

Study for Hanukkah – Shloshim for the passing of Rabbi Sacks

One of the favorite sayings of Rabbi Sacks was V'samahtah Beḥagekhah – one should rejoice, be happy, lough with joy, in the Holidays. Let us start with a little laughter, before delving into the serious material:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yu8hXns9Yqg>

Shabbat Tractate, pg. 22a 5-7:

איתמר: רב אמר אין מדליקין מנר לנר, ושמואל אמר מדליקין. רב אמר אין מתירין ציצית מבגד לבגד, ושמואל אמר מתירין מבגד לבגד. רב אמר אין הלכה כרב שמעון בגרירה, ושמואל אמר הלכה כרב שמעון בגרירה.

It was stated in a dispute between *amora'im* that **Rav said: One may not light from one Hanukkah lamp to another lamp. And Shmuel said: One may light** in that manner. The Gemara cites additional disputes between Rav and Shmuel. **Rav said: One may not untie ritual fringes from one garment in order to affix them to another garment. And Shmuel said: One may untie them from one garment and affix them to another garment.** And **Rav said: The halakha is not in accordance** with the opinion of **Rabbi Shimon in the case of dragging**, as Rabbi Shimon permitted dragging objects on Shabbat, even if, as a result, a furrow would be dug in the ground, as it was not the person's intent to dig that hole. **Shmuel said** that the *halakha* is **in accordance with** the opinion of **Rabbi Shimon in the case of dragging.**

אמר אביי: כל מילי דמר עביד כרב לבר מהני תלת דעביד כשמואל: מדליקין מנר לנר, ומתירין מבגד לבגד, והלכה כרב שמעון בגרירה. דתניא, רבי שמעון אומר: גזר אדם מטה כסא וספסל — ובלבד שלא יתפוין לעשות חריץ.

Abaye said: In all halakhic matters of the Master, Rabba, he conducted himself in accordance with the opinion of Rav, except these three where he conducted himself in accordance with the opinion of Shmuel. He ruled: **One may light from one Hanukkah lamp to another lamp, and one may untie ritual fringes from garment to garment, and the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Shimon in the case of dragging.** As it was taught in a *baraita*, **Rabbi Shimon says: A person may drag a bed, chair, and bench on the ground, as long as he does not intend to make a furrow in the ground.** Even if a furrow is formed inadvertently, one need not be concerned.

יטיב ההוא מרבנן קמיה דרב אדא בר אהבה ויטיב וקאמר: טעמא דרב משום ביזוי מצוה. אמר להו: לא תציתו ליה, טעמיה דרב משום דקא מכחיש מצוה. מאי בינייהו? איכא בינייהו דקא מדליק משרגא לשרגא: מאן דאמר משום ביזוי מצוה — משרגא לשרגא מדליק. מאן דאמר משום אכחושי מצוה — משרגא לשרגא נמי אסור.

One of the Sages sat before Rav Adda bar Ahava, and he sat and said: The reason for the opinion of **Rav**, who prohibited lighting from one Hanukkah lamp to another, is **due to contempt for the mitzva.** Using the light for a purpose other than illumination demeans the mitzva of Hanukkah lights. Rav Adda bar Ahava **said to his students: Do not listen to him, as the reason for Rav's opinion is due to the fact that he thereby weakens the mitzva.** By lighting

from lamp to lamp he slightly diminishes the oil and wick designated for the purpose of the mitzva. The Gemara asks: **What is the practical difference between them?** The Gemara answers: The practical difference **between them** is in a case **where he lights directly from lamp to lamp**, without using a wood chip or another lamp to light the second lamp. According to the **one who said** that Rav's reason **is due to contempt for the mitzva**, directly **from lamp to lamp he may even light *ab initio* (= from the beginning)**, as, by lighting another Hanukkah lamp, he does not thereby demean the sanctity of the mitzva because the second lamp is also a mitzva. According to the **one who said** that Rav's reason **is because he weakens the mitzva**, lighting directly **from lamp to lamp is also prohibited**, as ultimately, he utilizes the mitzva lamp for a task that he could have accomplished with a non-sacred lamp.

Rabbi Sacks interpretation to the above

The following video clip contain excerpts from the Shloshim ceremony for the passing away of Rabbi Sacks Zt"l. It starts with his interpretation and insights based on the previous teaching we studied from Talmud, and weaves on the universal ethical and behavioral standards we all should adopt and live by.

https://youtu.be/d1PoQHHi_bY

Transcript of the Videoclip:

"There is a famous "*maḥaloket*" [dispute] in [the Talmud,] Gemara Shabbat Tractate, page 22a, on the following question: "*madlikin mi'ner l'ner o'lo?*" – can you take a Chanukah candle and use it to light another Chanukah candle? Yes or no? On this there is a "*maḥaloket*" [between] Rav and Shmuel: Rav says no, Shmuel says yes. Rav says no because "*ko makḥish mitzvah*" – you diminish the Mitzvah. If I take a light to light another light, then I'm going to spill a little of the oil, or a little of the wax and the result is that I will diminish the first light. And Shmuel doesn't worry about this. Now we know in general, any "*maḥaloket*" between Rav and Shmuel, Halacha k'Rav – the law is always like Rav against Shmuel with only three exceptions, and this is one of them.

What is at stake? What were they arguing about? And why in this case is the law not like Rav but like Shmuel?

And the answer, you will find in today's Jewish world, you will take two Yidden, two Jews, both religious, both "frum", both erlich, both "*yorei shamayim*" (pious, revere heavens), both keeping all the mitzvot, "*kala ke'chamura*" (observing the least significant mitzvah the same way as the most important and highest priority mitzvah). But there's a big difference between them; one of them says I have to look after my light, and if I get involved with Jews who are not frum, not religious, who are not committed, "*ko makḥish mitzvah*" – my Yiddishkeit will be diminished. That is the view of Rav, and Rav was a spiritual giant. But Shmuel dared to say otherwise. He said when I take my light to set another Jewish soul on fire, I don't have less light, I have more! Because while there was once one light, now there is two, and maybe from those two will come more! And on this the Halacha is like Shmuel. Friends, that is what it is to be a Chassid, to "*paskin*" (make rulings) like Shmuel, to know that when we go out to Jews who are less committed than we are, our light is not diminished; the result is we create more light in the world.

A Chassid of the Rebbe knows, "*aron nosse et nos-av*" (The ark of covenant carries its carriers), if you lift another Jew, you yourself are lifted. If you light with your candle and kindle the flame in the heart of another Jew, your light will not be diminished, you will be lifted; your light will be double."