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Oil and Wicks

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: All those of which they ruled that you must not light with them (*using them as wicks; such as cedar bast*) on the *Shabbos*, yet a large fire may be made of them, both for warming oneself and for using its light, whether on the earth or on the stove; for they merely prohibited the making of a wick of them for a (*Shabbos*) lamp.

The *Mishna* had stated that *kik* oil cannot be used.

The *Gemora* asks: What is *kik* oil?

Shmuel said: I asked all the seafarers about it, and they told me that there is a certain bird in the sea towns called *kik*. [*Oil was taken from it and used as a fuel for lamps.*]

Rav Yitzchak the son of Rav Yehudah said: It is cottonseed oil.

Rish Lakish said: Oil taken from (*a plant called*) Yonah's *kikayon*. [*Kikayon was the plant used to provide shelter for the prophet Yonah.*]

Rabbah bar bar Chanah said: I myself have seen (*the plant called*) Yonah's *kikayon*, and it resembles the ricinus plant, and it grows (*from the moisture*) in water ditches. Merchants set it up at the entrance of their shops (*to provide shade and fragrance*). From its kernels oil is manufactured, and under its branches rest all the sick of the West (*Eretz Yisroel*).

Rabbah said: As to the wicks which the Sages said that you must not kindle with them for the *Shabbos*, the reason is because their flame flickers on them. The oils, which the Sages said you must not kindle with, is because they are not drawn (*freely*) to the wick. [*Accordingly, one may tilt the lamp to produce a better light; this is forbidden to do on the Shabbos on account of kindling.*]

Abaye inquired of Rabbah: As to the oils which the Sages said you must not kindle with for the *Shabbos*, is it permissible to pour a small amount of (*good*) oil into them and kindle the lights? Do we forbid it, lest one come to kindle the lights with the forbidden oil in its unmixed state, or not?

Rabbah answered him: We must not kindle the lights with it.

Abaye asks: What is the reason for this?

Rabbah replied: It is because we must kindle the lights with it (*purely unacceptable oil; and therefore the Rabbis decreed even upon a mixture*).

Abaye asked from a *braisa*: If one wraps a material which may be used (*as a wick*) for lighting around a material which may not be kindled with, one may not light with it. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: In my father's house a wick was wound over a nut and they did kindle with it. Abaye concludes: He (*Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel*) is teaching us that one may kindle using such a wick!

He replied: Instead of refuting me by Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel's view, support me by the *Tanna Kamma's* ruling (*who forbids kindling with such a wick*)!

Abaye responds: That is not difficult, for an act (*of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel's household*) is (*more*) weighty (*than an ordinary ruling*).

The *Gemora* notes that the difficulty still remains, for surely it was for kindling (*that Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel permitted*)!?

Rabbah responds: No; it was used for floating. [*The nut was used to enable the wick to float on the surface of the oil instead of sinking.*]



The Gemora asks: If it was (*merely*) for floating, what is the reason of the *Tanna Kamma*?

The Gemora answers: The entire *braisa* is Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, but it is as if there are missing words, and it was taught as follows: If one wraps a material which may be used (*as a wick*) for lighting around a material which may not be kindled with, one may not light with it. When were these words said? It was said for lighting (*as one wick*); but for floating, it is permitted, for Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: In my father's house a wick was wound over a nut and they did kindle with it.

The Gemora asks: Yet is that so (*that it would still be forbidden even when other acceptable oil is added*), for Rav Bruna has said in Rav's name: The melted tallow and the dissolved innards of fish, one may pour a small amount of (*good*) oil into them and kindle the lights!?

The Gemora answers: These (*two*) are drawn (*freely*) in their natural state, while those (*in the Mishna*) are not drawn (*freely*) in their natural state, but that the Rabbis prohibited melted tallow on account of unmelted tallow and the dissolved innards of fish on account of the undissolved innards of fish. [*The prohibition, however, went no further; therefore if it is mixed with oil, it is permissible.*]

The Gemora asks: Then let us prohibit melted tallow and the dissolved innards of fish mixed with oil on account of the same without an a mixture of oil?

The Gemora answers: That itself is (*merely*) a preventive measure, and are we to arise and enact one preventive measure to safeguard another preventive measure?

