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[A Lifting Light](#)

Throughout Hilchos Chanuka we see the emphasis of putting light in places that don't contain spiritual light.

- 1) The Menora is placed less than 10 טפחים high which is where the Shechina doesn't rest.¹
- 2) The Menora is placed on the left side.² This represents the side of טומאה³ as שמאל is called טמאל, the same word as שמאל, left.⁴ Lighting on the left side is putting the light in a place of טומאה. With this we can fulfill ימין ושמאל תפרוצי (לכה דודי הו'): to spread Kedusha to the right and left side as the Mezuzah is on the right side and נר הנוכה on the left.⁵ Then, וזאת ה' תעריצי: we will exalt Hashem. In fact, the term שמאל is a contraction of א-ל, there is Hashem, as we need to spread Kedusha even there.
- 3) The Gemara instructs us that the נר הנוכה should be placed by the doorway of one's house from the outside. If he lives on an upper floor it should be placed in a window that is adjacent to רשות הרבים, public domain.⁶

¹ Orach Chaim 671:6. Succa 5a.

² Shabbos 22a, Orach Chaim 671:7. See Melachim 2, 23:8. שמן forms an acronym of שמאל מדליקין as we light from left to right.

³ We also see this by ערבות, which represents the Jew without Torah and מעשים טובים, which is placed to the left of הלוכה.

⁴ The ט and ש are interchangeable as in Shemos 25:5, 33:22.

⁵ This is alluded at the outset of Parshas Mikeitz as שנתים are the first letters of שמאל נר תדליק ימין מזוזה.

⁶ Shabbos 21b. Orach Chaim 671:5. see Tanya end of 33.

contains the impure outside influences as well as being out in the open, the opposite of צניעות, modesty. This is in contrast to יהידור של עולם, which is the domain of Hashem, רשות היחיד⁷. In a similar vein, this is what is meant in השוק מן השוק⁸ to get rid of the negative outside influences.

4) The Gemara teaches the wicks and oils that we may not kindle on Shabbos, we may kindle on Chanuka.

Just as the candles of Chanuka puts light in the impure places, it also puts light into the lowest of Jews. This is how the Tiferes Shlomo⁹ explains "the wicks and oils that we may not kindle on Shabbos, we may kindle on Chanuka": those that are not lit up from Shabbos can get lit up from Chanuka. This is because when we light the candles of Chanuka, we are lighting up our Neshama as it says נר ה' נשמת אדם, the spirit of man is the candle of Hashem.¹⁰ Therefore, נפש forms an acronym of נר, פתיל, שמן. The נר should be placed by the doorway of one's house from the outside. This also means that on Chanuka that those Neshamos that are on the outside are lit up. In this way we can grasp why even a poor person should be very careful with lighting Chanuka lights,¹² as עני refers to impoverished of understanding, referring to the Jews that are low. The Chidushai Harim explains...מי שאמר לשמן וידלוק...¹⁴ the one who said oil should light can let vinegar light, in the following way. חומץ, vinegar, refers to lowly people as in מעורל וחומץ, unrighteous and cruel man.¹⁵ Just as Hashem commanded us to light oil, similarly with חומץ Neshamos, as Hashem lights up those Neshamos.

This is really what Chanuka is as it has been said זאת הנוכה means this is what Chanuka truly is! The Krias Hatorah כי נשנינו who are called so because זאת הנוכה means this is about the מנשה בני בני מנשה who are called so because נשנינו, meaning those low Neshamos. That is to say, גמליאל בן פדהצור, these Jews are also for Hashem whereas פדהצור is a contraction of א-ל, these Jews are also for Hashem whereas פדהצור is a contraction of צור, Hashem redeems them. Consequently, מנשה is composed of the same letters as נשמה.

[Delving Deeper](#)

R' Shimon bar Yochai, stated in the Zohar,¹⁷ that permission to reveal [the secrets of kabbalah] was only granted to himself and his associates. The Arizal (1534-1572) wrote that it

⁷ By Esav it says נפשות, plural (Breishis 36:6), in contrast to Yaakov where it says שבעים נפש, singular (Shemos 1:5, see 46:26, Rashi). Additionally, Avoda Zara is called אלהים אחרים, plural whereas Hashem is referred to as אחד ה' (see Breishis 1:5, Rashi).

⁸ Shabbos 21b. This is the time for lighting Chanuka candles (Literally it translates as until the passerby vanishes from the market).

⁹ Shabbos 21b. הדמטה להנוכה חו'.

¹⁰ Mishlei 20:27. In a slightly different way we can understand it as follows: the Pasuk states ה' צלך, Hashem is our shadow. Hence, when we light the Chanuka light Hashem lights אדם נשמת אדם נר ה' נשמת אדם.

