

O.C. *siman* 678 : Precedence of Shabbos Candles over Chanukah Candles

The development of: **Se'if 1**

IF ONE CAN ONLY AFFORD EITHER A SHABBOS CANDLE OR A CHANUKAH CANDLE (NOT BOTH)

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 23b¹):

Rava said: *It is obvious to me that if someone is so poor that he has to choose between the Shabbos "candle of his home" [i.e. the basic obligation of a single one (Mishnah Berurah)] and the Chanukah "candle"¹ - the Shabbos "candle of his home" takes precedence², because of [the need for] "the peace of one's house" [i.e. just like the Gemara says (*Shabbos* 25b) that the Mitzvah of lighting Shabbos "candles" is called "peace" - because for the members of one's household to remain in the dark is a pain, because one keeps tripping (Rashi³)].*

Accordingly, the *Shulchan Aruch* starts the *se'if* by ruling: **[In the case of] someone who cannot afford to buy a Chanukah "candle" and a Shabbos "candle" - he should buy a Shabbos "candle", because of "the peace of one's house."** [The other parts of the *se'if* follow the next two subjects.]

As mentioned, the above is all about the basic single-candle obligations. When it comes to adding more, the *Mishnah Berurah* writes (in the name of the later authorities) that the Chanukah candles take precedence⁴ [since adding to *them* is mentioned in the Gemara itself (*Sha'ar HaTziyun* - see above 671:2)].

Actually, it could be that this entire Halacha is assuming that the Chanukah candles are lit outdoors, whereas we have learned [as discussed above 671:5] that "nowadays" (when there's "danger"), "one puts it on his table and that is sufficient" (i.e. we light *indoors*). The *Mishnah Berurah* brings a position that in such a "nowadays", one buys a *Chanukah* candle⁵, because that *itself* will take care of "the peace of ones home" [see above 673:1 by "what kind of

¹ The word "*ner*" is traditionally translated "candle", but the earlier sources generally do not use the word to refer to solid candles. Rashi explains that in the days of the Gemara, earthenware "lamps" were used; his full description is brought above (671:3).

² source's wording: "is greater [in importance]."

³ A second explanation (in the *Me'iri*): the issue of peace of the "home" relates to one's *wife*, since the Mitzvah [of Shabbos candles] is in *her* hands.

⁴ Over the fact that it's most appropriate to have [at least] two Shabbos candles, as we learn in the Halachos of Shabbos (O.C. 263:1).

⁵ The straightforward reading of this ruling is that the candle would *only* be a Chanukah candle. However, one *could* have argued that the candle would be a fulfillment of *both* Mitzvahs (and perhaps then it would have been appropriate to say over it the *brachos* of the Chanukah candle *and* of the Shabbos candle). On the other hand, perhaps the above authorities concede that since most forms of "making use" of this candle will be *assur*, consequently it's not a *true* fulfillment of the purpose of the Shabbos candle. [In other words, they are merely saying that establishing "the peace of one's home", which is what made the Shabbos candle take *precedence*, is not applicable here as a reason for that *precedence*.]

use is *assur*", that a "totally insignificant" use of Chanukah candle-light is *muttar*.⁶ Still, the *Mishnah Berurah* concludes by saying that most authorities disagree - saying that "nowadays" the Halacha is still as Rava said.⁷

[To make the transition to the next subject, we quote what the *Rema* inserts (after the above *Shulchan Aruch*): **[In addition,] see above, [O.C.] siman 263 se'if 3.** The *Mishnah Berurah* explains what he is referring to: The *Shulchan Aruch* there says (based on a second "it is obvious to me" statement by Rava {ibid.}) that the Shabbos candle similarly takes precedence over the Mitzvah of *kiddush* - again because of the paramount need for "the peace of one's home".]

IF ONE CAN ONLY AFFORD EITHER A CHANUKAH CANDLE OR WINE FOR *KIDDUSH* (NOT BOTH)

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 23b¹):

[Now that Rava has explained what "is obvious" to him, the Gemara continues:]

Rava asked: *If one has to choose between the Chanukah "candle" and the Mitzvah of kiddush,⁸ what is the Halacha? Should we say that the Mitzvah of kiddush takes precedence,⁹ because it is the more frequent [Mitzvah]¹⁰? Or, perhaps we should rather say that the Chanukah "candle" takes precedence, for the sake of publicizing the miracle?*

Then, he himself resolved it [and said]: *The Chanukah "candle" [i.e. the basic obligation of a single one (Mishnah Berurah)] takes precedence, for the sake of publicizing the miracle.*

The *Beis Yosef* brings the commentary of the *Ran*^o to these words:

One can ask: *How can we push aside the Mitzvah of kiddush, which is Torah-mandated, because of the [Rabbinical] Chanukah "candle" (and Shabbos "candle of one's home")?*

One can answer: *Actually, we do not push aside [the Torah-mandated obligation of] kiddush. After all, it is possible [as far as the Torah-mandated obligation is concerned] to say kiddush over bread. [I.e. the Gemara was only talking about the **proper** (and Rabbinically obligatory) way of saying kiddush, which is to say it over wine.]*

Accordingly, the *Shulchan Aruch* continues: **[On the other hand,] if he has [enough money] for [the "candle"] of Shabbos, and he does not have [enough money both] for the Chanukah "candle" and for wine for the**

⁶ In the *Sha'ar HaTziyun*, he points out that we learned above (671:5) that in such a case it's "obligatory to have an extra candle ['shamash']." He explains that this doesn't make the position we're discussing impossible, though, because the Halacha *always* is (as mentioned above there) that if someone only *has* one candle [and none to use as the "extra"] - he nevertheless lights that candle with the *bracha*, and simply "has to do without" the extra candle. [Over there, he ended by reminding such a person to be extra careful not to "make use" of the light. Here, he says it's *muttar* "even though he has no choice but to make use of it by his table." (This needs further examination.)]