Rami bar Chama recited a *braisa*: The wicks and oil which the Sages said that one may not kindle the lights with on the *Shabbos*, one must also not kindle the lights within the Temple, because it is written: *to kindle the lamp continually*. He recited the *braisa* and he interpreted it: the flame must ascend of itself, and not through something else (*such as tilting or other adjustments*).

The Gemora asks from a *Mishna*: The outworn trousers and belts of the *Kohanim* would be torn (*and made into wicks*), and with these they kindled the lights! [*The belts contained wool, which, as stated above (20b), was added to the forbidden materials enumerated in the Mishna. The reference of this Mishna is to the Temple, and thus this refutes Rami bar Chama!?*]

The Gemora answers: The *Simchas Beis Hashoeivah* (*rejoicing of the Water Drawing*) was different. [*At the daily morning service during Sukkos, a libation of water, in addition to the usual libation of wine, was poured out on the altar. The water was carried in procession to the Temple amid great rejoicing. Since the illumination of the Courtyard at this time was not a Biblical precept, the wicks could be made out of wool as well.*]

The Gemora asks from a *braisa* taught by Rabbah bar Masnah: Worn out priestly garments were cut and then made into wicks used for the Temple. Surely that means the garments containing *kelayim* (wool and linen)!?

The Gemora answers: No; the garments of linen are meant. (21a)

Chanukah Lights

Rav Huna said: Regarding the wicks and oils which the Sages said that one must not kindle the lights with on the *Shabbos*, one may not kindle the *Chanukah* lights with, either on the *Shabbos* or on weekdays.

Rava said: What is Rav Huna's reason? He holds that if it (*the Chanukah lights*) became extinguished, one must rekindle it (and that is why they must be made properly in the first place, for we are concerned that he will be negligent after they become extinguished, and he will not rekindle it), and one may make use of its light (for reading; therefore these wicks and oils are forbidden on the *Shabbos*, for he might tilt the lamp in order to draw the oil).

Rav Chisda maintained: One may kindle the *Chanukah* lights with (*these wicks and oils*) on weekdays, but not on the *Shabbos*. He holds that if it (*the Chanukah lights*) became extinguished, one is not required to rekindle it, and one may make use of its light.

Rabbi Zeira said in Rav Masnah's name, and others state that Rabbi Zeira said in Rav's name: Regarding the wicks and oils which the Sages said that one must not kindle the lights with on the *Shabbos*, one may kindle the *Chanukah* lights with, either on the *Shabbos* or on weekdays.

Rabbi Yirmiyah said: What is Rav's reason? He holds that if it (*the Chanukah lights*) became extinguished, one is not required to rekindle it, and one is forbidden to make use of its light.



The Rabbis stated this before Abaye in Rabbi Yirmiyah's name, but he did not accept it; however, when Ravin came (*to Bavel*), the Rabbis stated it before Abaye in Rabbi Yochanan's name, whereupon he accepted it. Abaye observed: Had I been worthy, I would have learned this dictum originally.

The *Gemora* asks: But he learned it now?

The *Gemora* answers: The difference is in respect of the studies of one's youth (*which lasts longer than what is learned at a later age*).

The *Gemora* asks: Now, if it became extinguished, one is not required to rekindle it? But the following *braisa* contradicts it: Its observance (*the Chanukah lights*) is from sunset until there is no wayfarer in the market. Does that not mean that if it became extinguished (*within that period*), it must be rekindled?

The *Gemora* answers: No! It means that if one has not yet kindled it, he must light it; or, in respect of the amount of oil (*necessary to use; there should be enough oil for the lights to stay burning for that period*).

The *braisa* stated: Until there is no wayfarer in the market.

The *Gemora* asks: Until when is that?

Rabbah bar bar Chanah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: It is until the Tarmodians have departed. [*Tarmod is Palmyra, an oasis of the Syrian desert. They sold lighting wood and went about in the streets later than the general populace as their wares might be needed.*]

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: The *mitzvah* of *Chanukah* is that one light (*each night of Chanukah*) for a man and his household; the zealous (*those who pursue mitzvos*) kindle a light for each member (*of their household*); and the extremely zealous, Beis Shammai maintain: On the first day eight lights are lit and thereafter they are gradually decreased (*one less each night*), but Beis Hillel say: On the first day one is lit and thereafter they are progressively increased (*one more each night*).