¹¹ The Nekuda known as a Cholam is the only one that is in the air since it represents a dream. Therefore, the word חולם consists of the same letters as חלום, dream. The light of נר הנוכה resembles a חולם as the ו appears as the candle and the dot above it as the flame. This hints to us that we should dream by the נר הנוכה (In the name of the Chida). For this reason, Chanuka coincides with Parshas Miketz, the Parsha about dreams. Let us dream of the person we desire to become, the life we want to lead and the like.

¹² Orach Chaim 671:1.

¹³ Nedarim 41a.

¹⁴ Taanis 25a.

¹⁵ Tehillim 71:4. שיחות בעבודת ה', Sichas 6.

¹⁶ Bamidbar 7:54. The פכים קטנים that Yaakov went back for refers to the low Neshamos.

¹⁷ It is reported that R' Elyashiv said that the Zohar is not kabbalah. It is a commentary on Chumash (Sefer Vayishma Moshe volume 5, p. 237).

is only in these latter generations that it is permitted and obligatory to reveal this wisdom—i.e. kabbalah, which illuminates the esoteric dimension of the Torah—but not in the earlier generations.¹⁸ In explaining why we are allowed to enter this share of Torah called kabbalah although in previous generations it was just for certain individuals, R' Yisrael Salanter (1809-1883) said that from the year ה"ר, 1840, it went from the private domain of individuals to the public domain of the masses.¹⁹

So one way recent history is different than all the periods that precede it is the learning of the deeper parts of Torah—called kabbalah, *Sisrei Torah*, and *Pnimityus Hatorah*.²⁰ What is the reason for this?²¹

1) The Shach²² (1621-1662) writes there are those who say that one should wait until the age of forty²³ before learning kabbalah,²⁴ like it says in the Mishna²⁵ forty is the age one attains understanding (בן ארבעים לבינה). A gadol explained that this age limit of 40 applied before chassidus²⁶ was revealed to the masses by the Baal Shem Tov and the Baal Hatanya. During that time, the esoteric parts of Torah were considered to be a luxury, and only an elite few were privileged to be privy to the Torah's inner dimension, and it was necessary for one to have exceptional knowledge and wisdom to study kabbalah. Today, however, chassidus has been prepared for, and revealed to, everyone because it isn't a luxury anymore. Today, chassidus is necessary in order to be able to live as a G-d fearing Jew who loves and fears Hashem. The longer the Galus progresses, the darker (spiritually) it becomes. In order to combat this darkness it is necessary to have the great light of chassidus.

2) The Magen Avraham²⁷ writes that it is a *mitzva* to taste the [Shabbos] dishes and one should taste every dish on Erev Shabbos. The Arizal²⁸ says this is hinted to in the words טועמיה דיים זכו, *those who taste it will merit life*.²⁹ Since it's almost the Shabbos of the world, we taste from those foods, meaning we increase in the learning of kabbalah because Moshiach is almost here.³⁰

¹⁸ See Iggeres Hakodesh, 26.

¹⁹ There were numerous Chassidish Rebbes that said in the years prior to the coming of Moshiach, the kabbalistic texts should be taught to the masses (See Midrash Shocheh Tov, Mishlei 10). See for example the Minchas Elazar, volume 1, 50.

²⁰ This includes learning Maharal and Chassidus.

²¹ After the Jews received each of the first two commandments directly from Hashem at Har Sinai, they died. Moshe then told us the remainder of them (See Shabbos 88b and Makkos 23b-24a). It is said from the Zohar that the Neshamos that asked to hear it from Hashem Himself are the Neshamos that can't live without *Pnimityus Hatorah*. On the other hand, those that were satisfied with hearing it from Moshe and not Hashem are those who feel they can survive without *Pnimityus Hatorah*.

²² Yoreh Deah 246:6. See the Maharshal in his respona, 98. See also the Rema in Toras Ha'olah 3:4 and in his respona, 7. The Rema (1530-1572) personally studied kabbalah on Shabbos, Yom Tov, and Chol HaMoed, and used the rest of his time to study Mishna, Talmud, Halacha, and the relevant commentaries. The Divrei Chaim (1793-1876) said that the essence of life is to study the main parts of Torah all day, and that he involves himself with kabbalah when other people are in their beds and he is fighting off sleep (*Divrei Chaim* 2, *Yoreh Deah*, 47).

²³ It is interesting to note some of the greatest teachers of kabbalah, including the Arizal, Ramchal, and R' Nachman of Breslov didn't even live until age 40!

²⁴ The Remak (Ohr Ne'erav 3:1) writes that one should be 20 (and married).

²⁵ Avos 5:25.

²⁶ Chassidus has been called the teachings of kabbalah as prepared for the masses.

