

# WHERE GOOD TIMES ARE FOUND

by Rabbi Label Lam

The Mitzvah of Chanuka is: A candle for **each man and his household!** (Shabbos 21B)

And these are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt; with Yaakov, **each man and his household** came. (Shemos 1:1)

It's no mistake that the same Talmudic Language used to define the requirement for lighting a Chanukah Candle is the very same expression that describes how the Jewish Nation descended to Egypt: "Ish U Beiso" "a man and his household". In his Haggadah, Rav Hirsch ztl. notes that the Jewish People were organized as a household unit when they entered the exile and they were also configured as households at the time of the exodus just as we find ourselves on Pesach ever since - not in a stadium but rather at home!

About the importance of the home as a primary survival unit he writes: *"To inherit a home and to build a home – this encompasses a Jew's ethical vocation on earth. Is it not the sine qua non for the hopes and perfection of all nations? If only this great Magna Carta were consulted wherever education and culture, peace and salvation of men and mankind are discussed. For the fate of men, their success or failure, is decided neither in the chambers of rulers nor on the battlefield. It is not decided in business concerns, in colleges and institutions of arts and sciences or in houses of worship. It is sealed only in one place, in the parental home..."*

*There exists no substitute for the home, and if one is looking elsewhere for the source of peace and prosperity, he is searching in vain. All of a nation's politics and diplomacy, its theories of national economy and institutions for mass education, its trade and industry, its schools and community centers – none of these will save the people from extinction if they let the parental home become a parody. Are children born for the sake of the state's false concern instead of the warm love of parents?*

*Does the census show ever-growing numbers of children without parents and parents without children? Does the nation's high society make a mockery of morality and modesty? If so, then all the palaces it is building are founded on quicksand."*

A Chanukah Candle in the window shouts, "This is a Jewish home!" Now what if there is there is a shortage of resources and one must choose between lighting a Shabbos candle or a Chanukah candle!? Which Mitzvah takes precedence? Here we can appreciate how Jewish Law-Halachah shapes our philosophy and not the other way around.

Both are Rabbinical Mitzvos of equal ranking. The reason for the Chanukah Candle is to advertise the Miracle of Chanukah and the reason for the Shabbos Candle is its impact on Shalom Bais- Peace in the Home! When there is light in a home there is peace. Which value wins out? Shabbos Candles because of "Shalom Bais".

Years back when I was in college and a member of a Fraternity- Phi Tau, (As the butler said, "Es Chatai Ani Mazkir HaYom, I mention my sin today!") Our Frat house was not the popular one! All the others were giant mansions and on a Saturday night they were pushing in the front doors of every Frat House to enter. Ours had the disadvantage of being like a Swiss Chalet with a big picture window. People passing by could look in and see nobody was in side. The emptier it looked from the outside the emptier it remained.

Then we had a "genius" idea. A bunch of us pressed up against the window so people passing in the street will perceive a packed house. The only problem was that when they came in, they saw a group of guys pressed against the window and an empty house. There was no way to fool the masses.

On Chanukah we dare not advertise to the world what we are not in our essence. Rabbi Avigdor Miller ztl. had said that when you see people out on the prowl late at night searching for good times, don't be deceived. Similarly, if you find someone at 3 AM at the store buying eggs, you know one thing for sure. They have no eggs at home. The home is **where good times are found**.