

The Shul
at the Lubavitch Center
6701 Old Pimlico Road
Baltimore, MD 21209
410-486-2666
www.chabadshul.org



24 Kislev 5777

Vayeishev -- Chanukah

December 24, 2016

How to Change Your Life: A Talmudic Chanukah Debate

By Menachem Feldman

I want to change. Should I stop engaging in destructive behaviors abruptly, or should I focus my effort on gradually introducing positive behaviors into my life?

My eating habits are terrible. Should I cut out sugary and fatty foods all at once (what's the point of eating a vegetable with one hand, while holding a bottle of Coke in the other?), or should I slowly introduce broccoli and lettuce into my diet?

I want to write a book. Should I stop everything that I'm doing and devote every minute of the next year to the task, or should I focus on writing for 10 minutes each day?

I would like to climb out of my spiritual darkness. I can put all my effort into stopping the negative behaviors. But perhaps I should recognize that for the time being I will not be able to stop entirely, and that I should direct my energy toward introducing productive activities into my routine.

Obviously, no two situations are the same, and in most cases we need to use both tactics in tandem. But there is certainly room for discussion on where to focus our efforts.

This question is at the root of a Talmudic dispute about the number of lights kindled on each night of Chanukah.

The House of Shammai says: On the first day we light eight, and after that we gradually reduce. But the House of Hillel says: On the first day one is lit, and thereafter they are progressively increased.

Ulla said: In the West [Israel], two sages, Rabbi Yosi bar Avin and Rabbi Yosi bar Zevida, argue. One maintains: The rationale of the House of Shammai is to represent the days still to come, and that of the House of Hillel is to represent the days that are gone. But the other maintains: The House of Shammai's reason is that it should correspond to the bulls [offered on the altar during] Sukkot, while the House of Hillel's reason is that we ascend in [matters of] sanctity but do not descend.

According to Shammai, we start out by lighting eight candles on the first night, and then we decrease by one candle each night. Hillel maintains that we start out by lighting one candle, and then we increase until we have a full menorah on the eighth night. (The *halachah* follows Hillel.) Why the difference of opinion? Let's examine the second explanation:

Shammai says to decrease, corresponding to the bulls offered in the Temple on Sukkot. Hillel says to increase because, as a rule, we are meant to increase in holiness and not decrease. This requires additional explanation. According to Hillel, why does the Torah command us to decrease the number of bulls offered each day of Sukkot? Does that not contradict his principle that we must increase in holiness? As for Shammai, does he not subscribe to the principle of increasing holiness?

Shammai and Hillel differ on the question of where to begin.

Shammai says that the first thing you must do is fight your evil—completely. When you want to fight evil, you can't take baby steps. You have to come out swinging. You must tell yourself things like "I will never [fill in any destructive behavior] again." If alcohol is your challenge, and you say, "I'll only have three drinks instead of four," you will never win. Taking small steps in the right direction, argues Shammai, is like building a sand castle on a beach: it will be washed away by the first wave of the raging sea.

Therefore, says Shammai, on the first night of Chanukah you must kindle all your lights, as you need every ounce of energy to fight the darkness outside. Here's the good news: Tomorrow it will be a bit easier. You weakened the evil on the first night, so there is less of it on the second; hence, all you need on the second night is seven lights. Eventually, you will rid yourself of the darkness, and you won't need any light with which to fight it.

Hillel says: Forget the evil.

Perhaps in Temple times we had the spiritual strength to battle the darkness head-on, and that is why the Sukkot offerings decreased every day. In exile, bereft of the spiritual power of the Holy Temple, we need a new strategy altogether.

We need to focus on positive action.

Don't worry about the darkness; just take one small step in the right direction. Just light one small candle. No big deal. Anyone can do it. The key, however, is that tomorrow you add one more light. Small but consistent growth. Before you know it, your menorah will be full.

And so too in our own lives, with our own personal struggles—making small, manageable changes can add up to a great deal of goodness and light.

(Source: http://www.chabad.org/holidays/chanukah/article_cdo/aid/3144687/jewish/How-to-Change-Your-Life-A-Talmudic-Chanukah-Debate.htm)

DAVENING SCHEDULE

Friday December 23 / 23 Kislev

Shacharit 7:00 a.m.
Candles 4:30 p.m.
Mincha 4:30 p.m.

