

# There's No Place Like Home

## *Defining the Obligation of Lighting Chanukah Candles*

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The mitzvah of lighting Chanukah candles entails an individual obligation incumbent on every Jewish man and woman. However, a number of prominent Poskim<sup>1</sup> assert that the mitzvah is also dependent upon the existence of a *bayis*, a home in which the Chanukah candles must be lit.<sup>2</sup> In the following article, we will present aspects of this thesis and some of the practical halachic applications.

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<sup>1</sup> Many of the points in this article can be found in essays written by Rabbi Herschel Schachter (*Bi'ikvei Ha'tzon*, "Makom hadlakas nerot Chanukah," pp. 117-125) and Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (*Minchas Shlomo* 2:51(1); *Kovetz Mevakshei Torah*, 4:18, Kislev 5756; *Halichos Shlomo*, vol. 2, Ch. 13, #1-3; *Shalmei Mo'ed*, pp. 196-201).

Others that accept the thesis that a *bayis* is required for *nerot Chanukah* include: Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank (*Mikra'ei Kodesh: Chanukah*, #18); Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (*Igros Moshe* Y.D. 3:14:14:5); Rabbi Simchah Zissel Broide (*Moriah* 7:1 [Marcheshvan 5737], "Geder chiyuv ner Chanukah", pp. 23-29); Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky, *Emes LeYaakov al Shulchan Aruch*, Siman 677, fn. 590. See also Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Karp (*Hilchos Chag BeChag: Chanukah*, pp. 27-29); Rabbi Shmuel Rozovsky, *Zichron Shmuel* (1985), Siman 19, sec. 4.

The basic thesis that the mitzvah of *nerot Chanukah* is dependent upon the home is found clearly in an earlier source, the commentary of the *Pnei Yehoshua* on Shabbos (21b, s.v. *tanu rabbanan*).

There are those who argue with this premise, asserting that the obligation of *nerot Chanukah* is not dependent on a *bayis*, and therefore one may light *nerot Chanukah* in an open area when necessary. See *Aruch HaShulchan* (677:5), *Tzitz Eliezer* (15:29); see also the brief exchange with Rabbi Auerbach in *Tzitz Eliezer* vol. 9, p. 79, s.v.

*u'bi'nogai'ah*); *Az Nidberu* (7:67, 11:34:2). For further discussion of views in the poskim, see e.g. Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, *Chazon Ovadiah: Chanukah*, pp. 156-158; Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Shemaya, *Birkas Mo'adecha: Chanukah U'Purim*, pp. 61-72. See also Rabbi Michel Zalman Shurkin, *Harerei Kedem* (vol. 2, #161); Rabbi Zvi Ryzman, *Ratz Ka'Tzvi: Chanukah U'Purim*, #9.

<sup>2</sup> Rabbi Auerbach noted that even if the mitzvah of *nerot Chanukah* requires a *bayis*, it is nonetheless clearly different than the mitzvah of *mezuzah*. If an individual moves into a home that already has *mezuzos*, there is no need to place one's own *mezuzah*. Regarding *nerot Chanukah*, however, each person is obligated to ensure the fulfillment of the mitzvah. See *Mevakshei Torah* (*ibid.*), p. 13, s.v. *u'bekesav yad*.

## A Home is Essential for the Mitzvah

The primary sources in the Talmud imply that the mitzvah of lighting Chanukah lights can only be fulfilled in one's home. The Gemara (*Shabbat* 21b) defines the essential mitzvah of *hadlakas neros Chanukah* (lighting the Chanukah lights) as “*ner ish u'baiso*” - “a candle of the individual and his home.” The significance of the home is also highlighted by the Gemara's statement that the *neros Chanukah* should ideally be lit *al pesach baiso me'be'chutz* - outside of one's doorway, indicating that the candles' location must be associated with the person's home. Similarly, the Rambam underscores the need to light in a home in two places in *Hilchos Chanukah*:

*Its [essential] Mitzvah requires that every house should light one candle. (4:1)*

