



CHANUKAH MIVTZOIM

“Excuse me are you Jewish?”

“Yes I am.”

“Well Happy Chanukah, do you have a Menorah? How about a dreidel?”

“Wow! This is incredible; last night your friends got me in LA and tonight you found me in NY. You guys are everywhere!”

“Ha ha. Here you go, take a doughnut and some chocolate coins and a dreidel for your kids.”

It all began in 5734 when the Rebbe expressed the need to bring the Mitzva of Ner Chanuka to as many Yidden as possible. It didn't take long until there were giant Menorahs overlooking the great cities of the world and iconic landmarks, such as the White House in Washington and the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Parades were arranged; menorahs were distributed in the street, in the subway, and in malls. Spontaneous visits to homes, offices, and shops followed, and in Israel, soldiers on duty were brought the Chanuka cheer by groups of Bochrin armed with chanukiyot and sufganiyot (Menorahs

and doughnuts). Each year, the Rebbe stressed the importance of bringing this special Mitzvah to all Yidden, and soon hospitals, cruise ships, and even prisons were teeming with the Mitzvos and happiness of Chanukah.

It is no wonder then that Chanukah Mitzvot is a favorite amongst Bochorim. People are generally receptive and excited when given the opportunity to light the Menorah and celebrate Chanukah. For many it brings back warm childhood memories of their parents or grandparents, and for this they are appreciative. Every Bochor has their story of how they happened to find a Yid in a store, or gave someone a Menorah who forgot it was Chanukah and, “oh, how happy my kids will be,” or, “it’s been years since I last lit Menorah, thank you.”

This being said, when we go out on Mitzvot this year, we must remember what we are doing and who we represent.

As Chassidim involved in Hafotzas Hayahadus – the spreading of Yiddishkeit – we must always remember, that we are not just trying to exhibit Ahavas Yisroel by sharing our heritage with others who are unfamiliar with it, or who may have otherwise not had the opportunity to fulfill the Mitzvos, but in addition to that, in doing so we are going on our Rebbe’s shlichus.

Going on the Rebbe’s Mitzvot means he is with you and is giving you the Koichois you need to do this holy work of literally saving lives. Keeping these points in mind should make a big difference in the attitude we have when going on Mitzvot, not viewing it as a burden but rather as an enormous Zchus.



Rabbi Dovid Raskin created the now famous tin Menorah used for Mitzvot.

This mindset also helps us from becoming discouraged. It could be that we stood on a street corner for three hours and the most we think we have accomplished was that the guy took the Menorah because he felt bad. The Rebbe said on many occasions that we can never know what will become of the few words said and the impression made on the people who merely saw us doing Mitzvot. We have to do our part and ask. Our simple request plants seeds and stirs their Neshoma. The Friediker Rebbe once told someone, “You ask a person to put on Tefillin, he will thank you. If not today then tomorrow, if not tomorrow then next year, and if not in this world then in the next world.”

The message is clear: Don’t go out on

Mitzvot feeling like a second-class citizen; be confident and proud about what you are going to do, and get into the right frame of mind and mood.

Let us take advice from Shlomo Hamelech. The Possuk in Mishlei states: “Kamayim Haponim El Ponim, Kein Leiv Ho’odom El Ho’odom” – as water reflects a face, so a heart reflects a heart. The best way to meet someone is through smiling and being polite; people naturally mirror the behavior shown toward them, and so, a courteous introduction is the path to conversation, and the chance to share your thoughts about Chanuka.

Remember, in most situations, you only have one short moment to catch their attention, so make it count. Prepare something to say in advance; a vort; a short Chanukah story; a joke. Take a few minutes to think through how you are going to say it in simple English; people don’t know the meaning of “yivonim” and “mishpotim, edus, chukim.”

When visiting people’s homes, it is important to ensure the entire family is involved in the Chanuka “party.” This can easily be accomplished by giving attention to the children. Naturally, when a parent sees their child having a good time they will go along with this as well. Try to find common ground: ask which songs they are familiar with and invite them to share their Chanukah (or Jewish) experiences. And of course, don’t overstay your welcome; make sure that your visit is pleasant and not dragged out.

The *Ikur* is: Go out confidently and with Simcha, knowing that you are doing the Rebbe’s Mitzvot and he is with you every step of the way!



PRACTICAL HALACHA

With Rabbi B. Hertz,
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Knowing the Halachos of Menorah lighting is an absolute necessity. While on Mivtzoyim many questions and interesting scenarios present themselves and we need to know how to deal with them correctly.

We have put together a list of some of the more frequent questions that come up on Chanukah Mivtzoyim. This by NO means substitutes learning the Halochos.

1. What is the earliest and latest time you can light the menorah with people?

From Plag Hamincha until half an hour before Alos Hashachar (dawn), if people are around.

2. Can one make a bracha at a public menorah lighting, and if yes, who should make it? Can a woman make the brocha? And, should the person who makes a bracha at a public lighting make one at home as well?

If the menorah is lit with oil or candles – not electric – then yes, one may say a bracha but should try arrange for ten people to be

present – including women and children. A man should say the bracha, and that person should light in their home again and say a bracha, including Shehechenu (on the first night or their first time).

3. Does a store go into the category of a ‘public menorah lighting’?

Yes. One should light by a window or a place where Jews can see it, because the reason of lighting in such a place is Perumei Nissa. He should then light again at home with a bracha.