Ulla said: In the West (*Eretz Yisroel*) two *Amoraim*, Rabbi Yosi bar Avin and Rabbi Yosi bar Zevida, differ about this (*Tannaic*) dispute: One maintains: The reason of Beis Shammai is that it shall correspond to the days (*of Chanukah*) still to come (*i.e., each evening one must kindle as many lights as the number of days of Chanukah yet to come, starting with eight, and decreasing by one*

each night), and that of Beis Hillel is that it shall correspond to the days that have already passed; and another maintains: Beis Shammai's reason is that it shall correspond to the bullocks of *Sukkos* (for thirteen bullocks were offered on the first day, twelve on the second, and so on, one less each succeeding day); whereas Beis Hillel's reason is that we elevate in (*matters of*) sanctity but do not reduce.

Rabbah bar bar Chanha said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: There were two old men in Sidon: One did as Beis Shammai and the other as Beis Hillel. The former gave the reason of his action that it should correspond to the bullocks of *Sukkos*, while the latter stated his reason because we elevate in (*matters of*) sanctity but do not reduce.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: It is incumbent to place the *Chanukah* light by the doorway of one's house on the outside (*by the courtyard; this was done to publicize the miracle; their houses did not open directly on to the street but into a courtyard, and there the light was to be placed*); if one dwells in an upper floor, he places it at the window nearest the street. But in times of danger (*when the Persians decreed that on a day that they celebrated a holiday, lights can only be kindled in their pagan temples*), it is sufficient to place it on the table.

Rava said: Another light is required for its light to be used (*to make it recognizable that the lights were kindled for Chanukah and not for illumination*), yet if there is a large fire (*in the house*), it is unnecessary. But in the case of a distinguished person (*who does not use a large fire*), even if there is a large fire, another light is required. (21a – 21b)

Festival of Chanukah

What is the reason for *Chanukah*? For it was taught in a *braisa*: On the twenty-fifth of Kislev (*commence*) the days of *Chanukah*, which are eight (*altogether*); on which eulogizing and fasting are forbidden. For when the Greeks entered the Sanctuary, they defiled all the oils that were in the Sanctuary, and when the royal Hasmonean house prevailed against and defeated them, they searched and found only one flask of oil which lay with the seal of the *Kohen Gadol*, but which contained sufficient for one day's lighting only; yet a miracle was performed with it and they kindled the lights (*of the Menorah*) for eight days. The following year they established a Festival with the recital of *Hallel* and thanksgiving (*the 'al hanisim' recital*).



We learned in a *Mishna* elsewhere: If a spark flies out from under a smith's hammer and damages, the smith is liable. The *Mishna* discusses the case of a camel carrying (*combustible*) straw on a street. If the camel's straw stuck into the store, catching fire from the store owner's candle, and then burned down a tower, the owner of the camel is liable, because he should not have put so much straw that it entered the store. If, however, the store owner's candle was outside the store, and the straw caught fire and burned down a tower, the store owner is liable, since he should have kept his candle inside. Rabbi Yehudah states that if the candle outside was a candle for Chanukah, the store owner is not liable, as he had religious permission to place his candle outside.

Ravina says that Rabbi Yehudah's opinion indicates that the Chanukah candle should be placed within ten *tefachim* (*hand widths*) off the ground. Otherwise, the store owner should have put the candle higher than the camel and its rider, and should not be exempt.

The *Gemora* deflects the proof by saying that perhaps if he is put to too much trouble, he may refrain from the observance of the *mitzvah*. (21b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Placement of the Chanukah Candle

The Shulchan Aruch (H"M 418:12) and the Rambam (Nizkei Mamon 14:13) rule against Rabbi Yehudah, and hold the store owner liable for his Chanukah candle. The reasoning given is that although the store owner had license to put the candle outside, to fulfill the *mitzvah* of Chanukah, he still is responsible to ensure no damage comes from it.

The *Gemora* discusses whether Rabbi Yehudah's exclusion of liability in the case of a Chanukah candle indicates that it should be below ten *tefachim*. The *Gemora* concludes with a limit of twenty *amos*.

There is discussion in the poskim about reconciling the two measures. The Shulchan Aruch (O"H 671:6), following the Rosh, rules that the optimum placement (*l'chatchila*) is below ten *tefachim*, but the absolute limit (*b'dieved*) is twenty *amos*.

The Gr"a explains that even though the *Gemora* deflected the proof from the *Mishna*, we follow the straightforward implication of the *Mishna*.