*And we light the candles in the evening at the entrances of the houses. (3:3)*

כמה נרות הוא מדליק בחנוכה, מצותה  
שיהיה כל בית ובית מדליק נר אחד (א:ד)  
ומדליקין בהן הנרות בערב על פתחי  
הבתים (ג:ג)

## Lighting in One's Place of Residence

One aspect of this requirement relates to the need to light in one's place of residence, where one lives. This condition finds expression in a number of *halachos*:<sup>3</sup>

### Fulfillment of the Mitzvah through Lighting in the *Bais Haknesses*

The Rama (671:7) rules that the individual cannot fulfill his obligation through the lighting of the *neros Chanukah* in the *bais haknesses* (synagogue). Apparently, this is reflective of the premise that a person can only fulfill the personal obligation of *hadlakas neros Chanukah* when lighting in one's residence.

### A Traveler Fulfilling the Mitzvah through Lighting in the Home

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 23a) cites Rabbi Zeira as saying that after he married, he fulfilled the mitzvah of *neros Chanukah* even when he was away from home, בגו ביתאי, “for they are lighting for me in my home”.<sup>4</sup> This halachah, enabling a travelling husband to fulfill the basic mitzvah of *hadlakas neros Chanukah* through his wife's lighting in their home (and vice-versa), appears to be an anomaly: how can a person fulfill a personal obligation if he/she is not even present at the time of the fulfillment of the mitzvah? This seems to prove that the essential mitzvah is *ner ish u'baiso*, ensuring that the *neros Chanukah* will be burning in the home.

### *Birchas Ha'roeh*-The Observer's Blessing

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 23a) rules that a person who does not fulfill the mitzvah of *hadlakas neros Chanukah* should say the *brachah* of *She'asa Nissim* (referred to as *birchas ha'roeh*) upon seeing another person's Chanukah candles. Tosafos (*Sukkah* 46a, s.v. *ha'roeh*) is puzzled by this *brachah* - where else do we find that Chazal legislated a “back-up *brachah*” for a person who cannot fulfill a mitzvah? Does someone who cannot fulfill the mitzvah of *sukkah* or *lulav* have

<sup>3</sup> Additionally, the *Bais Yosef* (Siman 671, s.v. *u'ma she'kasav she'mainichin*) explains the custom to light *neros Chanukah* in the *bais haknesses*: בר - נראה שתיקנו כן מפני האורחים שאין להם בית להדליק בו - “it appears that it was instituted because of guests that do not have a house to light in.”

<sup>4</sup> See *Shulhan Aruch* 676:3, 677:1 with *Mishnah Berurah* 2.

the option of making an alternative *brachah* upon observing someone else fulfilling the mitzvah? What is unique about the mitzvah of *neros Chanukah*?

Tosafos explains that this special *brachah* was introduced specifically for *neros Chanukah*: משום "because there are some people that do not have houses and [therefore] are not able to fulfill the mitzvah."<sup>5</sup> The straightforward reading of this answer indicates that an individual can only light in a residence, which precludes a significant number of people from fulfillment of the mitzvah. Both homeless individuals and those who would be travelling during Chanukah would often be lacking the necessary *bayis* required for the fulfillment of *neros Chanukah*, and therefore *birchas ha'roeh* was instituted to enable them to participate in the *pirsumei nisa*, the publicizing of the miracle of the Chanukah candles.<sup>6</sup>

### **Achsinai: How a Guest Fulfills the Mitzvah**

The halachah (*Shabbos* 23a, *Shulchan Aruch* 677:1) states that an *achsinai*, a guest, fulfills the mitzvah of *hadlakas neros Chanukah* by taking ownership in a portion of the Chanukah candles. This halachah is puzzling: Why institute a different method of fulfilling the mitzvah for a guest? And why is this method effective?

