

## *Chapter 28*

# **A USE FOR PIGS**

Whilst I was a boy, I recollect that the only Chanukah candles available were boxes of 44 candles (36 for the mitzvah of lighting Chanukah candles plus 8 for the shamashim). I don't know what the composition of the candles then was, namely whether it was from animal fat or from synthetic materials. These candles burned for about 40 minutes each which was sufficient for every day of Chanukah with the exception of the night of Shabbat. Probably most people did not realise that they were not suitable for the night of Shabbat. I myself would make sure that one of the candles was longer. Therefore, on one of my Chanukah menorahs I replaced one of the candle holders with a larger holder.

At the age of nearly eleven, I went to Carmel College, and in addition to the lighting of Chanukah candles for the whole school, there was a table for those pupils who wanted to light their own candles. For this purpose, I bought a very cheap menorah and used that, making provision for Shabbat Chanukah. One year, Chanukah began on Shabbat and one of my friends and myself lit our Chanukah candles in our dormitory in the presence of the Housemaster and the Matron, having moved the beds well away from the candles. However, on his way down to the Shul, before Shabbat began, which was then held in the Main Hall, the Principal obviously passed by the door of the dormitory and saw that the candles were alight, and he announced that they should be brought down to the Main Hall where others were lighting their candles. He was naturally afraid that the school building would catch fire.

On another year, someone sent a large number of menorahs to the school. Since the size of the candles for these menorahs were birthday size candles and would not last for half an hour, the pupils who lit them were told not to say a berachah on the lighting.

A friend of mine decided to make his own menorah. I gave him a part of the box which my own menorah had come in, and he clipped on to this card eight holders plus a shamash. Since there was no Jewish community in Wallingford where the school was situated, he went to Wallingford and purchased Christmas candles, and he commented that they were expensive – far more than a box of Chanukah candles! His friends would tease him and say they were made from non-kosher fats whereas Chanukah candles are made from kosher margarine!

In my house in Edgware, my father, my younger brother and myself would each light our Chanukah candles and place them in front of the window facing the street. The date of Chanukah is 25 Kislev. The month of Kislev approximately correspond to the month of December and on day 25 of that month the Christians celebrate Christmas. Is the identity of dates a remarkable coincidence or the copying from Chanukah?! Furthermore, Christmas trees with the lighted candles attached to them, are often placed in front of the window. Coincidence or copying the Jews?! I mention all this since it was on the last day (or one of the last days) of Chanukah that there were a large number of Chanukah candles in front of our window. A passing non-Jew commented to us that he liked our Christmas lights. He was not trying to be smart or funny, but it was a sincere comment!

Whilst I was on Shlichut in Liverpool during the 1970s, Chabad came to my door and wanted to give me menorahs for Chanukah for my children. I informed them that I only had daughters and therefore did not require them. They still wanted to give them to me but I pointed out to them that the Chabad Shulchan Aruch (Shulchan Aruch Harav) specifically states that girls do not light their own Chanukah candles. They were a bit taken aback but added that the Lubavitcher Rebbe said that this year was a special year.

Also, whilst I was on Shlichut, I took a group of boys to North Wales for a few days which included the last night of Chanukah. I asked Chabad for a supply of their menorahs which they sent me and I bought a sufficient supply of Chanukah candles and all the boys accordingly observed the mitzvah of Chanukah candles “mehadrin min hamehadrin.”

When I went to live in Israel, I decided that I would start to use olive oil, and I accordingly bought a very cheap oil menorah. At a later date, I bought a more elaborate menorah. On the first night of the first year when I got married, someone dropped the glass bottle of olive oil on the floor where it broke (what a mess to clear up!!). I managed to salvage enough oil for that night. I asked someone who was travelling to Jerusalem to buy me a fresh bottle which they did.

In front of my row of apartments in the Hebron Military Compound was a covered roof way and one of the families living there lit their Chanukah candles at the entrance to the covered roof way (like a “Chatzer” to a group of houses). However, a Rav at the Yeshivah said that he had not fulfilled the mitzvah by lighting it there. Since it was Shabbat night, he could do nothing about it. We could not understand why the Rav had ruled that way.

