



**A Remote Visit**  
**Chanukah Special**

I was summoned in the winter of 2013 to the chambers of the great Rabbi Aharon Leib Shteinman. Knowing what was coming, I prepared myself for the visit.

The Rabbi, who treated me like a son even during the days I was his student, received me with great warmth and we discussed current events.

He then brought up the issue for which I came to him: my candidacy for the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. He asked me in the past to take up the position, but I reminded him of my father's instruction to refrain from doing so.

This time he was adamant. You father will forgive you, he told me as he asked me to reconsider. He listed several issues which would benefit from my ascent to the Chief Rabbinate.

When he concluded, I told him of my 50 years of activities on behalf of the children of Israel. I told him of the thousands of the Migdal Ohr's students, about the Yeshiva students, about the youth at risk we were saving, and about the new Zoharim Youth Village. He was deeply impressed.

I then explained: these endeavors take up all my time. I spend all my waking hours working for the children; fly around the world to raise funds, and I will not be able to do all this if I become chief rabbi.

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Chanukah<sup>1</sup> is the holiday of beginnings and has several lessons on education.

The Temple's altar was twice rededicated on Chanukah: once during the days of the Prophet Chagai, and the second time during the days of the Hasmonians.

Eight days were devoted for the dedication of the altar during the time of the Tabernacle – the seven days of Moshe's preparations, and the eighth when Aharon and his sons began to serve.

Our Sages did not establish Chanukah as a holiday immediately after the victory, but waited until a year later. Beginnings and setting on a new path, and education in general, require the utmost dedication and focus. You cannot do this hastily without proper thought. Only after a year of thought was Chanukah set as a holiday.



When the Hasmonians won the battle and entered the Temple they found no pure oil with which to light the Menorah. According to Jewish law they could have lit it with impure oil, but did not want to do so, because the rededication of the altar should be done with purity, as should all new beginnings.

A man is commanded to light a candle at home, because before we go to educate the world, we must first put our house in order and ensure our children's education, and only after can we shine light on to the world.

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The Rabbi was deep in thought for several minutes while everyone remained silent. He then suddenly said: "You are doing great things. I would like to pay you a visit."

I was very excited. The rabbi, who was 100 years old, wanted to visit Migdal Ohr. I was waiting for this for years.

I told the Rabbi I was delighted and was waiting for his visit. I then remembered that I had a presentation about Migdal Ohr with me. I told the Rabbi: "I have brought Migdal Ha'emek to you."

I set the presentation up for the rabbi, who may have been viewing a digital screen for the first time in his life. He spent many minutes learning about Migdal Ohr.

"You were right," he said at the end. "You should stick to educating Israel's children."

<sup>1</sup> Chinuch, חינוך, can mean a beginning, a dedication or education.