The particular method whereby an *achsinai* fulfills the mitzvah of *neros Chanukah* can be understood in light of the principle that a person must light in his place of residence. This stipulation presents a problem for a guest who lives primarily in another home and is only staying by the host for a short time. In order for a guest to attain the status of a resident vis-a-vis *neros Chanukah*, he must become a partner in the lighting, thereby demonstrating that he is a member of the household and a resident of this home.<sup>7</sup>

### **Eating a meal at the home of a relative or friend, and then returning home**

The *Turei Zahav* (672:2) critiques the practice of dinner guests who light candles in their host's home rather than lighting in their own residence.<sup>8</sup> The *Mishnah Berurah* (677:12; *Bei'ur Halachah* s.v. *Ba'makom*) also rules that if a person eats a meal at a friend's or relative's house and then returns home, he must light the Chanukah candles in his residence rather than at the

<sup>5</sup> See similarly *Sefer Kolbo* (Siman 44), *Sefer Avudraham* (Hilchos Chanukah, s.v. *hamadlik ner*).

<sup>6</sup> Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (*Igros Moshe*, *ibid.*) cites Rashi's interpretation of *birchas ha'roeh* as a proof that a *bayis* is required for the lighting of *neros Chanukah*. In explaining the halachah that someone who cannot light Chanukah candles must say *birchas ha'roeh*, Rashi presents the example of someone on a boat. Why can't the individual light on the boat? Apparently, says Rabbi Feinstein, a boat does not qualify as a *bayis*, and therefore the mitzvah of *neros Chanukah* cannot be fulfilled on it. [The interpretation of this Rashi is discussed in many other sources as well.]

<sup>7</sup> With this conceptual understanding of the halachah of *achsinai*, Rabbi Soloveitchik called into question the prevalent custom that a guest lights his own candles. One could argue that the halachah specifically required that the guest contribute towards the candles of the *ba'al ha'bayis*, the host, thereby identifying himself as a member of the household; lighting one's own candles arguably does not accomplish this purpose (*Bi'ikvei Ha'tzon*, p. 120); see also *Halichos Shlomo* vol. 2, Ch. 13, *Devar Halachah* par. 12).

<sup>8</sup> "...בזה שיאכל כאן שעה או שתים וישוב למקומו אין שום סברא לו' שידליק שם ולא בביתו דזה הוה כאלו עומד בשעת הדלק' על " "In such a case that one will eat here for an hour or two and then return [home], there is no logic to claim that one should light [in the host's home] rather than his house, for it is as if he is standing in the street of the city at the time of lighting, for lighting is not relevant for him there..."

place where he is eating. This halachah reflects the rule that *neros Chanukah* must be lit in one's place of primary residence, and simply eating a meal at someone else's home does not qualify as setting up residence there.<sup>9</sup>

## What Structure is Defined as a “*Bayis*”? The view of Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach

Even assuming that an individual may only light in his *bayis* or “residence”, another question remains: what are the criteria that qualify a structure as a *bayis* for the purpose of lighting *neros Chanukah*? Can an airplane or train passenger light by his seat, and consider it to be his *bayis*? What of an Israeli soldier who effectively lives in a tank or a foxhole?

Rabbi Auerbach<sup>10</sup> notes that the Gemara (*Sukkah* 3a) stipulates that the obligations of *mezuzah* and *ma'akeh* (as well as many other mitzvos that relate to a house) only apply to a home that has the dimensions of four by four *amos*.<sup>11</sup> Since it seems logical that the *bayis* referenced in regard to *neros Chanukah* would have this same criterion, Rabbi Auerbach was troubled that the mitzvah of *neros Chanukah* is noticeably absent from the Gemara's list of halachos that necessitate a *bayis* that is four by four *amos*.

Therefore, Rabbi Auerbach concluded that the definition of a *bayis* vis-a-vis *neros Chanukah* does not necessitate the dimensions of four by four *amos*. This criterion, he suggested, only applies when the mitzvah in question applies throughout the year, and therefore, the corresponding *bayis* must have a permanent quality. Regarding the mitzvah of *neros Chanukah*, however, which only lasts for eight days of the year, the requisite *bayis* may be of an impermanent character. This is analogous to the halachah that a sukkah, defined as a *diras arai*, a temporary residence, need only have dimensions of seven by seven *tefachim*,<sup>12</sup> far less than the four by four *amos* required in other areas of halachah.

