



Illumination

MIVTZA CHANUKAH - CHANUKAH 5734



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Yom Kippur, 5734. The Arab countries surrounding Eretz Yisrael attacked from all directions, with the goal of destroying Eretz Yisroel. Soldiers were drafted directly from shul to the frontlines of the war, fighting for their country's very survival.

Through tremendous miracles Eretz Yisrael survived, but at a heavy cost. More than two-thousand soldiers were killed, and thousands more wounded.

During the months before, during and following the war, the Rebbe constantly spoke about the situation in Eretz Yisroel. On Yud Tes Kislev, 5734,

the Rebbe launched the international mitvza Chanukah campaign, later connecting it with the war and putting an emphasis on visiting the Israeli soldiers, and the widows and orphans from the war.

At the farbrengen of Shabbos Vayeshev, 20 Kislev¹, the Rebbe went into detail, giving clear guidelines as to what the mitvza would include:



His factory began churning out menorahs 24 hours a day, completely stopping any work he had been doing for the army.

“On Chanukah one has to ensure that Chanukah candles will be lit in every place where Jewish people live, both in public areas for *pirsumei nissa*, and in private homes, at least one menorah per house. If you meet anyone who doesn’t have a menorah, you should give one to them, and it would also be fitting that every child light their own menorah.”

The Rebbe said that the Israeli soldiers “serve as shlichim of Klal Yisrael and have the zechus to shield Yidden with their body and soul”, and as such, it is our duty to ensure that there be a Chanukah Menorah on every base and that each day it be lit by someone else. Additionally, the Rebbe said that special emphasis should be placed on visiting the homes of those who were widowed, orphaned or injured during the war so that they too can fulfil the mitzvah and benefit from the light of chanukah. The Rebbe also spoke about



MR. TIBOR KUPFERSTEIN (R) MANUFACTURED THE TIN MENORAH USED FOR DISTRIBUTION ON MIVTZOIM TILL TODAY. HE IS JOINED BY RABBI DOVID RASKIN AT HIS FACTORY.

the importance of giving Chanukah gelt and that each army base should have a *tzedaka pushka* so that the soldiers would be able to give some of the Chanukah gelt to tzedaka.

If a person does not have a menorah, a menorah should either be sold to them or given to them for free, depending on the situation. The Rebbe said that the cost of the menorahs would be covered by the magbis (*tzedaka* appeal), which was given in connection to Yud Tes Kislev.²

The Rebbe ended off the Farbrengen suggesting that a meeting be held right after Havdala to make the necessary plans for Chanukah.³

The mitvza was launched on Yud Tes Kislev, a mere six days (!) before Chanukah, so there was no time to spare. Working under the auspices of Tzach (Lubavitch Youth Organization), a group of bochurim in 770, led by Rabbi Dovid Raskin and Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht, immediately threw themselves into arranging the mitvzoim.

The first step, of course, was to obtain menorahs for distribution. But where could they get so many menorahs in such a short time? They tried getting from various stores and distributors, but no-one had the sheer volume they needed, and it was impossible for them to manufacture so many on such short notice. To add to their woes, there was a shortage of metal at the time, so factories could hardly manufacture menorahs even if they wanted to.

Eventually, the chassidim approached an individual by the name of Tibor Kupferstein⁴, who had a factory that produced supplies for the US military. Mr. Kupferstein initially took upon himself

KOIACH FOR THE MIVTZA

At the end of the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Vayeishev, the Rebbe called the name of Rabbi Avrohom Yitzchak Glick, a known askan from London who would often do various *peulos* around Europe. Some people at the farbrengen were a bit puzzled, as he was not in America at the time and they didn’t understand why the Rebbe would mention him if he was not there. After Shabbos, when one of the chassidim from London was speaking to the *mazkirus*, he was told that the reason the Rebbe had mentioned him by name, even though he was not present, was in order to infuse spiritual “*koiach*” for mitvza Chanukah in Europe!