4. Can one light in a non-kosher store? How about a ‘pareve’ store with no hechsher (e.g. coffee shop, ice cream store)?

A non-kosher store should be avoided. In a neutral area, it is always good to encourage Jews to light Menorah and do Perumei Nissa. One should not display a Chabad sign where it could be misread as endorsing questionable standards.

5. Are women obligated in Menorah? Can they make the bracha if a man is also

present?

Women are obligated in Menorah. It's brought down in Shulchan Aruch that a woman should hear from a man, but if there is no man there, and she lives alone, then she should light and make her own bracha.

6. It is our minhag to light by a door post. If one asks whether they should light at the window or doorpost what is the answer?

You should encourage people to light by a doorpost [based on an answer of the Rebbe]. If they live on a high floor [in an apartment block] and the window is higher than 20 amos (30 feet), then they have to light by a doorpost. If someone lives alone and no one is around, then they should light by the door of the apartment.

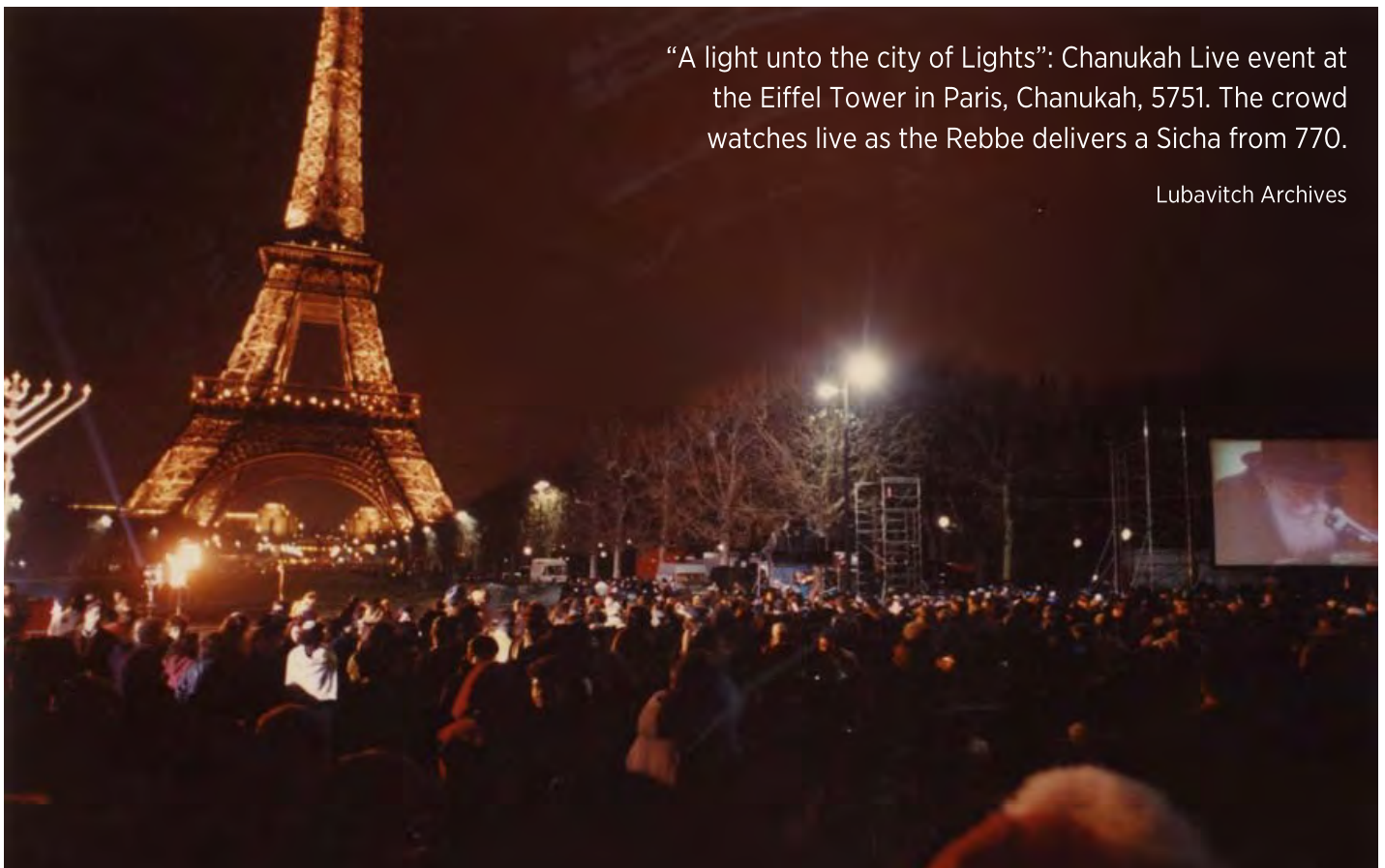
7. Can one fulfill one's obligation by lighting on a Mitzva tank?

If it is a place where you do not sleep, then it has the same halacha as a store [and follow the Halochos of a public lighting] and one should light but not for the mitzvah.

8. If you know the candles will not burn for the shiur, should a bracha be made?

As long as there is enough oil/wax to burn for the Shiur, you could light it, even though you are in a place where it will be removed before burning the correct Shiur.

For further reading on some of these contemporary questions, see Shulchan Aruch Hilchas Chanukah, Nitei Gavriel, and Piskei Teshuvos.



“A light unto the city of Lights”: Chanukah Live event at the Eiffel Tower in Paris, Chanukah, 5751. The crowd watches live as the Rebbe delivers a Sichah from 770.

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