²⁷ Orach Chaim, 250:1.

²⁸ Shaar Hakavanos 62a.

²⁹ Shabbos Mussaf service.

³⁰ It is said from the Shulchan Aruch Harav that every Jewish soul must learn the four aspects of Torah—Pshat, Remez, Drush, and Sod—

The idea of founding the yeshiva Shaar Hashamayim came to R' Chaim Yehuda Leib Auerbach³¹ (1883-1954) one night in a dream. He awoke from the strange dream and tried to fall asleep again, only to dream the same thing a second time. He decided to get dressed and go out to consult with his friend, R' Shimon Tzvi Horowitz (1864-1946), about this. As he walked toward R' Horowitz's home, he was surprised to see R' Horowitz walking toward him. It turned out that R' Horowitz was coming to see him about his dream, which was one and the same. They had each envisioned an elderly man, his face shining with an otherworldly light, who had forcefully requested them to teach his Torah in Yerushalayim. "My Torah has the power to bring the Divine Presence back from its exile," the man said. R' Horowitz determined that the man in the dream was the Arizal, who was known to have regretted the fact that his Torah was not widely studied among Yerushalayim's Ashkenazi population. At that time, the only place where the Arizal's kabbalah was studied was the Beis E-I Shul in Yerushalayim, which had produced such great Sefardi kabbalists such as R' Shalom Sharabi ("the Rashash") and R' Yehudah Abulafia. Then and there R' Auerbach and R' Horowitz decided to open a yeshiva for the study of the Arizal's kabbalah and share the responsibilities as joint Roshei Yeshiva. The yeshiva opened shortly afterwards, in 1906, in the Old City of Yerushalayim, with accommodations for a Talmud Torah, a yeshiva ketana, a yeshiva gedola, and a Kollel for married students. R' Auerbach served as rosh yeshiva of the Shaar Hashamayim Yeshiva from 1906 until his death in 1954. When his father, the Admor of Chernowitz-Chmielnik, died, his father's Chassidim asked him to become their Rebbe. But R' Auerbach opted to stay on as rosh yeshiva of Shaar Hashamayim. His son, R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, served as president of the yeshiva; after his death, his son, R' Shmuel Auerbach, succeeded him. Today the Shaar Hashamayim Yeshiva is headed by R' Yaakov Meir Shechter and R' Gamliel Rabinowitz.

Rabbi Alt merited to learn under the tutelage of R' Mordechai Friedlander Ztz"l for close to five years. He received Semicha from R' Zalman Nechemia Goldberg Ztz"l. Rabbi Alt has written on numerous topics for various websites and publications and is the author of the Sefer, *Fascinating Insights: Torah Perspectives on Unique Topics*. His writings inspire people across the spectrum of Jewish observance to live with the vibrancy and beauty of Torah. He lives with his wife and family in a suburb of Yerushalayim where he studies, writes, and teaches. The author is passionate about teaching Jews of all levels of observance.

throughout his lifetime(s) in this world. If he doesn't accomplish this in one lifetime he returns to this world to achieve this. R' Yehuda Fatiyah (1859-1942), the foremost student of the Ben Ish Chai, said that he was the reincarnation of the "Noda B'Yehuda." He said that he had to come back to this world because although in his last lifetime he was a tzaddik, he did not fulfill his Torah obligation to study kabbalah. So in this life, the study of kabbalah was his main focus and tikkun. Born in Baghdad, he eventually moved to Eretz Yisrael, where he was niftar. His most famous sefer, *Minchas Yehuda*, is one of the most revelatory works about demons, how they act and deceive people. He was an expert in exposing these demons and casting them out. He also authored other works including *Beis Lechem Yehuda*.

³¹ R' Chaim Yehuda Leib Auerbach's father was R' Avraham Dov Auerbach, the Admor of Chernowitz-Chmielnik, Poland, who was a son-in-law of R' Tzvi Halberstam, the son of the Divrei Chaim of Sanz. R' Avraham Dov was a son of R' Yehuda Dov Auerbach, who was a son of R' Yoel Faivel Stein, who was a son-in-law of R' Avraham Dov of Chmielnik, a son-in-law of R' Yaakov Yosef of Polnoye, known as the Toldos Yaakov Yosef, who was the Baal Shem Tov's most prominent student. R' Auerbach's father-in-law, R' Shlomo Zalman Porush founded the Yerushalayim neighborhood of Shaarei Chesed. R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, named after his maternal grandfather, was the first child born in Shaarei Chesed. R' Chaim Yehuda Leib Auerbach often rolled in the snow and wore sackcloth under his clothing to mortify his flesh, in the way of hidden tzaddikim. He would retire early in the evening and then rise before midnight, learning until dawn.