RABBI AVROHOM YITZCHAK GLICK DOES “MIVTZOIM” IN THE STREETS OF LONDON. RABBI MENDEL FUTERFAS CAN BE SEEN AT THE DOORWAY OF THE MIVTVAH TANK.

PINNY LEW



THE FIRST EVER CAR-MENORAH, CHANUKAH 5734.



THE CAR-MENORAH STATIONED ON FIFTH AVENUE IN NEW YORK CITY.

to quickly manufacture ten thousand menorahs that would be light and easy to distribute.

His factory began churning out menorahs 24 hours a day, completely stopping any work he had been doing for the army. [Throughout the days of Chanukah, there was a constant demand for more menorahs, and they kept on replenishing their supply from Mr. Kupferstein's factory.]



FOLLOWING THE REBBE'S CALL, BOCHURIM HIT THE BUSY NEW YORK CITY STREETS, BRINGING THE LIGHT OF CHANUKAH TO FELLOW JEWS.

When the administration of Tzach reported this to the Rebbe, the Rebbe responded in pleasant surprise, "Ten thousand?!!" On the *duch*, the Rebbe wrote (in reference to Mr. Kupferstein):

"ויאיר מזלו, ודבני ביתו של כמו שע"י יאירו ריבוי בתי ישראל".

"May his mazal shine, and the mazal of his family, just like through him many many Jewish homes will be lit up".

[Mr. Kupferstein's son had been murdered in a hold-up only a few weeks earlier, and this *brocha* from the Rebbe - which was also a *nichum* of sorts - completely lifted his spirits.]

Responding to the general report on the preparations, the Rebbe wrote:

תודה רבה על הבשורות טובות, ואשרי חלקו וחלק כל אחד ואחד מהמתעסקים, וכל כיוצא בזה, ובמיוחד בימי חנוכה, המאירים בבית, ובחוץ, והמאיר הוא מלמעלה כביכול מה' כמ"ש והו"י יג' וגו', כמו שנת' בתורה אור, ובשערי אורה, ובאור התורה.

"Thank you very much for the good news, and fortunate is his lot and the lot of each and every one of those involved in this and in similar [initiatives]. And especially during Chanukah, which illuminates the home and the outside.

And the One Who illuminates is from on high, from Hashem *kevayochol*, as it says "And Hashem will illuminate [my darkness]" etc., as is explained in Torah Or ["Torah of light", by the Alter Rebbe], and explained in Shaarei Orah ["Gates of light", by the Mittler Rebbe], and in Or Hatorah ["Light of the Torah" by the Tzemach Tzedek]."

By the end of Chanukah, the chassidim had successfully distributed some 60,000 (sixty thousand!) menorahs that Mr. Kupferstein's factory had managed to make!



LUBAVITCHER CHASSIDIM BRING THE MESSAGE OF LIGHT TO THE SOLDIERS IN THE IDF, CHANUKAH 5748

Busloads of bochorim and baalei-batim poured out of 770 and swept across New York to spread the light of Chanukah.

A few days before Chanukah, the Rebbe saw Rabbi Shlomo Cunin on the way out of 770 and asked him if he would be taking menorahs with him to California. Rabbi Cunin answered that he would be taking five hundred.

The Rebbe asked, “Will that be enough for the entire California?!”

Rabbi Cunin answered that for the time being he would be taking five hundred, and later he would ship in more menorahs. He added that until now they had only distributed candles, instructing people to melt them onto a plate and light them that way. Smiling, the Rebbe said that the parents would be upset that the plates are getting dirty. The Rebbe added that by sending the menorahs in the mail they would spread the word of Chanukah also to the mailmen.

The Rebbe then blessed him with, “*hatzlacha bechol hainyanim*”.

When Chanukah came around, Lubavitch went into high gear. Busloads of bochorim and *baalei-*

batim poured out of 770 and swept across New York to spread the light of Chanukah. They visited people in their homes and lit candles with them, went to businesses to give out menorahs, and distributed menorahs in the streets.

