — Because the flame rises upwards (עולה), an expression denoting “ascending” is used of kindling them (the lights), implying that one must kindle them until the light ascends of itself (Shabbat 21a). — Furthermore our Rabbis derived from here (from the expression כָּהעלתך) that there was a step in front of the candelabrum upon which the priest stood while preparing the lights (Sifrei Bamidbar 59).

שבת כ"א א:ט'

תַּנִּי רַמִּי בַר חֲמָא: פְּתִילוֹת וּשְׁמָנִים שֶׁאֲמָרוּ חֲכָמִים אֵין מְדַלִּיקִין בְּהֵן בְּשַׁבַּת — אֵין מְדַלִּיקִין בְּהֵן בְּמִקְדָּשׁ, מִשּׁוּם שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "לְהַעֲלוֹת נֵר תְּמִיד". הוּא תַּנִּי לֵה, וְהוּא אָמַר לֵה — כְּדֵי שֶׁתֵּהָא שְׁלֵהֶבֶת עוֹלָה מֵאֵלֶיהָ, וְלֹא שֶׁתֵּהָא עוֹלָה עַל יְדֵי דָבָר אַחֵר.

Shabbat 21a:9

Rami bar Ḥama taught a *baraita*: Those wicks and oils, which the Sages said one may not light with them on Shabbat, one may not light with them in the Temple either because it is stated with regard to the Temple candelabrum: “And you shall command the children of Israel, that they bring unto you pure olive oil beaten for the light, to cause a lamp to burn continually” (Exodus 27:20). Rami bar Ḥama taught that *baraita* and he also said its explanation: What is the proof from the verse? One may interpret the verse homiletically: The requirement is to light the candelabrum so that the flame ascends of itself when it is kindled, and not that it ascends by means of something else, i.e., adjusting the wick after it was lit.

סנהדרין ק"ה ב:ט"ו

ופליגא דרב יוסי בר חוני דאמר רב יוסי בר חוני בכל אדם מתקנא חוץ מבנו ותלמידו בנו משלמה ותלמידו איבעית אימא (מלכים ב ב, ט) ויהי נא פי שנים ברוחך אלי ואיבעית אימא (במדבר כז, כג) ויסמוך את ידיו עליו ויצוהו

Sanhedrin 105b:15

The Gemara notes: This explanation **disagrees** with the opinion of **Rav Yosei bar Ḥoni**, as **Rav Yosei bar Ḥoni** says: **A person is jealous of everyone except for his son and his student.** Since their success reflects well upon him, he celebrates their success. The fact that one is not jealous of **his son** is derived **from** King David's servants telling him: May **Solomon** be greater than he is. **And** the fact that one is not jealous of **his student; if you wish, say** that it is derived from that which Elisha said to Elijah: **"I pray you that a double portion of your spirit be upon me"** (II Kings 2:9). He asked of his mentor to be greater than him, indicating that it is not an objectionable matter. **And if you wish, say** instead that it is derived from Moses: **"And he laid his hands upon him and commanded him"** (Numbers 27:23). God commanded Moses to lay only one hand upon Joshua, and instead he laid both hands upon him with all his strength.

שבת כ"א א:י"ב-כ"א ב:י

אמר רב הונא: פתילות ושמונים שאמרו חכמים אין מדליקין בהן בשבת, אין מדליקין בהן בתנופה, בין בשבת בין בחול. אמר רבא: מאי טעמא דרב הונא? — קסבר: כבתה זקוק לה, ומופתר להשתמש לאורה. ורב חסדא אמר: מדליקין בהן בחול, אבל לא בשבת. קסבר: כבתה (עמוד ב) אין זקוק לה, ומופתר להשתמש לאורה. אמר רבי זירא אמר רב מתנה, ואמרי לה אמר רבי זירא אמר רב: פתילות ושמונים שאמרו חכמים אין מדליקין בהן בשבת, מדליקין בהן בתנופה, בין בחול בין בשבת. אמר רבי ירמיה: מאי טעמא דרב? — קסבר: כבתה אין זקוק לה, ואסור להשתמש לאורה. אמרוה רבנן קמיה דאבבי משמיה דרבבי ירמיה, ולא קבלה. פי אתא רבין אמרוה