Shabbat December 24 / 24 Kislev -- Parshas Vayeishev

First candle for Chanukah Shacharit 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema .9:39 a.m.
Gemora Shiur 3:15 p.m.
Mincha & Seuda Shilishit 4:15 p.m.
Maariv 5:33 p.m.
Light 1 Chanukah Candle after 5:33 p.m.

Sunday December 25 / 25 Kislev

Chanukah - Day 1
(Federal Holiday) Shacharit 8:00 a.m.
Breakfast "Chinuch Shiur" after Shacharit
Mincha/Maariv 4:30 p.m.
Light 2 Chanukah Candles after 4:49 p.m.

Monday December 26 / 26 Kislev

Chanukah - Day 2
Shacharit 8:00 a.m.
Mincha/Maariv 4:30 p.m..
Light 3 Chanukah Candles after 4:50 p.m.

Tuesday December 27 / 27 Kislev

Chanukah - Day 3
Shacharit 6:50 a.m.
Maariv 8:15 p.m.
Light 4 Chanukah Candles after 4:50 p.m.

Wednesday December 28 / 28 Kislev

Chanukah - Day 4
Shacharit 6:50a.m.
Maariv 8:15 p.m.
Light 5 Chanukah Candles after 4:51 p.m.

Thursday December 29 / 29 Kislev

Chanukah - Day 5
Shacharit 6:40 a.m.
Maariv 8:15 p.m.
Light 6 Chanukah Candles after 4:52 p.m.

Friday December 30 / 1 Tevet ---- Rosh Chodesh Tevet

Chanukah - Day 6
Shacharit 6:40 a.m.
Candles 4:35 p.m.
Mincha 4:35 p.m.
Light 7 Chanukah Candles before 4:35 p.m.

Rabbi:

Shmuel Kaplan
rabbikaplan@chabadmd.com

Treasurer:

Michael Frank
shul.chabad@gmail.com

Membership:

Jay Bernstein
bernstein1@msn.com

Kiddush:

Reuven Frank
rfrank82@gmail.com

Bulletin/Website:

Sue Zakar
sue.zakar@gmail.com

Gabbaim:

Yehuda Buchwalter
judahbuchwalter@verizon.net
Allan Genut
agenut@gmail.com
Ephraim Siff

Mikvah Mei Menachem

410-415-5113

Aleph Learning Institute

Director: Mrs Rochel Kaplan
410-486-2666 x 2
www.alephlearninginstitute.org

Father/Son Learning

Weekly Father/Son learning
Friday nights with chulent from
O'Fishel. Time: 7:45 -
8:15, followed by a story. If anyone
has any questions, please see
Rabbi Eli Itzkowitz



Mazel Tov to Aharon Kahn and his parents Chaim and Estie Kahn, on his Aufruf this Shabbos and upcoming marriage to Shaindee Schmel, daughter of Ben-Zion and Shoshana Schmel.

Mazel Tov also to Aharon's grandparents, Mrs. Eva Kahn and Rabbi and Mrs. Hesh Cohen, as well as all the relatives and guests who are joining us.

Everyone is invited to Kiddush after davening, sponsored by the Kahn family.



Please join us for a two-part Breakfast shiur: "**Fundamentals of Parenting and Chinuch**", followed by Q&A, given by Rabbi Kaplan after 8:00AM Shacharis on **Monday, December 26th and Monday, January 2nd.**



Yahrzeits for this week

Monday, 12/26/2016	Kislev 26	Ethel Fischer	Father	Albert Goldscheider (Avrohom ben Moshe)
Wednesday, 12/28/2016	Kislev 28	Irving Hain	Father	Uri Hain (Uri ben Hechover Moshe)
Friday, 12/30/2016	Tevet 1	Chaim Kahn	Father	Rav Nachman Kahn (Rav Nachman ben R' Meir)
Friday, 12/30/2016	Tevet 1	Deborah Eisenberg	Mother	Sheva bas Rav Chaim Elazar