

# LET THERE BE LIGHT

An 8 Day Mitzvah Challenge



*I believe in the sun even when it is not shining.  
I believe in love when there is no one there.  
I believe in God even when God is silent.*

Found written on a concentration camp wall after World War II

In the Jewish narrative, the very first act of Creation was the creation of light. (Gen. 1:3). The Sages called this primordial light Ohr Ha-Ganu, “the Hidden Light.” Too pure for the current state of the universe, God concealed it for a future, more deserving world.

As we look around since October 7, one wonders if we will ever deserve to see the light. A deep darkness looms around us and people’s internal flames are burning up. People’s sense of safety and belonging has been called into question and feelings of alienation and invisibility are heightened. Many of the hostages are still in captivity and we are still amidst a war.

In a recent speech given by Chuck Schumer on the Senate floor, he laid out the ways in which Jews have felt isolated in the last months, called out recent examples of antisemitism in the U.S., and spoke about how past Jewish traumas are affecting how Jews feel today. The darkness around us is deep.

Scan the QR code or [click here](#), to watch an excerpt from the forty five minute speech.



And yet, in darkness, we must see the light.

For James Baldwin, “*One discovers the light in darkness, that is what darkness is for; but everything in our lives depends on how we bear the light. It is necessary, while in darkness, to know that there is a light somewhere, to know that in oneself, waiting to be found, there is a light.*”

For this reason, we are grateful that Chanukah is upon us and we will gather around light amidst the layers of darkness. Light that will remind us of our responsibility towards finding the cracks within the darkness and to take comfort in our ability to do so.



The Lubavitcher rabbi (19th Century) believed that one concrete way to alleviate darkness is through the performance of Mitzvot (good deeds). In 1967, just before the outbreak of the Six-Day War, when the situation in Israel was dire, the Rebbe initiated the *T'fillin* (*Phylacteries*) campaign, where he instructed his students to wear the ritual object as a symbol of protection. Chasidic philosophy teaches that tefillin serve as a conduit, linking the physical with spiritual and the Rebbe insisted that the mitzvah has deep spiritual potency to affect our everyday life. Because of this, he and his followers attempted to inspire as many Jews, regardless of their spiritual or religious standing, to put on *T'fillin*.

- ◆ **What would it look like to create our own Mitzvah campaign for this moment? How can this spiritual technology help us see the light?**

## CONVERSATION PROMPTS

- ◆ When is a time that you performed a Mitzvah (good deed) and how did it affect your current reality?
- ◆ The Chasidic commentator, Sefat Emet, explains that performing a mitzvah is like lighting an internal candle. What do you think he means by this?

## A MITZVAH CHALLENGE

Let's test out the Rebbe's Mitzvah theory that performing a Mitzvah can lead to lightness and connection. For each night of Chanukah, try performing one of these acts to test it out! [Click here](#) or scan the QR code to complete the Mitzvah Challenge.



On this Chanukah, may you be blessed with eight days of seeing and spreading light in order to illuminate these dark days to inch one step closer to that primordial light.