Every year I would light my Chanukah candles using olive oil. To do this, I had to make wicks using cotton wool and immerse them in containers which I had previously filled with olive oil. However, there was one year which was an exception. That year I was hospitalized in Sha’arei Tzedek hospital with jaundice. Because I was infectious, I was in a single room. This was during the last few months whilst Sha’arei Tzedek was in the old building in Rehov Yaffo. (A few months later it moved to its luxurious building near Bayit Vegan). I lit my Chanukah candles, using actual candles, (olive oil would have been too complicated under those conditions), on a table next to my bed. I suspect that today the hospital would not have permitted me to light it in that location due to a fire risk! On one of the days of Chanukah my family visited me, but had to stand outside the window of my room which was on the ground floor. I lit my Chanukah candle so that they could see and listen and be “yotzer” for the Mitzvah.

A number of years ago, sets of 44 containers of olive oil with wicks became available and it was much simpler to use than having to make one’s own wicks and fill containers with olive oil. Almost every year these sets arrived with no spillages of the oil from the capped containers. The exception was one year when I received the sets, I saw that in some cases a noticeable amount of the oil has spilled out, and as I remember some were almost empty. Fortunately, I had a bottle of olive oil in the house and I was thus able to refill them. After Chanukah I wrote a letter of complaint to the manufactures and they replied that they had sent me a replacement. What’s the use of this a few weeks after

Chanukah?!! However, it never arrived. I informed the manufactures and they said they would send me a replacement. Years later I am still waiting for it to arrive!!

Usually, these sets have liquid olive oil, but one of the manufacturers did something to the olive oil to make it solid. Only after lighting it, does it turn liquid. One year, a set containing such solid olive oil arrived at my house, but I found that I didn't like it and have not used such solid olive oil since then. In contrast, I am very satisfied with the liquid olive oil which often lasts for almost three hours.

According to the Shulchan Aruch, all oil and wicks can be used for Chanukah lights and I often wondered whether this includes fat from pigs, namely lard. I therefore decided that I would research this subject.

The period when I did this research was during the corona period and there were therefore limitations on going outside. Fortunately, today one can do research just in front of one's computer. Using Google and especially the site HebrewBooks and also from the books that one has in one's house, I managed to find almost all the references I required. There was only one book which I could not find on the internet, but fortunately the Kiryat Arba Municipal Library possessed a copy of it.

I began my paper by stating that needless to say one would not deliberately go out to use lard for Chanukah candle, but there are rare occasions when one has no alternative. I have in my house the book "Sparks of Glory" by Moshe Prager which describes how Jews in Concentration Camps during the Nazi Era made extreme efforts to observe mitzvot. One of these incidents describes how in Auschwitz they obtained margarine to light Chanukah candles. Margarine, at least in those days, was often made from fats of non-kosher animals including pigs.

This book was a translation from the Hebrew original, which I did not possess. Because my paper was in Hebrew, I preferred the original Hebrew text. I searched the catalogue of the Kiryat Arba Municipal Library and saw that they had the Hebrew text. Since at that period due to corona there were limitations in the use of the library, I telephoned them and they located this book in the library and it was passed over to me.

What could be the problem in using lard for lighting Chanukah candles? There is a general principle that one can only use for the performance of mitzvot that which one is permitted to eat. However, there are many exceptions to this rule. In the first section of this paper, I discussed this principle and the exceptions to it.

There are also two things from non-kosher species, which specifically are used in the performance of mitzvot, in particular in Tzitzit. One of them is silk from the non-kosher silk worm. The second in techelet which is the blood of the non-kosher chilazon.

I discussed the various attempts to identify the chilazon. One of them was researched in detail by the former Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Yitzchak Herzog. His work appears in a 300-page thesis for a Higher Doctorate he received from the University of London at the period of the First World War. Whilst I was studying at London University in the 1960s, I went to the University Library at Senate House and ordered this thesis to the reading room. Unlike today's theses which have to be bound to rigid specifications, this thesis comprised various piles of loose papers stapled together which were then placed

in a large envelope. As I recollect, there were a number of comments added in ink. A copy of this thesis, I assume from the original, is to be found on the internet.

The second part of my paper, utilises the principles bought in the first part, in order to determine how relevant they are to the case of Chanukah candles, and I concluded that according to many opinions lard could be used.

During the course of the paper, I quoted a large number of books written by Rabbis who lived during different periods and were situated in different locations. I feel that it is important for the reader to know where and when these Rabbis lived. I obtained most of this information from Wikipedia.

As with all my papers a draft is first written and the source material meticulously documented. It is then checked word by word and even letter by letter and after the correction are put it and the Hebrew text is edited for the best style, the paper is then published.