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<sup>9</sup> There is much discussion as to when a guest can be considered a resident in someone else's home, thereby allowing the guest to light *neros Chanukah* there. The *Bei'ur Halachah* writes that this status takes hold when the person lives there for all eight days of Chanukah (see the discussion in *Bi'ikvei Ha'tzon*, fn. 2; p. 123 s.v. *ve'ayain Mishnah Berurah*). While some poskim adopt this view, many assume that a person becomes a resident by eating and sleeping in another's home for one night (see e.g. *Igros Moshe* Y.D. vol. 3, Siman 14, par. 5, s.v. *Im Yesh Lo Bayis*; *Shalmei Mo'ed* p. 239, quoting Rabbi Auerbach). To illustrate, it is common practice that a family that stays with relatives on Shabbos Chanukah will light the *neros Chanukah* on Friday afternoon in the host's home (rather than in their permanent residence). It is presumed that staying for Shabbos is considered taking up residence in the host's home. There is much discussion regarding the appropriate place for lighting on Motzei Shabbos in the common circumstance that the visiting family will return to their residence that evening. Some poskim say that their “residency status” has essentially expired, as they anticipate leaving imminently and returning to their permanent residence. Others, however, assert that the status of temporary residency, once established, continues until they actually leave. There are other possible permutations and details; each person should consult with a rabbi to determine the correct course of action.

<sup>10</sup> *Minchas Shlomo* vol. 2, Siman 51 (1).

<sup>11</sup> There are various views regarding the length of an *amah*; it can range from approximately 18.9 inches (Rabbi Chaim Na'eh) to 23 inches (Chazon Ish). Thus, 4 *amos* is approximately between 6 feet, 3.6 inches, and 7 feet, 8 inches.

<sup>12</sup> Seven *tefachim* is between approximately 22 inches (R. Chaim Na'eh) and 26.5 inches (Chazon Ish).

Based on this reasoning, Rabbi Auerbach considered the possibility that the minimum dimensions of a *bayis* in regard to *neros Chanukah* corresponds to the requirements for a sukkah: an area of 7 by 7 *tefachim* (22 inches), and a height of 10 *tefachim* (31.5 inches), with a roof above. However, he later considered the possibility that the Halacha's requirement of a *bayis* regarding *neros Chanukah* only requires a *distinctive and identifiable personal domain that is designated as the person's place of residence*.<sup>13</sup> He found support for this in the view of Rabbi Shalom Mordechai Shvadron (*Teshuvot Maharsham* 4:146), a leading halachist of the 19th century, who was asked whether it was permissible for someone to light *neros Chanukah* while travelling on a train. He ruled that despite the impermanent nature of a moving train, the area designated for this passenger could be considered like a "house of residence" rented for eating and sleeping, and therefore the person could light at this "*bayis*".<sup>14</sup>

Rabbi Auerbach did not resolve this question conclusively, remaining uncertain whether the *bayis* needed for *neros Chanukah* needs to have the dimensions and structure associated with a *diras arai*, a temporary structure such as a sukkah, or whether it is sufficient to have a defined area which is designated as one's residence. Therefore, he ruled that someone travelling on a train or plane should light *neros Chanukah* on the tray at his designated seat, but without a *brachah*.<sup>15</sup> On the one hand, the individual has paid for use of this location for eating and sleeping purposes; on the other hand, it does not have the dimensions and structure associated with a *diras arai*.

This issue took on greater practical ramifications following the Yom Kippur War, when many Israeli soldiers remained on the battlefield during Chanukah. Rabbi Auerbach was asked about the propriety of lighting *neros Chanukah* in various situations in which the soldiers were not living in conventional living quarters. Using the guidelines mentioned above, he ruled that soldiers who essentially lived in their tanks could treat it as their *bayis* and light Chanukah candles with a *brachah* either inside or by its entrance. Similarly, he ruled that a soldier who ate and slept in a foxhole could light *neros Chanukah* with a *brachah*, on condition that it was ten *tefachim* deep and had a roof overhead. In both these cases, the area occupied by the soldiers satisfied the criteria of a *diras arai* (an area of seven by seven *tefachim*, a height of ten *tefachim*, and a roof), which in Rabbi Auerbach's view fulfilled the requirement of the *bayis* needed for

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<sup>13</sup> See *Minchas Shlomo* (ibid); *Halichos Shlomo* (vol. 2), Ch. 13, par. 2, and especially n. 12, quoting from a manuscript responsum of Rabbi Auerbach.