⁷ The *Sha'ar HaTziyun* explains that this majority position seems to hold that if one would light such a Chanukah candle, it would be *assur* to do anything by its light [i.e. so "the peace of one's home" *would* still be lacking].

⁸ source's wording: "the '*kiddush*' ['sanctification'] of the day". [In the Gemara (in a number of places), this commonly refers to the *main* "sanctification of the Shabbos *day*" - which is said on Friday *night*.]

⁹ source's wording: "is greater [in importance]".

¹⁰ Hebrew: "*tadir*". Usually, this is given as a reason for a Mitzvah to be done *before* another [see "Principles"].

Mitzvah of *kiddush*¹¹, he should buy a Chanukah "candle"¹², for the sake of publicizing the miracle. [The *Rema*'s addition follows the last subject.]

The Bach^o says that one can be *yotzei* the Torah-mandated obligation of *kiddush* even with words alone. [This is like the position of the *Magen Avraham*^o in the Halachos of Shabbos (at the beginning of O.C. 271), that one is *yotzei* the Torah-mandated obligation of *kiddush* with *Ma'ariv* itself.] Therefore, he says that even if someone does not even have *bread* yet, that person *still* buys a Chanukah candle instead. But the *Mishnah Berurah* writes that buying bread takes precedence even over *Shabbos candles*¹³ (and he refers to his separate discussions of these Halachos of Shabbos {by O.C. 263:2}).

How can the Bach^o say that one doesn't really need even bread? Doesn't the *Ran*'s answer clearly imply that one *does* need it? In response, the Bach himself says that the *Ran* was merely giving an *example* to *illustrate* that using wine is not Torah-mandated; but really, he just as easily might have said "it is possible to say *kiddush* even with words alone" (i.e. as far as the Torah-mandated obligation is concerned).

IF ONE CAN ONLY AFFORD EITHER A CHANUKAH CANDLE OR WINE FOR *HAVDALAH* (NOT BOTH)

The Tur writes in the Halachos of Shabbos (O.C. 296) that then "the Chanukah 'candle' takes precedence, for it's possible to say *havdalah* in the [*Ma'ariv*] prayer [i.e. without wine]." The *Shulchan Aruch* there (*se'if* 5) writes the same.

Accordingly, the *Rema* here concludes the *se'if*: **[In addition,] the Chanukah "candle" likewise takes precedence over the wine of *havdalah*, as above¹⁴ in *siman* 296 *se'if* 5.**

The *Beis Yosef* over there clarifies the reasoning which the Tur gave here: Just like we said by *kiddush*, that "publicizing the miracle" justifies not saying *kiddush* the proper way - so long as there is in fact another way to say it, so too "publicizing the miracle" justifies not saying *havdalah* the proper way - because there does exist another way to say it.

(According to this reasoning, it could be that if regarding Chanukah candles *as well* there were a way to do it without "expense", then *kiddush/havdalah* would take precedence. [Similarly, we learn over there {*se'if* 4}

¹¹ source's wording: "the '*kiddush*' ['sanctification'] of the day". [See footnote above.]

¹² source's wording: "he should buy [oil] for the Chanukah 'candle'."

¹³ In the *Sha'ar HaTziyun*, he cites the Taz and others as ruling this way, but he does not record a *reason* for disagreeing with what the Bach said. The *Mishnah Berurah* explicitly agrees with the Bach that one can be *yotzei* his Torah-mandated obligation with words, and that therefore *kiddush* itself cannot justify missing the Chanukah lighting. It seems clear that here it's the Mitzvah of the *Shabbos meal* which is doing the overriding, and that's how the *Mishnah Berurah* in the Halachos of Shabbos (by O.C. 263:2) presents the issue. (He discusses there whether even the *third* Shabbos meal outweighs these other Mitzvahs, but that's beyond the scope of this volume.) The *Aruch HaShulchan*^o mentions a different reason that buying bread should override the Chanukah candle: because "bread, too, certainly contains [an important element of] 'the peace of one's home', understandably."

¹⁴ This is the *Mishnah Berurah*'s emendation. Our text reads: "And see above" etc., which is difficult, because it doesn't say any more there than here.

that "*havdalah* with wine" takes precedence over "*kiddush* with wine".] However, the *Mishnah Berurah* here implies {as did the *Beis Yosef* there} that "publicizing the miracle" outweighs the [Rabbinical] Mitzvah of *havdalah*, *entirely*.¹⁵ In fact, according to the Bach's way of interpreting [see the previous subject], even the Tur can be read this way, as follows: The Rambam says the basic Mitzvah of *havdalah* is Torah-mandated {like the basic Mitzvah of *kiddush*}, but *that* only requires "words". Now, if *havdalah's* Torah-mandated obligation *would have* required wine, then "publicizing the miracle" of Chanukah *certainly* would not outweigh that. Consequently, the Tur could mean *havdalah* in *Ma'ariv* as an *example* to *illustrate* that wine is not Torah-mandated, just as if he would say "it is possible to say *Havdalah* even with words alone" {as far as the Torah-mandated obligation goes}.)

¹⁵ It should be apparent that this does not follow directly from our Gemara, since "publicizing the miracle" outweighing *kiddush* is "easier", because (a) there a "different if improper" form in fact exists, and (b) *havdalah* outweighs *kiddush*, as mentioned.