

BRINGING DOWN THE LIGHT

Chanukah is a festival of light and spiritual perception of God. The kingdom of Greece wanted to overpower us with foreign philosophies, in order to make us forget the Torah. The Greek ideology represented a spiritual force operative even today: The belief that there are more enlightened ways than the Torah – in particular, the conviction that external form and beauty are the highest value. The Greeks believed that the world runs autonomously, according to the laws of nature. They also believed that man is independent from God, and maintained that human reason is the highest expression of wisdom and knowledge.

This path inevitably leads to denial of God (*apikorsut* in Greek) and a rejection of the responsibility to observe the mitzvot. The preciousness and centrality of the Torah becomes forgotten and lost. The Greek philosophy negates the Jewish belief in a God Whose presence permeates the entire universe, and Who personally supervises every aspect of our lives.

For every Jew, the Torah is the essence of holy wisdom; the Torah is the only possible way to acquire a clear and true perception of God. The problem is that many find themselves in circumstances where it is difficult, and seemingly impossible, to sense the light of the Torah. Today, the challenge is to seek the right channel to constrict the light in a way it can be perceived.

During the first Chanukah two millennia ago, God "preceded the illness with a cure." Not only was the Greek rule overthrown, but a great light was brought into the world and was established for all future generations – including, and especially, our own. Every Chanukah, we draw down the very same light by simply lighting the Chanukah menorah – everyone in his own home and place, no matter who, what, or where he may be. The Chanukah light has the awesome ability to penetrate the lowest levels and unify them all. When the flame is lit, it serves to constrict and channel a glimpse of Divine light. This is what all Tzaddikim have worked to accomplish throughout history: to bring down the light to the lowest places in Creation, where anyone can receive it, if they so desire. When we light the Chanukah menorah, we connect to the Infinite from wherever we find ourselves. "Though I walk in the valley overshadowed by death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me" (Psalms 23:4). ■

(see *Likutey Halachot, Haskamat HaBoker* 4:10)

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