The Rambam (Chanuka 4:7) only mentions the measure of twenty *amos*. The Rambam understood that the two measures are a dispute, and ruled like the opinion of twenty *amos*. The Rambam therefore could have held the store owner liable simply because he should have placed the candle higher, but nonetheless made the more fundamental statement that performing a *mitzvah* does not exempt a person from damages. This statement is a more general one, and has implications in other cases, as the Gr"a points out (H"M 418:28).

The Shaarei Teshuva (O"H 761:8) points out that the *Chachamim* and Rabbi Yehudah's dispute, as detailed in other sources, does not relate to different opinions on the location of the Chanukah candle, but rather on this fundamental question of exemption due to religious activity.

If there aren't enough candles to add one more each night of Chanukah

By: Meoros HaDaf HaYomi

This week, the pages of Daf HaYomi discuss Chanukah and its mitzvos. Having discussed at length which oils and wicks are acceptable for Shabbos candles, the *Gemara* turns to the oils and wicks that may be used for Chanukah, and to other mitzvos associated with this holiday.

Strictly speaking, one fulfills the *mitzvah* of Chanukah candles by lighting only one candle each night. According to Beis Hillel, whose opinion is accepted, the *mehadrin min hamehadrin* (those who go for the best of the best) add an additional candle each night: the first night they light one candle, up to eight on the last night.

What should be done with two candles on the third night? It is not always possible to fulfill the *mitzvah* according to the *mehadrin min hamehadrin*. The Poskim discuss what a person should do if he finds himself on the third night of Chanukah with only two candles. Should he fulfill the *mehadrin min hamehadrin* to the best of his ability by lighting two out of the required three candles? Or rather, since he's unable to light the number of candles to indicate which night of Chanukah it now is, he should light only one?



Lighting two candles diminishes the miracle: The consensus of the poskim, including the Chaye Adam (154:25), Ksav Sofer (O.C. 135), Aruch Hashulchan (671:10), Kaf Hachaim (671:10), and Mishna Berurah (671, s.k. 5), is that only one candle should be lit. The Ksav Sofer (ibid.) explains that lighting two candles in place of three seems to diminish the miracle. By lighting an additional light each night, we mark the increasing miracle of the oil that burned in the Menorah night after night. When we light only two candles on the third night, it appears that the miracle tonight was only “two days great”, rather than three. However if we light only one candle, as is the bare requirement, we do not signify the number of days at all, but rather the miracle as such.

HaGaon Rav Yosef Dov of Brisk *zt”l*, the Beis Halevi, explained that this question depends upon the reasoning behind Beis Hillel’s *mehadrin min hamehadrin*, as discussed in our *sugya*: Some explain that an additional candle is lit for each miracle-day that passes (*k’neged yamim hayotzim*). Others explain that one must “increase in holiness and not decrease”. The question before us would seem to depend on the opinions in this debate. If we add candles to mark the number of nights that have passed, lighting two instead of three is counter-productive, and we must suffice in lighting one candle, as is the basic requirement. However, if we add candles in order to “increase in holiness and not decrease,” then we must fulfill this principle to the best of our ability by lighting three on the third night if possible or at least two, so as not to decrease in holiness.

Rav Eliezer Menachem Mann Shach *zt”l* (Avi Ezri, *hilchos Chanukah* 4:1) cites the Beis Halevi’s explanation and begs to differ, contending that both opinions in the *Gemara* may well agree that the two available candles should be lit on the third night. The Beis Halevi bases himself on the assumption that *k’neged yamim hayotzim* – to signify the outgoing days – refers to the length of the miracle until this point. However, this is not necessarily so. Perhaps each additional light signifies another day of the miracle, but not necessarily the current day of the miracle. Lighting two candles is surely a greater *hidur* than one, because they signify a greater miracle. We should therefore signify the greatness of the miracle to the best of our limited ability.

DAILY MASHAL

The dispute between Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel regarding Chanukah lights

The Gemara states that Beis Shammai maintains that the first night of Chanukah, one lights eight lights, and subsequently every night decreases the amount of lights. The reasoning of Beis Shammai is that the Chanukah lights correspond to the bulls offered on Sukkos, where the amount of bulls offered decreased every day. Beis Hillel maintain that the first night of Chanukah one lights one light and on subsequent nights increases the amount of lights, based on the premise of *maalin bakodesh vain moridin*, one ascends in holiness and does not descend in holiness.