רבנו קמיה דאבני משמיה דרבי יוחנן, וקבלה. אמר: אי זכאי, גמירתיה
לשמעתיה מעיקרא. והא גמרה! נפקא מינה לגירסא דינקותא.
וכבתה אין זקוק לה? ורמינהו: מצותה משתשקע החמה עד שתכלה רגל מן
השוק. מאי לאו, דאי כבתה הדר מדליק לה! לא, דאי לא אדליק — מדליק. ואי
נמי לשיעורה.

עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק. ועד כמה? אמר רבה בר בר חנה אמר רבי יוחנן: עד
דכליא ריגלא דתרמודאי.

תנו רבנן: מצות חנוכה, גר איש וביתו. והמהדרין, גר לכל אחד ואחד. והמהדרין
מן המהדרין, בית שמאי אומרים: יום ראשון מדליק שמנה, מכאן ואילך פוחת
והולך. ובית הלל אומרים: יום ראשון מדליק אחת, מכאן ואילך מוסיף והולך.
אמר עולא: פליגי בה תרי אמוראי במערבא, רבי יוסי בר אבין ורבי יוסי בר
זבדא. חד אמר טעמא דבית שמאי פנגד ימים הנכנסין, וטעמא דבית הלל פנגד
ימים היוצאין. וחד אמר טעמא דבית שמאי פנגד פרי הסג, וטעמא דבית הלל
דמעלין בקדש ואין מורידין.

אמר רבה בר בר חנה אמר רבי יוחנן: שני זקנים היו בצידן. אחד עשה כבית
שמאי ואחד עשה כדברי בית הלל. זה נותן טעם לדבריו פנגד פרי הסג, וזה נותן
טעם לדבריו דמעלין בקדש ואין מורידין.

תנו רבנן: גר חנוכה מצוה להניחה על פתח ביתו מבחוץ. אם הנה דר בעלייה —
מניחה בחלון הסמוכה לרשות הרבים. ובשעת הספנה — מניחה על שלחנו ודיו.
אמר רבא: צריך גר אחרת להשתמש לאורה. ואי איכא מדורה — לא צריך. ואי
אדם חשוב הוא — אף על גב דאיכא מדורה צריך גר אחרת.

מאי חנוכה? דתנו רבנן: בכ"ה בכסליו יומי דחנוכה תמניא אינון דלא למספד
בהון ודלא להתענות בהון. שפשוטנסו יוונים להיכל טמאו כל השמנים שבהיכל.
וכשגברה מלכות בית חשמונאי ונצחום, בדקו ולא מצאו אלא פך אחד של שמן
שקיה מונח בחותמו של פהו גדול, ולא הנה בו אלא להדליק יום אחד. נעשה בו
גס והדליקו ממנו שמונה ימים. לשנה אחרת קבעום ועשאוים ימים טובים בהלל
והודא.

Shabbat 21a:12-21b:10

Rav Huna said: Those wicks and oils with which the Sages said that one

may not light the lamp on Shabbat, one may not light the lamp with them on Hanukkah either; both when it falls on Shabbat and when it falls during the week. Rava said: What is the reason for Rav Huna's statement? He holds that if the Hanukkah light becomes extinguished, even though one lit it properly, one is bound to attend to it and relight it so that it will burn properly. Therefore, one must ensure that the wick burns properly from the outset. And utilizing the light of the Hanukkah lamp is permitted during the week. Consequently, in order to prevent him from inadvertently sinning on Shabbat, he must ensure from the outset that the wick burns well, lest he come to adjust the flame on Shabbat. Those wicks and oils do not burn well at all. And Rav Hisda said: Those same oils and wicks with which the Sages prohibited to light on Shabbat, one may light with them on Hanukkah during the week, but not on Shabbat. He holds that if the Hanukkah light is extinguished