<sup>14</sup> He indicates, however, that one may not fulfill the mitzvah of *neros Chanukah* in an open area which is exposed to the wind and the elements. See also *Mikra'ei Kodesh* (ibid.).

<sup>15</sup> *Halichos Shlomo* (ibid., par. 3). While lighting a real candle would clearly be proscribed due to safety considerations, Rabbi Auerbach allowed a person to use a conventional flashlight with incandescent bulbs for the mitzvah of *neros Chanukah* - see *Halichos Shlomo*, Ch. 15, par. 3. Other Poskim do not accept the presumption that a flashlight with an incandescent bulb can qualify as a *ner Chanukah*; see e.g. Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, *Teshuvot Yabia Omer* O.C. vol. 3, Siman 35, *Chazon Ovadiah: Chanukah*, pp. 93-97. Rabbi Auerbach himself was reluctant to rely on use of a flashlight unless there was no other option; see the sources cited *ibid*.

It seems clear that this ruling (and that of the Maharsham regarding a train) is only applicable if a person is travelling through the night and the personal space is therefore designated for eating and sleeping. If, however, the trip is (e.g.) for a few hours at the beginning of the evening when most people are not sleeping, this would not be defined as a *bayis* even according to these Poskim. (See *Halichos Shlomo* vol. 2, Ch. 13 n. 17.)

*neros Chanukah*.<sup>16</sup> If, however, the soldiers were sleeping in an open area, they could not light *neros Chanukah* with a *brachah* there.<sup>17</sup>

## A Hashkafah Perspective

Why did Chazal link the *neros Chanukah* to the home? Why must they be identified with a *bayis*?

In answer, we may first pose a different question: Given that the miracle of Chanukah transpired in the environs of the Bais HaMikdash, would it not have been more appropriate to commemorate the miracle in the public arena? Why didn't Chazal see fit to reenact the miracle in a communal setting? Would not the *bais haknesses*, the *mikdash me'at* (the minor sanctuary) which is identified as perpetuating the *kedushah* of the Bais HaMikdash, serve as the most natural and ideal location for the lighting of the *neros Chanukah*?<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> These rulings were recorded in *Kuntres Hilchos Ner Chanukah La'Chayalim*, written by Rabbi Avraham Sherman and Rabbi Yaakov Katz, and quoted in *Halichos Shlomo* (vol. 2, pp. 259-260).

<sup>17</sup> Similar conclusions, based on the ruling of the Maharsham, are presented by Rabbi Yosef Cohen (in his footnotes to *Mikra'ei Kodosh*, *ibid.*), and by Rabbi Moshe Shternbuch, *Mo'adim U'zmanim*, vol. 8, p. 34.

Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein concurs that a *bayis* is required for *neros Chanukah*, but maintains different criteria for its definition. He asserts that when dealing with a temporary and unconventional place of residence, the *duration of the residency* rather than the structure determines whether it is categorized as a *bayis vis-a-vis neros Chanukah*. If the person has resided there for at least thirty days, it is considered a *bayis* and *neros Chanukah* should be lit there; if the person maintains residence for less than seven days, it is definitely not a *bayis* and Chanukah candles should not be lit there; if it is between seven and thirty days, it is considered a *safek* (doubt) whether it is considered a *bayis*. If the person maintains residence for the requisite period of time, it is considered a *bayis* even if the person is sleeping under the open sky; the structure per se is immaterial.

Based on these criteria, Rabbi Lichtenstein rejects the view that one can light *neros Chanukah* on a train or airplane, as these situations are transient and temporary. (See <http://www.vbm-torah.org/chanuka/05chanal.htm>)

Rabbi Asher Weiss (*Kovetz Darchei Hora'ah*, vol. 4, Kislev 5766, pp. 91-94) similarly emphasizes the transient nature of airplane travel in asserting that a plane does not qualify as a *bayis* for the purpose of *neros Chanukah*. He also records his sharp opposition to the consideration of lighting a candle on a plane given that it violates the rules of the airline and also constitutes a danger.

