

Dear haverim,

The lighting of the hanukkah is a special time for so many families. Extended families come together to light the candles and join together in song and joy. For so many children they remember standing with loved ones lighting the candles and singing the blessings. Lighting one hanukkah for the community is not sufficient; instead every Jewish home must kindle their own candles. Judaism implores us to feel a personal connection to the light of the hanukkah, but the commandment for lighting the hanukkah is two-fold.

In addition, to lighting the hanukkah within one's home it must also be lit in a way that is visible to those passing by on the street. The hanukkah is to be placed in a window and ideally lit at a time when people are out on the street. One of the central ideas of lighting the hanukkah is *pirsumay nisa*, to publicize the miracle. In addition to the private commandment of lighting in a home, we also need to perform the public component of this ritual. The hanukkah may be the only ritual in Judaism that needs to fulfill both a private and public obligation.

As we light our hanukkah in the comfort of our homes, we look at the lights one way, but do we ever walk outside and view the candles from the public's perspective? The same is true in our daily lives. We view life through our own lens, but do we stop and try to see it through another perspective? So many times throughout life we try to convince others why our view is the best, or the only perspective, and are unable to listen to others. We are unable to recognize the value and authenticity of a different perspective.

The lights of the hanukkah are designed to remind us that there is more than one valid perspective on the same 'lights', it is all dependent on which angle you view the candles. As we try to increase the light in our world, may we each try to recognize that our world is full of differing perspectives. We should not shut others out. Perhaps they are in the house or walking by on the street, however Judaism demands us to accept and celebrate both perspectives. The lights look different depending on whether you are inside the home or outside and the same is true throughout life, but the both fulfill the commandment.

Hag Urim Sameach,
Rabbi Michael Kushnick