

נשי
ובנות
חב"ד

KISLEV

N'SHEI
U'BNOS
CHABAD

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The festive month of Kislev, with its many special and auspicious days, brings with it valuable lessons. At the climax of the month we celebrate the luminous Yom Tov of Chanukah, which teaches us beautiful lessons to apply in our *avodas Hashem* throughout the year.

The Rebbe often quoted the Gemara's ruling that,¹ "נשים חייבות בנר חנוכה שאף הן היו באותו הנס"—Women are obligated in lighting the Chanukah light, as they too were included in that miracle, and the accompanying Rashi: "ויעל יד אשה נעשה הנס"—the miracle was brought about *through* a woman. In the times of the Chanukah miracles, Jewish women and girls acted with self-sacrifice and dedication. They stand as a shining example for women today, the Rebbe explained.

THREE PRIMARY LESSONS

In a letter to N'shei U'bnos Chabad, the Rebbe addressed three primary lessons of Chanukah and their application with regard to Jewish women and girls.²

1) The Chanukah *licht*, which symbolize "*Ner mitzvah v'Torah ohr*"—the light of Torah and mitzvos, must be kindled after the sun sets and the sky is dark. This teaches us that we must not be affected by spiritual darkness, for even a tiny bit of the light of Torah and mitzvos dispels much darkness; how much more so, *a lot* of light.

2) The Chanukah *licht* must be kindled (as described in the Gemara, though not always practiced today) outside one's home so that the light shines outdoors. This teaches us that we must not be satisfied by the spiritual comfort we may enjoy within our homes, but must also ensure that the outside street and all of our surroundings are illuminated as well.



MIVTZA NESHEK

The luminous lessons of Chanukah, the Rebbe highlighted, are very much connected to the Shabbos Candle campaign, “Mivtza Neshek,” which shares the theme of increasing light. For this reason, the Rebbe said that Chanukah is an appropriate time to add in activities related to “Mivtza Neshek.”⁵

3) The Chanukah *licht* are kindled in increasing number each night of Chanukah. This teaches us that our work in strengthening and disseminating Yiddishkeit must always grow, and that these efforts contain in themselves the assurance of ever-growing success.

These powerful lessons are applicable to Jewish women of today: As the mainstay of the home, the Jewish woman is the foundation of her household. It is largely up to her to ensure the continuity of the very foundations of Yiddishkeit.

“May the Chanukah *lichtelech* which represent Torah and mitzvos,” the Rebbe wrote, “continuously—every day and every moment—shine in you personally and in the members of your family, and as living and shining examples to others.

“May the light of the Torah and mitzvos, infused with *chassidische* warmth and vitality, permeate every niche of your home, and also spill out to the street.”

NEVER DISCOURAGED

In another letter addressed to N’shei U’bnos Chabad, the Rebbe underlines an additional lesson of value:³

“It is emphasized in the *tefilla* of “*Val Hanissim*” that a Yid is never at all discouraged by the fact that the Yidden may be “weaker” (“חלשים”) or “smaller” (“מעטים”) in numbers, facing against the “mighty” (“גבורים”) and the “many” (“רבים”).

“On the contrary, since Yidden are ‘pure, righteous, and are those who occupy themselves with Your Torah,’ they overcome all external and internal obstacles which might make

them forget Hashem’s Torah and mitzvos, until they attain a complete victory and the kindling of the [Chanukah] *licht*.”

CHANUKAH – CHINUCH

The name “Chanukah” is rooted in the word “*chinuch*,” which literally means “inauguration” (celebrating the re-dedication and inauguration of the Beis Hamikdash by the Chashmonaim) and “education.” Chanukah is thus a time to focus on Jewish education.

This is especially relevant to Jewish women: In all things connected to children’s education and upbringing, women take a significant role, especially in the education of very young children. Similarly, when it comes to *chinuch* in the broader sense of the term—spreading Yiddishkeit and Chasidus, even to adults—it is evident that a woman can be highly successful, and in certain areas, even more than a man, by influencing others in matters of Yiddishkeit (obviously, in a *tznius’dike* way).⁴ ❶

1. Shabbos 23a.
2. Igros Kodesh vol. 23, p. 66ff.
3. Ibid vol. 31, p. 44ff.
4. Likkutei Sichos vol. 25, p. 378ff.
5. See Igros Kodesh vol. 31, *ibid*.