Menorahs were distributed right and left. Thousands upon thousands of menorahs were given out in New York alone. One must bear in mind that this all occurred before the advent of Friday mivtzoim, so knocking on private doors and doing mivtzoim on the street for hours was a fresh and daring concept.

On one of the first nights of Chanukah, someone came up with the novel idea of putting a menorah on top of a car, and so the first car menorah in history was built. After it was built, the bochorim parked it in front of 770.



A NOTE DISTRIBUTED TO PARTICIPANTS IN MIVTZA CHANUKAH, ATTESTING TO THEIR PARTICIPATION, 5734.



The Rebbe saw the car menorah, and said that they should light the menorah, so, they got a hold of some flares, and lit the menorah on top of the car.

The car menorah was later stationed on Fifth avenue in Manhattan, and on one of the nights of Chanukah the mayor of New York City, Mr. John Lindsay, came by. He shook hands with each bochur, while the newspaper cameras flashed. It was a huge *kiddush Hashem*.

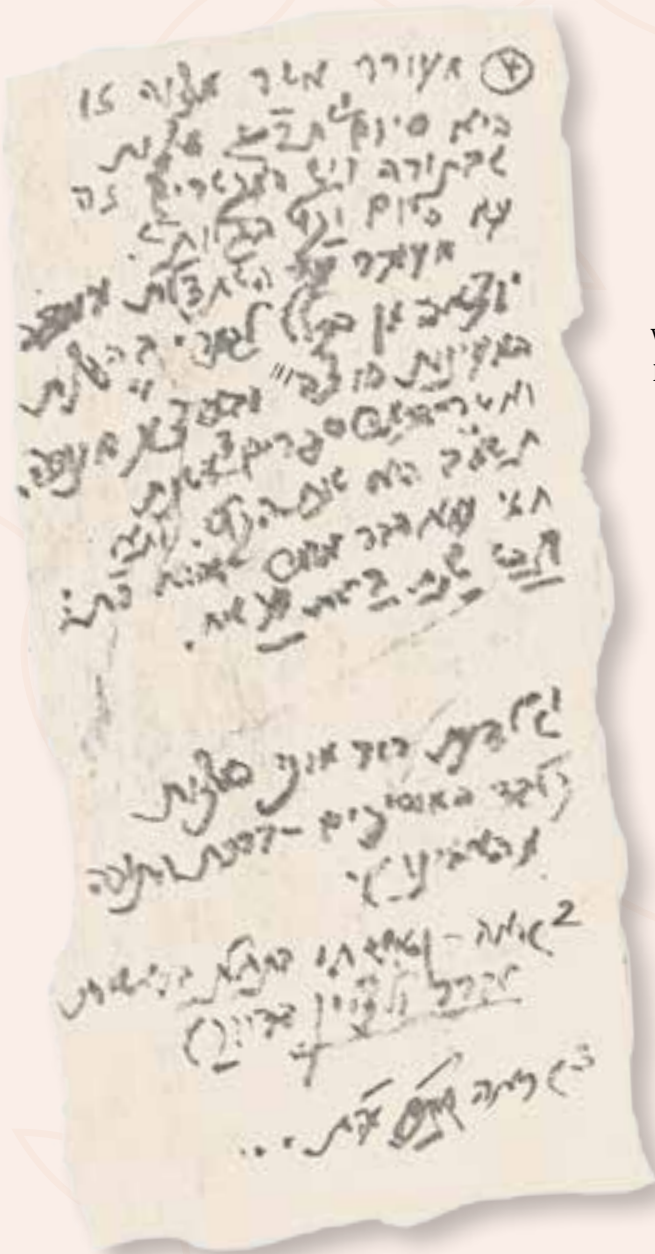
On the sixth night of Chanukah an astonishing message came from

the Rebbe. The next day, the Rebbe would be distributing Chanukah gelt, but strictly to those who went on *mivtzoim*. (In 5721, the Rebbe had stopped giving Chanukah gelt to the *bochurim*, and the Rebbe had distributed Chanukah gelt only once since then. Additionally, it was a rarity in those years to receive a dollar or coin from the Rebbe, only adding to the significance of the event.)