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At the time, most **margarine** was made from animal **fat** such as **pork lard** or beef tallow. When Hippolyte Mege-Mouriez took out his patent in England for **margarine** in 1869, he did so calling it "butterine." In the late 1880s, it was used as the word for **margarine** in the UK until the word "**margarine**" won over. Oct 17, 2002



[www.cooksinfo.com](http://www.cooksinfo.com) › Butter › Dairy

# SPARKS OF GLORY

by

MOSHE PRAGER

*Translated by*

MORDECAI SCHREIBER

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## אליה שפירא

### רבי אליה שפירא



רבי **אליהו** <sup>[1]</sup> **שפירא** ראש מתיבתא ודרשן מפראג (1660 - 14 באפריל 1712), פוסק, מחבר הספרים **אליה רבה** ו**אליה זוטא**.

### תוכן עניינים

**חיו**

**חיבוריו**

**משפחתו**

**לקראת נוספת**

**קישורים חיצוניים**

**זערות שוליים**

### חיו

נולד בפראג לרב בנימין וולף. בצעירותו למד תורה בקאליש, פולין, אצל רבי אברהם אבלי גומבינר, בעל מגן אברהם, ואצל סבו (אבי אביו) ר' אהרן שמעון<sup>[2]</sup> (מופיע בספרות ההלכה בשם **מהר"ש מפראג**). בספריו מזכיר הוא רבות את סבו בשם "זקני הגאון"<sup>[3]</sup>, בתחילה כיהן כרב בעיר קלין ולאחר מכן בעיר טיקטין<sup>[4]</sup>. לבסוף התמנה לדרשן וראש ישיבה בעיר הולדתו פראג.

נפטר בחיי אביו ביום ה' בניסן תע"ב (14 באפריל 1712) בפראג.

גיסו (חתן אביו) הוא הגאון רבי יעקב ריישר בעל הספר "חוק יעקב" ועוד ספרים.

### חיבוריו

חיבורו **אליה זוטא** שהוא פירוש קצר על ספר ה**לבוש** לרבי מרדכי יפה, נדפס במהדורות ה"לבוש".

חיבורו **אליה רבה** שהוא הפירוש הארוך, נכתב אף הוא על סדר ה"לבוש". הספר לא נדפס בחיי המחבר אלא לאחר מותו בידי תלמידיו. כתב היד המקורי אבד בשריפה גדולה בפראג בשנת תקי"ד (1754) יחד עם ספרים נוספים של המחבר שאבדו, והפירוש השתמר רק בהעתק אשר לפי עדות המוציא לאור היה הסר ומטושטש. התלמידים שינו מכוונתו המקורית של המחבר, ובמקום להדפיסו בצמוד לספר ה"לבוש" הדפיסוהו בצמוד ל**שולחן ערוך**. זכר זה גרם לעיתים לאי-הבנה, כאשר דברי "אליה רבה" נסובים על דברי ה"לבוש" ולא על דברי ה"שולחן ערוך". מאוחר יותר נדפס "אליה רבה" כספר בפני עצמו.

שני הספרים נחשבים לספרי יסוד בפסיקה האשכנזית.

כמו כן חיבר גם ספר חידושים על התלמוד, גם הוא בשם "אליה רבה", וזה נדפס על ידי נכדו.

Dates and location of Rabbi Eliahu Shapira (Elia Raba)

	70 <sup>n</sup>	71 <sup>n</sup>	72 <sup>n</sup>	73 <sup>n</sup>
67 X	62 ⊗	44 =	28 X	1 =
70 =	68 =	46 =	24 =	2 X
71 =	69 =	47 X	25 X	3 X
72 =	70 =	48 =	26 X	4 X
73 X	71 =	49 =	27 X	5 =
74 X	72 =	50 X	28 =	6 X
75 ⊗	73 =	51 X	29 =	7 X
76 =	74 =	52 =	30 X	8 =
77 =	75 X	53 =	31 X	9 =
78 =	76 X	54 =	32 ⊗ =	10 =
79 =	77 X	55 =	33 =	11 X
100 ⊗	78 X	56 =	34 X	12 =
101 X	79 X	57 =	35 =	13 =
102 ⊗	80 ⊗	58 X	36 =	14 X
103 =	81 =	59 =	37 =	15 X
104 =	82 =	60 =	38 X	16 X
105 =	83 =	61 =	39 =	17 X
106 =	84 =	62 =	40 =	18 X
107 =	85 =	63 X	41 =	19 =
108 =	86 =	64 =	42 X	20 =
109 =	87 ⊗ =	65 =	43 =	21 X
110 =	88 ⊗ =	66 =	44 =	22 =

### Checking of footnotes

X = footnotes of commonly found books

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