What is the association between these reasons and the miracle of Chanukah? Rabbi Chaim Friedlander in *Sifsei Chaim* expounds on this matter and writes that the Second Temple era was a stage of the exile and essentially was a preparation for the long upcoming exile. This was the reason that prophecies ceased, and certain practices that had functioned during the First Temple era were not conducted in the second Beis HaMikdash. On the other hand, this time period when the Chanukah miracle occurred serves as the foundation that has sustained the Jewish People throughout the exile. It was specifically in this era that the members of the Great Assembly taught many disciples and enacted many Rabbinical decrees as safeguards for the Torah. They also instituted the order of the prayers and the blessings, thus establishing the spiritual foundations of the Jewish People. The Members of the Great Assembly prepared the nation to withstand the trials and tribulations of the exile. One event that stands out from the Second Temple Era is the miracle of Chanukah, which reflects the essential foundations for future generations. When Jews would weaken in their service of Hashem, Hashem would allow the nations to enact decrees that would threaten the Jews in areas of religion. When the Jews sacrifice their very lives to fulfill the mitzvos, Hashem saves the Jews through unnatural means.

The Sifsei Chaim explains that the opinion of Beis Shammai is that the bulls of Sukkos are offered as atonement for the gentiles, whose merits are constantly diminishing. We decrease the lights of Chanukah because our spiritual level is also constantly decreasing in the exile. Beis Hillel, however, maintains that the miracle of our survival in the exile constantly increases, as we are able to withstand the trials and travails of exile. For this reason, Beis Hillel



maintains that we increase the Chanukah lights, culminating with eighth lights. Eight symbolizes a level above the natural order of events, which we hope will be revealed in perfection with the arrival of Moshiach and the building of the third Beis HaMikdash.

The Mehadrin

Concerning the term *mehadrin*, Rashi comments “after the mitzvos”. He explains this word according to the root *h.d.r*, which parallels the Hebrew root *ch.z.r* – i.e., those who chase intently after the mitzvos. But Rav Nasan, author of *Sefer He’Aruch*, and Rambam explained it as a Hebrew word meaning *hadar* (“glorious”) – in other words, those who glorify the mitzvos: “And he who glorifies (*mehader*) the mitzvah, lights according to the number of the members of his family, a light for each, both men and women. He who glorifies the mitzvah even more than this and performs the choice mitzvah...” (*Hilchos Chanukah*, beginning of Ch. 4).

The Most Important Thing

Even as a youth, HaGaon Rabbi Yechezkel Abramski zt”l has a burning desire to learn Torah. Once, after the Shabbos evening meal, he was learning tractate Shabbos for many hours. Suddenly he rose and began to walk around, deep in thought. His mother, who noticed him, asked him what he was thinking about.

“I’m starting to learn *Bameh Madlikin* where Shmuel asked all the seafarers for the definition of *kik* oil and I wonder: Shmuel, who was both a physician and an astronomer, when he met the seafarers, he didn’t ask them what was new in the world of medicine or astronomy. He had only one wish: what is *kik* oil, which is forbidden to light on Shabbos” (*Peninei Rabeinu Yechezkel*).

Chanukah Elevates Everything

The author of *Meor Einayim* of Tchernobil zt”l said: These wicks and oils, to which the flame doesn’t adhere well, hint at people who haven’t merited to adhere to the light of life and to draw near to Hashem. But they may be used for Chanukah for Chanukah elevates even these souls.

By the Merit of the Torah

“What is Chanukah, *detanu rabanan* (that the *rabanan* learnt)...” HaGaon Rabbi Meir Shapira of Lublin zt”l said: By what merit did the miracle of Chanukah come about? By the merit of learning Torah, “that the *rabanan* learnt” (*Sefer HaYovel LeMaharam Shapira*).

To Give Thanks for Everything

The additional prayer *’al hanisim* for Chanukah states “and they installed these eight days of Chanukah to give thanks and praise Your great name.” Rabbi David of Kotzk explained: Chanukah signifies education (*chinuch*). The miracle of Chanukah educated the Jews to see Hashem’s hand in everything and thank Him for other miracles – “and they installed these eight days of Chanukah” – the miracle of Chanukah installed in the Jewish heart “to give thanks and praise Your great name” (*Ohel Torah*).