For further discussion regarding lighting by Israeli soldiers and the broader issue of the definition of the obligation of *neros Chanukah*, see e.g. Rabbi Moshe Harari, *Mikra'ei Kodosh: Hilchos Chanukah*, 9:21-23, 31; Rabbi Eliyahu Schlesinger, *Eileh Heim Mo'adai* (2002), pp. 23-27.

<sup>18</sup> In fact, some Rishonim explain that the custom cited in the *Shulchan Aruch* (671:7) to light in the Bais HaKnesses is intended as a *zecher li'Mikdash*, a commemoration of the lighting in the Bais HaMikdash. See *Bais Yosef* (Siman 671, quoting from the Kolbo); *Sefer HaManhig*, Hilchos Chanukah, s.v. *u'mitzvah li'hanicha*.

The relationship between the lighting in the *bais haknesses* and the lighting in the Bais HaMikdash is most evident from the ruling that the Chanukah candles should be placed by the southern wall of the *bais haknesses*, corresponding to their placement in the Bais HaMikdash. Similarly, in discussing whether the alignment of the menorah should be from east to west or north to south, many poskim assumed that the placement of the menorah in the Bais HaMikdash (which is disputed by Rashi and the Rambam) should determine its position in the *bais haknesses*. See *Terumas Hadeshen*, Siman 104; *Shulchan Aruch* 671:7 with commentaries. Other applications of the view that the lighting in the *bais haknesses* is a commemoration of the lighting in the Bais HaMikdash can be found in *Teshuvos Binyan Shlomo* (#53), *Teshuvos Shevet Halevi* (8:156).

There is also much discussion regarding the correlation between the *original mitzvah of hadlakas neros Chanukah* and the lighting of the Menorah in the Bais Hamikdash. For example, the Ran (*Shabbos*, 9a in Rif, s.v. *shemah minah*) asserts that the prohibition to use light from the *neros Chanukah* is based upon the proscription against using the light of the Menorah in the Bais HaMikdash. Other associations with the lighting in the Bais HaMikdash

In light of this question, we may suggest that the decision to formulate this mitzvah as *ner ish u'baiso*, each person and his home, was a bold one, signifying an incisive and far-reaching perspective on the confrontation with Greek culture and its implications for the Jewish future. As it was, the era of the second Bais HaMikdash was fraught with religious inconsistency and mediocrity, sometimes especially evident in the conduct of the very individuals who were charged with upholding the sanctity of the Bais HaMikdash. Especially in that context, the cultural and spiritual confrontation with the Greek Empire could not be viewed as a passing aberration, but rather as foretelling an inevitable feature of Jewish existence, a religious conflict that would have broad and enduring ramifications even after the victory of the Chashmonaim and the miracle of lighting the Menorah in the Bais HaMikdash. The broader spiritual battle would continue to rage unabated throughout the centuries, with varying societies religiously hostile to our beliefs and way of life, and disparate Jewish communities would struggle to protect, preserve, and nurture the flame of Jewish faith and observance in the face of the threatening winds of foreign values and cultures. The lighting of the Menorah would represent uncompromising commitment to Hashem and His Torah, even when faced with enmity and ridicule.

Where would this battle be waged? Where would the Jews set up their line of defense to protect against influences that would undermine our loyalty to the Torah? Chazal, observing the ongoing and subtle infiltration of Greek ideas and values into Jewish society despite the presence of the Second Bais HaMikdash, understood that the spiritual survival of Klal Yisrael during the remainder of the Second Bais HaMikdash and the subsequent centuries of exile would depend upon the defense of a different sanctuary: the Jewish home. It is there that the Menorah would be lit; it is there that each family would publicly demonstrate its loyalty to Hashem and its dedication to preserving the sanctity of the home.<sup>19</sup>

