



LIGHT HELPS YOU SEE, BUT **FIRE MAKES YOU LOOK**. ON CHANUKAH, WE LIGHT CANDLES TO REMIND US TO BRING OUT MORE SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORLD. LOOKING **DEEPLY** AT THE WORLD — NOT JUST “SEEING” IT SUPERFICIALLY — WILL BRING OUT ITS **INNER BEAUTY**.



DO WE COUNT **UP** OR **DOWN** WITH THE CHANUKAH CANDLES? IS THE GLASS HALF-EMPTY OR HALF-FULL? THE ANSWER: **IT'S ALL ABOUT PERSPECTIVE**.



DREIDELS ARE SPUN FROM **ABOVE** AND GROGGERS ON SPUN FROM **BELOW**. WE ARE IN CONTROL OF OUR LIVES THROUGH THE DECISIONS THAT WE MAKE, BUT, ON CHANUKAH, THE DREIDEL REMINDS US THAT **EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD IS GUIDED, LOVINGLY, FROM ABOVE**.



A CANDLE FOR A MAN AND HIS HOUSE. PROTECT YOUR FIRE INSIDE. **IT'S ALL ABOUT THE FAMILY**.



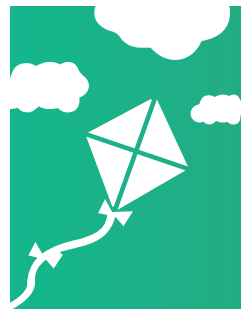
OIL CAN LAST LONGER THAN IT SEEMS. THE OIL ON CHANUKAH LASTED 8 NIGHTS, WHEN IT SHOULD HAVE ONLY LASTED ONE. OUR OIL IS **THE LITTLE BIT OF GREATNESS INSIDE US**. NEVER UNDERESTIMATE **HOW FAR IT CAN TAKE YOU**.



DO YOU HEAR THE BATTLE CRY? **JOIN THE CLUB**. SHOW US WHAT YOU STAND FOR.



FIRE **DOESN'T LOSE ANYTHING** WHEN IT SHARES ITS FLAME WITH OTHERS. SO TOO, WHEN WE PASS ON TORAH TO THE NEXT GENERATION, THE **LIGHT OF TORAH** REMAINS STRONG.




UP, UP, AND AWAY? OR — **HOW LOW CAN YOU GO?** KEEPING IT WITHIN REACH.

In what order do we light the candles? The Talmud quotes an argument between Beis Shamai and Beis Hillel about whether we light 8 candles on the first night and **go down** by lighting **one less candle** each subsequent night, or start with 1 light and **go up** by adding **one new candle** each night until we hit 8.

One way to understand this argument is that **it's all about perspective**: Where should our focus be? According to Beis Shamai, on each day of Chanukah, we're **counting down to the end**, announcing how many days are left – 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, done! Kind of depressing. (Although it's a good reminder for us to "seize the moment.")


Beis Hillel turns the focus around: Every day, when we light an additional candle, we are demonstrating, "I'm about to experience my 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, day of Chanukah!" until we reach the final 8th day of Chanukah, and light 8 candles.

By the end, instead of feeling depressed that the holiday is over, you feel **inspired by the 8 days that you just got to celebrate**, and can use those 8 days of inspiration to fuel your future growth! 

When you walk into a dark room to find something you're missing, and you turn on the lights, you can suddenly see everything around you. But if you would walk into the same room with a simple candle, you would only be given the opportunity to look.

Everything in the world has two parts – the outside and the inside. When you first look at something, your eyes tell you what's on the outside. Most of us stop there. **But if you would look at something deeply, in order to understand what's "inside" of it – you can find its beauty.** The soft and subtle light from the fire reminds us to look hard at what's around us, in order to find the beauty in everything.

The lights of Chanukah can bring out the "soul" of the world, because they remind us that **no matter what anyone thinks, I am beautiful and amazing.** Our friends are awesome, and our families are the best. School is great, our towns rock, and the world is a dream. We just have to look for it.


That's why Chanukah is always at the darkest time of the year – because **the things we can see easily when its light outside, aren't necessarily as real as what we can find when we look inside.** 

The Gemara describes the basic mitzvah of Chanukah as a commandment on "Ner Ish U'Beyso – Every man lights on behalf of his household." Literally, though, these words mean **"A candle of a man and his house."**

This is a very unique presentation – since when does a house have a mitzvah?

