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MOTHER OF FALLEN SOLDIER,
SERGEANT ELI MOSHE ZIMBALIST HY"D



Chanukah: Creating More Light in the World

Chanukah is the Festival of Light, *Or*, but in Chazal, light is never merely physical. *Or* represents clarity, chesed, spiritual awakening, and the presence of Hashem in the world. When we light the menorah, we are not simply recalling a miracle of oil; we are reaffirming

our mission to illuminate the world through mitzvot, compassion, and acts of chesed. The Gemara in Shabbat 21b records the famous debate between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel regarding how the Chanukiah should be kindled. Beit Shammai taught that one should begin with eight lights on the first night and decrease by one each night. In contrast, Beit Hillel taught that one should

begin with a single light on the first night and increase by one each night. The Gemara explains Hillel's reasoning: "מעלין בקודש ואין מורידין" — we ascend in holiness and never descend.

This principle guides much of halachic and spiritual life: holiness is not static. It must grow, expand, and elevate. Lighting an additional candle each

evening embodies the Jewish commitment to continual spiritual ascent.

Why does holiness grow? Because holiness shared is holiness multiplied. Light, unlike physical resources, does not diminish when given away. When you use your flame to ignite another candle, your own flame remains just as bright. This is the essence of חנוכה; we increase our own light specifically by lighting the lights of others.

Chanukah is thus a call not only to elevate ourselves, but to help elevate those around us. Chazal teach (Yevamot 79a) that one of the defining traits of Am Yisrael is



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rachmanim, bayshanim, and gomlei chasaddim, compassion, modesty, and boundless generosity. Whenever we give tzedakah, emotional support, time, or kindness we mirror the original miracle of the oil; a small amount becomes much more than expected.

So too with every act of chesed, a small gesture can illuminate a life, a moment of attention can restore dignity, and a quiet act of giving can ripple outward, creating light in places we never imagined.

In our times, the need for light, kindness, charity, empathy is profound. Darkness takes many forms such as loneliness, hardship, confusion, spiritual disconnection. Yet that darkness can be lifted, even erased by infusing the light of our love and compassion that we have for others, by showing our true friendship and by being there in one's time of need.

Each night of Chanukah urges us to **add more light, add more goodness and add more giving.**

Just as the halachah follows Hillel, ascending candle by candle, so too we ascend by acts of generosity, each one building on the next. No act of giving is insignificant. Each is a small flame that Hashem helps expand.

Eli Moshe Zimbalist HY"D lived his life embodying this very principle of giving light to others. He added so much goodness to this world and lived a life of מעלין בקודש. He was constantly helping and uplifting those around him, offering a kind word, a smile, or a helping hand even before anyone asked.

In his memory, we created a sticker that reads: אל תכחו שיבקשו פשוט תעזרו *"Don't wait to be asked, simply help."* This captured his spirit perfectly. Eli Moshe's

generosity was quiet, humble, and consistent. He was always present for others, making a difference in ways both large and small. His life serves as a living example of how each of us can illuminate the world by selflessly lifting others.

May we all be inspired by the light Eli Moshe lived his life by and use it to help others in all aspects of life. We all have what to share and give of ourselves to others. So when you light your candles, think about how you can shine, illuminate and radiate **your** special light in the world and how much an impact it can have and the lasting imprint it leaves in making this world a better place for us all. Chanukah Sameach! ■

Sara Zimbalist made Aliyah with her family almost 20 years ago to Bet Shemesh. She volunteers as an EMT in Ichud Hatzala.

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