(21b) one is not bound to attend to it. Therefore, there is no reason to make certain from the outset to light it with materials that burn well, as even if it is extinguished, he is not required to relight it. However, he also holds that it is permitted to use its light. As a result, he must ensure that the wick burns well on Shabbat; if not, he is liable to come to adjust the flame in order to use its light. The third opinion is that which Rabbi Zeira said that Rav Mattana said, and others say that Rabbi Zeira said that Rav said: The wicks and oils with which the Sages said one may not light on Shabbat, one may, nevertheless, light with them on Hanukkah, both during the week and on Shabbat. Rabbi Yirmeya said: What is Rav's reason? He holds that if it is extinguished, one is not bound to attend to it and relight it, and it is prohibited to use its light. Therefore, even on Shabbat, there is no concern lest he come to adjust the wick, as it is prohibited to utilize its light.

The Gemara relates that the Sages said this *halakha* before Abaye in the name of Rabbi Yirmeya and he did not accept it, as he did not hold Rabbi Yirmeya in high regard. However, subsequently, when Ravin came from Eretz Yisrael to Babylonia, the Sages said this *halakha* before Abaye in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan, and he accepted it. Then Abaye said regretfully: Had I merited, I would have learned this *halakha* from the outset. The Gemara wonders: Didn't he ultimately learn it and accept it? What difference does it make from whom and at what point he learned it? The Gemara answers: The practical difference is with regard to knowledge acquired in one's youth, which is better remembered.

With regard to the opinion that one need not rekindle the Hanukkah light if it is extinguished, the Gemara asks: **And** is it true that if the Hanukkah light is **extinguished one is not bound to attend to it?** The Gemara **raises a contradiction** from that which was taught in a *baraita*: **The mitzva of kindling the Hanukkah lights is from sunset until traffic in the marketplace ceases. Does that not mean that if the light is extinguished, he must rekindle it** so that it will remain lit for the duration of that period? The Gemara answers: **No**, the *baraita* can be understood otherwise: **That if one did not yet light at sunset, he may still light the Hanukkah lights until traffic ceases. Alternatively**, one could say that this is referring to the matter of **its measure**. One must prepare a wick and oil sufficient to burn for the period lasting from sunset until traffic ceases. If he did so, even if the light is extinguished beforehand, he need not relight it.

The expression **until traffic in the marketplace ceases** is mentioned here, and the Gemara asks: **Until when** exactly is this time? **Rabba bar bar Ḥana said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Until the traffic of the people of Tadmor [tarmoda'ei] ceases.** They sold kindling wood and remained in the marketplace later than everyone else. People who discovered at sunset that they had exhausted their wood supply could purchase wood from them.

The Sages taught in a baraita: The basic mitzva of Hanukkah is each day to have a light kindled by a person, the head of the household, for himself and his household. And 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, who are even more meticulous, adjust the number of lights daily. Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel disagree as to the nature of that adjustment. Beit Shammai say: On the first day one kindles eight lights and, from there on, gradually decreases the number of lights until, on the last day of Hanukkah, he kindles one light. And 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.

Ulla said: There were **two amora'im in the West**, Eretz Yisrael, who **disagreed** with regard to **this dispute, Rabbi Yosei bar Avin and Rabbi Yosei bar Zevida. One said that the reason for Beit Shammai's opinion is that the number of lights corresponds to the incoming days, i.e., the future. On the first day, eight days remain in Hanukkah, one kindles eight lights, and on the second day seven days remain, one kindles seven, etc. The reason for**

Beit Hillel's opinion is that the number of lights **corresponds to the outgoing days**. Each day, the number of lights corresponds to the number of the days of Hanukkah that were already observed. **And one said that the reason for Beit Shammai's** opinion is that the number of lights **corresponds to the bulls of the festival** of *Sukkot*: Thirteen were sacrificed on the first day and each succeeding day one fewer was sacrificed (Numbers 29:12–31). **The reason for Beit Hillel's** opinion is that the number of lights is based on the principle: **One elevates to a higher level in matters of sanctity and one does not downgrade**. Therefore, if the objective is to have the number of lights correspond to the number of days, there is no alternative to increasing their number with the passing of each day.