Part of the message of Chanukah is understanding that **it's the house, the family life, which preserves Judaism.**


Even during the years that the Temple was destroyed, the family of Yochanan Kohein Gadol was able to **protect the fire of Judaism from the Greek influences** who tried to extinguish this fire. By supporting each other in their performance of mitzvos and sheltering themselves from the bad influences outside, this family was able to preserve their passion for Judaism.

(Interestingly, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch – a Rabbi from the 19th century – said he wished that he could close every synagogue in his city for a number of years, just in order to reestablish that **the home is the center of Jewish life**, not the synagogue.) 

There are two concepts in life that are hard to combine: How is it that G-d can know everything, and yet we have the ability to choose our own path? This is one of the hardest ideas in Judaism to comprehend, which is why we only focus on them one at a time.

On Purim, we spin noise-making groggers – holding them from below – to remind ourselves that our lives and the decisions we make play an important role in the evolution of spirituality in the world. **I am important and I can make a difference.**

On Chanukah, we consider the **opposite message**. We spin dreidels from their tops onto the table to remind us that **no matter what happens in life – it's all for the absolute good with great care and lovingness from Hashem.**

There is one thing, however, that can be spun from above and below – and that's a Torah scroll. Torah is the guide that can help us understand in our lives how both of these things can be true – that **Hashem has a meaningful and worthwhile plan for the world, and I can find my own place within it.** 

The Chashmonaim were a family of Kohanim who served in the Beis HaMikdash until the Greeks destroyed it. When the Chashmonaim went to battle against the Greeks, they had to gather more Jews to join them in the war. How did they find Jews who would help fight? The Chashmonaim cried out: **"Mi LaHashem, Elai! – Whoever stands up for God, come join me!"**

(This battle cry was, in fact, an echo of the **same call** that Moshe used to call the loyal Leviim and Kohanim after the rest of the Jews sinned with the Golden Calf.)


When the Chashmonaim succeeded in defeating the Greeks, the Jews regained control of the Beis HaMikdash. Now **the Jews were able once again to do the avodah (service) in the Beis HaMikdash**, including lighting the Menorah in the Beis HaMikdash every day!

By us lighting our own menorahs on Chanukah, we identify ourselves as part of that **elite group of Jews** who answered the call of **"Mi LaHashem, Elai! – Whoever stands up for God, come join me!"** 

The Jewish warriors (Chashmonaim) finally pushed back the Greek armies and entered the Holy Temple, only to find that there was no more sacred oil to light the Holy Menorah. After a desperate search, one small flask of oil was obtained – **enough to light the Menorah for only one night.**

It would take 8 full days in order to make any new oil that could be used in Holy Temple. It was hopeless. It seemed like there would have to be days from now until then, that **the Jews would lose out on the opportunity to light the Holy Menorah for several days.**

Well... at least they had enough oil to light the Menorah for one night in the meantime...

The miracle of the oil lasting for a full 8 days is a yearly reminder that although we may not always think we have what it takes, **we each have much more potential to accomplish what we need to do** than we think we have. Everyone has something very powerful inside of them, and even if we can only see or feel it just a bit – that may be all we need in order to become great. 

The Menorah is meant to be lit in a place which can be seen by people walking by outside. This is known as Pirsumei Nisa – publicizing the miracle of Chanukah. The Jews only had enough oil to last for one day, but it miraculously lasted for 8 full days instead.

Another rule that not many people know is that **the menorah cannot be placed too high up**, like in the window of an apartment building that's on the seventh floor of a building. Why not? Because if the Menorah is too high off the ground, people walking by outside **won't be able to see it**, and you will not accomplish Pirsumei Nisa – publicizing the miracle of Chanukah.

Torah is compared to light, and the lights of the Menorah represent Torah. **Torah is relevant to everyone**, no matter what age or stage in life they're in. Torah should always be presented in a way that everyone can see it and recognize that it's accessible to them – not too high up, abstract, and out of their reach.

The Torah is for everyone! 

When you pour water from one cup to another, the first cup of water contains less. But when you share a flame from one candle to another, the flame is not diminished at all. **Fire is unique in that it doesn't lose anything when it gives to others.**

The single jug of pure oil that the Jews used to light the Menorah **symbolizes the light of Torah**, which has acted as the **guide for the Jewish people** throughout thousands of years, no matter what environment we find ourselves in.

Lighting the Menorah on Chanukah symbolizes **passing on the Torah from one person to the next**. On Chanukah itself, there was one tiny group of people – the Chashmonaim – who were able to stand up to defend the Torah.

Now, look around the world, and you can find hundreds of thousands of people, all **proud to call themselves Jews!** 