The Rebbe also gave Chanukah gelt for the women who went on *mivtzoim*, and sent Chanukah gelt to Eretz

Yisroel for those who had participated in *mivtzoim* there.

Those who wanted Chanukah gelt were required to submit a note, signed by one of those in charge of the *mivtzoim*; stating that they had indeed participated in the *mivtzoim* (for at least two of the days of Chanukah). As each person stood in line for Chanukah gelt, they would first submit the note to the *mazkir* who was standing next to the Rebbe, and then they received Chanukah gelt from the Rebbe. Even the *mazkirim* had to



THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN ADDITION TO THE SHALSHELES HAYACHAS IN HAYOM YOM, MENTIONING THE REBBE'S CALL FOR MITVZA CHANUKAH.

An astonishing message came from the Rebbe. The next day, the Rebbe would be distributing Chanukah gelt, but strictly to those who went on mitvzoim.

why he hadn't been present during the distribution of Chanukah gelt, and he answered that he had been out of town for business. The Rebbe told him that he is certain, that the single dollar of Chanukah gelt would have been worth more than the entire business trip!]

In a special farbrengen that took place on the last night of Chanukah⁵, the Rebbe said:

We spoke and asked that men, women and children should make the biggest *shturem* to ignite their own selves, and through that illuminate the world...

Those who were involved in these activities (which even on the spot had tremendous success, and it's impossible to estimate the effects of these activities throughout the year, and throughout the years to come), should say *L'chaim* with a *freilichen niggun*, being that we are continuing the *shturem* of Chanukah in this farbrengen. And this should be a good beginning for ג'י חשכי - the darkness [of galus] will be illuminated...

submit their own notes in order to get Chanukah gelt.

When Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht, (who was very involved in arranging the mitvzoim), came by to receive his dollar the Rebbe said, "Really you deserve more than one dollar, but when a mother gives to her children, she gives all of them the same amount."

[Later on while in yechidus, the Rebbe asked Mr. Yaakov Reider

The Rebbe continued that since women were also involved, they should also partake from the wine and *mezonos* of the farbrengen.

The *shturem* of mitvza Chanukah continued in even greater measures in the following years, garnering massive media coverage, and spreading the message of Chanukah to even wider circles. Every year the Rebbe would *shturem* in the weeks before Chanukah that every person should get involved in the mitvzoim.

The Rebbe's unique affection for this mitvza is evident in an addition the Rebbe made to the "שלשת היחס" printed in the front of Hayom Yom (which includes a list of the various *peulos* and mitvzoim that the Rabbeim initiated over the years). Among the *peulos* of 5742, the Rebbe wrote: "מעורר על דבר השתדלות יוצאה מן הכלל לגמרי ב"הפצת המעיינות חוצה" ובמבצע "חנוכה". [The Rebbe] encourages extraordinary effort in "*hafotzas hamayonos chutzah*" and in mitvza Chanukah." **T**

1. Sichos Kodesh 5734, Vol 1, pages 195-197
2. Another point mentioned by the Rebbe at these farbrengens in connection with mitvza Chanukah was the special focus on arranging rallies for children in honor of Chanukah.
3. In a yoman of a bochur at the time, he remembers the Rebbe saying that the bochorim should close their gemoros, and go do mitvza Chanukah!
4. A year later, Mr. Kupferstein's factory manufactured the candlesticks for mitvza neshek, producing some two million of them at no added cost. For an extended review of mitvza neshek, see *A Chassidisher Derher Magazine* Tishrei 5775.
5. Sichos Kodesh 5734, vol. 1 p. 236
6. See "The Chossid's Calendar," *Derher Magazine* - Cheshvan, 5776