

PAINT THE WORLD WITH LIGHT

by Rabbi Label Lam

The root of the word of the word Chanukah is Chinuch- Education! This is what the Sefas Emes writes in the name of the Shelah HaKodesh! It's not my idea! Chanukah is about educating ourselves and refocusing our attention on what's important. So what is important?

When we light the candles on Chanukah it is accompanied by a simply elegant declaration, "These candles are holy and we have no permission to use them, only to see them in order praise and thank Your great name..." Does that make sense?! We are lighting candles! It's dark! Let's get the practical benefit of the oil we are investing in the Menorah! No! We may not make use of these candles. They are holy! They are intended for our personal use! Their only function is to express great praise and thanks to HASHEM.

When I was a child, and we left a light on in a room after exiting, the speech went like this; "Am I working for Con Edison!?" Who leaves lights on where they cannot be used? Only wasteful and thoughtless people! And here we are calling the family together to rally around the Menorah which we will fill with oil night after night and we are not to get any personal benefit from the light and that you call education?! Yes, that's education!

I spoke to house filled with parents anticipating the beginning of their young children's Chanukah performance. I shared with them the following incident told to me by one of my Rebbeim. His wife was driving though the back roads of Rockland County one Sunday with a car filled with kids, her kids. She pulled over by a sign advertising a garage sale and all the children followed out of the car. It was an impressively large parade of little people.

The woman whose house was hosting the garage sale exclaimed in amazement, "Are these all yours?" The Rebbetzin responded pointedly, "No!" They are G- d's! I have been given the responsibility to watch them and see to it they grow up right!" I can't say the garage sale lady was ready for the philosophical response but it sure lands a great lesson.

These kids are not ours! They are G-d's! We don't own them! They are not our property! We are only meant to bring out their light! Aha! We don't own anything ultimately! What about private property? Between man and man there is private property and other people's stuff is sacred! Between man and G-d there is no private property. "Give to Him what's His, because you and all that's yours are His!" the Mishne declares in Avos.

That candle, the Menorah is an icon, like an apple with a bite out of is an icon. It shouts in symbolic language, like a teacher marking on the board, a lesson summary. Everything in the world is a candle. We are meant to discover and manifest the spiritual core of everything! That's all we can do! We can uncover light, and reveal the deep truth, wherever we go! That we can take with us forever and forever!

Mitzvos are important! That's what Mitzvos do! They connect us to HASHEM! They tie us to eternity! We are not wasteful people burning oil for no value. This is the ultimate value the greatest possible use of that miniscule flask of fuel! Don't take my word for it. King Solomon, only wisest man of all time had already said, "A candle is a Mitzvah and Torah is light!" With that in mind, go **paint the world with light!** DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).