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include: (1) whether a *ner Chanukah* must have the same characteristics as the Menorah in the Bais HaMikdash, which could also preclude use of electric lights which do not have conventional oil and wicks (see the broad discussions of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef in *Yabiah Omer* [O.C. 3:35], *Yechaveh Da'as* [4:38], *Chazon Ovadiah: Chanukah* [pp. 93-97]); (2) whether new wicks should be used each night, as was done in the Bais HaMikdash (*Darkei Moshe* 673:6, quoting *Kolbo* and *Avudraham*; *Meiri*, Shabbos 21b, s.v. *ve'lamaditah*; and cf. *Shulchan Aruch* 673:4). See also Ra'avad, gloss on *Mishneh Torah*, Hilchos Berachos 11:15..

<sup>19</sup> This gives added meaning to the famous Midrash : מול אל מול - "The sacrifices only are observed as long as the Bais HaMikdash stands, but the lights are forever: 'The seven lamps shall give light in front of the menorah'" (Bamidbar Rabbah 15:6). The Ramban (Bamidbar 8:2) writes that this refers to the mitzvah of *neros Chanukah*. As we have explained, the mitzvah of *neros Chanukah* represent the transfer of responsibility for *mesorah* to the Jewish home, and the identification of the Jewish home as a mikdash, a sanctuary.

This idea is reflected in the beautiful interpretation of Rabbi Kook regarding the revelation of the *Shechinah* on each Jewish home during the night of Pesach in Egypt, thereby transforming each home into a *mikdash*; see Rabbi Mordechai Greenberg, *Kerem Li'Shlomo*, pp. 140-141.

The idea of a home acting as a sanctuary may also be discerned in the custom of conducting a *chanukas ha'bayis*, a consecration of the home, after entering a new home. See Rabbi Yitzchak Yosef, *Yalkut Yosef: Sova Semachos* (I), p. 269, par. 2; Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Lerner, *Sefer Ha'bayis*, p. 26.

See also the beautiful idea presented by Rabbi Soloveitchik regarding the halachah that the Chanukah candles should be placed on the left side of the doorway so that one will be surrounded by the mezuzah and the *neros*

In this light, we may suggest an understanding of the significance of *mehadrin min hamehadrin*, the ideal way of lighting Chanukah candles, by which each individual lights his or her own set of candles. While the essential mitzvah can be fulfilled with *ner ish u'baiso*, a candle for the entire home, Chazal offered the opportunity for each individual to demonstrate initiative to fulfill the mitzvah in a more personal way. Building upon the designation of the home as a spiritual haven, this more ideal fulfillment represents every individual embracing and accepting personal responsibility to safeguard our Torah and protect ourselves from pernicious influences that would dilute and compromise our loyalty to Hashem. By lighting the *neros Chanukah* at home in commemoration of the miracle which occurred in the Bais HaMikdash, each Jew gives expression to the idea that not only is the home a sacred place, but each individual is identified as a sanctuary as well.<sup>20</sup>

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*Chanukah* when passing through the doorway: "...when the Sages introduced Hanukkah, they extended the *mitzvah* of *mezuzah*, that a *bayit Yisrael*, a house where Jews live, must fulfill two *mitzvot*, the biblical commandment of *mezuzah*, and the rabbinic enactment of *ner Hanukkah*" (*Days of Deliverance: Essays on Purim and Hanukkah*, p. 200).

<sup>20</sup> See Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin, *Nefesh HaChaim*, Shaar 1, Ch. 4, who emphasizes this idea. See especially his footnote (s.v. *ki ha'Mishkan*): "הרי כי ודאי עיקר ענין הקדש ומקדש ושריית שכינתו יתברך הוא האדם - "certainly, the most fundamental aspect of the *kodesh* and *Mikdash* and the resting of the Divine Presence is [identified with] the individual..."

For further elaboration on this theme, see e.g. *Malbim*, Shemos 22:1, 25:8; Rabbi Moshe Yechiel Halevi Epstein, *Be'er Moshe*, Shemos, pp. 781ff.; Rabbi Yehoshua Heschel Ryzman, *Iyunim Ba'Parasha*, pp. 228-236.