Rabba bar bar Hana said that Rabbi Yohanan said: There were two Elders in Sidon, and one of them acted in accordance with the opinion of Beit Shammai, and one of them acted in accordance with the opinion of Beit Hillel. Each provided a reason for his actions: **One gave a reason for his actions: The number of lights corresponds to the bulls of the Festival.** **And one gave a reason for his actions: The number of lights is based on the principle: One elevates to a higher level in matters of sanctity and one does not downgrade.**

The Sages taught in a baraita: It is a mitzva to place the Hanukkah lamp at the entrance to one's house on the outside, so that all can see it. If he lived upstairs, he places it at the window adjacent to the public domain. And in a time of danger, when the gentiles issued decrees to prohibit kindling lights, he places it on the table and that is sufficient to fulfill his obligation.

Rava said: One must kindle another light in addition to the Hanukkah lights **in order to use its light**, as it is prohibited to use the light of the Hanukkah lights. **And if there is a bonfire, he need not light an additional light**, as he can use the light of the bonfire. However, **if he is an important person, who is unaccustomed to using the light of a bonfire, even though there is a bonfire, he must kindle another light.**

The Gemara asks: **What is Hanukkah**, and why are lights kindled on Hanukkah? The Gemara answers: **The Sages taught in Megillat Ta'anit: On the twenty-fifth of Kislev, the days of Hanukkah are eight. One may not eulogize on them and one may not fast on them.** What is the reason? **When the Greeks entered the Sanctuary they defiled all the oils that were in the Sanctuary by touching them. And when the Hasmonean monarchy**

overcame them and emerged victorious over them, they searched and found only one cruse of oil that was placed with the seal of the High Priest, undisturbed by the Greeks. And there was sufficient oil there to light the candelabrum for only one day. A miracle occurred and they lit the candelabrum from it eight days. The next year the Sages instituted those days and made them holidays with recitation of *hallel* and special thanksgiving in prayer and blessings.

משלי ו':כ"ג

(כג) כִּי נֵר מִצְוָה וְתוֹרָה אֹר וְנִדְרָךְ סִיִּים תוֹכְחוֹת מוֹסֵר:

Proverbs 6:23

(23) For the commandment is a lamp, The teaching is a light, And the way to life is the rebuke that disciplines.

ברכות נ"ה א:ג

והמאריך על שלחנו: דלמא אתי עניא וניהיב ליה. דכתיב: "הַמְזַבֵּחַ עֵץ שְׁלוֹשׁ אַמּוֹת גְּבוּהָ", וְכָתִיב: "וַיְדַבֵּר אֵלַי זֶה הַשְּׁלֶחֶן אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי ה'", פָּתַח בְּמִזְבֵּחַ וְסִיִּים בְּשֶׁלְחָן! רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן וְרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר דְּאֲמָרֵי תַרְנֻיְיָהוּ: כָּל זְמַן שְׁבִית הַמְקַדָּשׁ קָיִים — מִזְבֵּחַ מְכַפֵּר עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְעַכְשָׁיו, שְׁלֶחֶנוּ שָׁל אָדָם מְכַפֵּר עָלָיו.

Berakhot 55a:3

As for the virtue of **prolonging one's** mealtime at the **table**, which Rav Yehuda mentioned, the Gemara explains: **Perhaps a poor person will come** during the meal and the host will be in a position to **give him** food immediately, without forcing the poor person to wait. The Sages elsewhere praised a person who acts appropriately at a meal, **as it is written: "The altar, three cubits high and the length thereof, two cubits, was of wood, and so the corners thereof; the length thereof, and the walls thereof, were also of wood"** (Ezekiel 41:22), **and it is written** in the continuation of that verse: **"And he said unto me: This is the table that is before the Lord."** The language of this verse is difficult, as it **begins with the altar and concludes**

with the table. Rather, Rabbi Yoḥanan and Rabbi Elazar both say: As long as the Temple stood, the altar atoned for Israel's transgressions. Now that it is destroyed, a person's table atones for his transgressions.

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