

On Friday night, as Chanukah ended and Shabbos began, the last lights of Chanukah gave way to the lights of Shabbos. These different candles -- Chanukah and Shabbos -- are linked together in some places by the *chachamim*, who speak, for example, of someone who is רגיל בנר, practiced in lighting candles for *mitzvos*.

But if we step back to think about what these two *mitzvah* candles stand for, our initial impression is that they represent opposite messages. The Shabbos candles speak to us of tranquility. The lights we kindle just before Shabbos begins embody the value of *shalom bayis*. The Shabbos candles ensure that our homes, which would otherwise be dark on Shabbos night, will be full of light; they make it possible for us to enjoy each other's company without being preoccupied with fumbling through the darkness and struggling to arrange our basic needs. This value of *shalom bayis* is so paramount that if one had only enough money to buy either Shabbos candles or Chanukah candles, he would buy Shabbos candles to be sure that *shalom bayis* was intact. The Shabbos candles are the embodiment of calm and peace.

What, on the other hand, do the Chanukah candles represent? They represent the triumph of the Jewish people after some of our most difficult years of struggle. The Chanukah candles remind us of the decrees of our Greek oppressors, of Hashem's guiding hand in leading a group of Kohanim through more than a decade of warfare, for a Bais Hamikdash so thoroughly defiled that only miraculous intervention made it possible for our one pure bottle of oil to last for eight days. On the surface, this is the opposite of the tranquil light of the Shabbos candles; the menorah is the light of struggle and triumph, of *galus* and *geulah*, exile and redemption. Where do these candles overlap?

The answer, I believe, is that both kinds of candles do speak of a common goal. They speak of devotion.

The commentaries teach that the following phrase in our Shabbos davening refers to people who give their lives for the sake of *kiddush hashem*: ועל מנוחתם יקדישו את שמך, for their rest they sanctify Your name. In what way is *kiddush hashem*, sanctifying Hashem's name -- which of course includes the possibility of giving one's life for the sake of Hashem -- associated with *menucha*, rest? I cannot say I understand it fully. But we are being taught that when you are so completely devoted to Hashem that you are willing to do anything to maintain that devotion, you achieved a state of serenity. You are so secure in your devotion, so committed to your connection and so clear about your direction that you are completely at peace. The struggles you encounter are external, they do not define you; the obstacles you overcome are just the steps on the staircase carrying you higher. The story of your life is defined not by how much you gave up but by how much you cared. That is the *menucha* we can achieve when we are devoted.

And so we come to the Shabbos candles. The Shabbos candles stand for *shalom bayis*, yes. But what they really provide is the backdrop for us to be present for each other. The candles light the room so that we are not so distracted by the darkness that we cannot focus on each other. They make it possible for us to be fully devoted. That is what provides us with *menucha*.

And while *shalom bayis* refers generally to tranquility in the home, it refers specifically to the peace that should reign between husband and wife. It is that peace that is referred to specifically as *menucha*: ומצאן מנוחה אשה בית אישה, *each woman shall find menucha in the house of her husband*. And here, too, the ticket to real tranquility is devotion. When we can find the ways in which we are devoted to each other, all the inevitable slings and arrows of life exist only on the outside, the backdrop of challenges which we must overcome together. And when we succeed at devotion -- to Hashem, to each other, and to our spouse -- *menucha* is the ultimate prize.