

**Dear Friends,**

We are standing here, **erev Shabbos Hagadol.**

What a week this has been. Roller coasters of emotions. Different levels of stresses. So much beauty and so much pain. We've stormed shamayim with our tefillos. We've scrubbed our homes clean of chametz. We've run after toddlers. We've entertained our children with as much joy as we could. **We have created an oasis of calm.** We've tried to have fun. We've been isolated. We've grieved personal and communal losses. Whatever transpired in our individual courts. We are still here.

We've arrived. It's Erev Shabbos Hagadol. **A Shabbos with its own special energy, a Shabbos that carries the fragrance of redemption.** Let's spend a few minutes tapping into the unique gifts of this time.

What was Shabbos Hagadol?

It was a Shabbos of courage, of danger, and of miracles. It was a Shabbos of commitment. The Maharal goes further. He says that **that Shabbos was the birth of our nationhood.** When Klal Yisrael defied the Egyptians to prepare a lamb for the korban Pesach, for the sake of Hakadash Baruch Hu, they did nothing less than reenact the creation of Man.

We know that Adam was the handiwork of Hashem. He saw from one end of the world to the other—the purpose and destiny of creation. And when Chava gave Adam the fruit and he ate, Chazal tell us that “the light of the world was extinguished.” The purpose of the world was derailed. Two thousand years of confusion and darkness ensued. **On Shabbos Hagadol, Klal Yisreal, restored that light. Mankind was once again in touch with his purpose.** Shabbos Hagadol is a tikun of the very first Shabbos, when Adam Harishon was created but disobeyed Hashem's will, bringing darkness into the world. And so the world, after veering wildly into 2000 years of tohu v'voahu, was marching once again to its destination, lamps aflame.

What has all this got to do with us? How do I, in my little house, in my community, in my circumstances relate to this? **How can I integrate the ideas of Shabbos Hagadol into my life?**

To answer this, let's read a midrash on parshas Behaalosecha.

The Midrash tells the story of a king, who wanted to visit his beloved subject.

The subject cleans the house, paints it, buys the best food in the marketplace, buys a new bed and a bedside lamp. The king arrives in his home and at the sight of the carriage, the subject begins to panic. The cushions in his carriage are made with gold thread, the king's coat is beaded with pearls and sapphires. He looks around his small—but clean and presentable house and is mortified. He quickly removes the bed and the lamp. There's no way that the king could sleep on this bed or read by this lamp.

The king walks in, looks around. "I asked you to prepare a place for me to sleep," he said.

The subject opts for the truth.

"I did prepare for you. But when you arrived, I realized how ordinary everything was. I was ashamed and I hid it all away."

The king said, "I disqualify and am mevatel, everything I came with.

**Because you prepared for me with love, I only want to use what is yours."**

And so the king took delight in his lodgings and He took delight in the small lamp, because they were prepared for Him by one who loved Him. The Midrash concludes that **Hashem—who is entirely light, and Who created the sun, moon and stars—preferred the small lantern of Yisrael, the menorah in the Mishkan—because of His love for us.**

Every Shabbos, we light the Shabbos licht. And that small light carries the secret of our connection with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. **It is that small light,**

**those two flickering flames, which welcome Hashem into our ordinary homes.** Because those two flames represent ner Hashem nishmas Adam.

For those of us who have been privileged to hold a newborn, we know that it might be the end of the pregnancy, but it's only the beginning of a very long process. The baby, so utterly dependent upon us, has to grow and develop and come to identify with the ner Hashem nishmas Adam that he is. He has to take his part in rekindling his personal lantern—and thus stoking the flame that is our nation.

A baby grows in the rechem, in the womb. A tzelem Elokim grows in the womb that is each and every Yiddishe home. **We light the neiros Shabbos, and are reminded of how in the womb, there is a ner daluk al rosho, a lamp above the head of the unborn child.** We are reminded that right here, in our homes, today, something is forming, developing, growing. That is the ner Hashem nishmas Adam. **That is the light which is inside each and every one of us.**

We might feel embarrassed. Ashamed. We might feel that we are inadequate, incomplete.

But we are given a message from the king, who comes to visit our homes each Shabbos. **I take pleasure in your home, He says.** I take pleasure in your lamps, your hadlakas neiros, the illumination that is your neshamah, the ner Hashem nishmas Adam that you are. I might have the light of the sun, I might have the moon and the stars. I might have the radiance of all the tzaddikim through all the generations.

But you are lighting this candle to welcome Me. **You are initiating a connection with Me. And so your flickering light is more precious to Me than the sun, the moon, the stars.**

We're standing here at Shabbos Hagadol. **It's a Shabbos of miracles. It's a Shabbos of love.** It's a Shabbos when we showed that Adam HaRishon may have fallen, but Klal Yisrael have risen to the challenge: **we will rekindle the flame that was dimmed.** And though our efforts may at times

feel inadequate, the light that is in our homes—the light that is in our neshamos—is beloved. For with it, we show our capacity to change, to be present, to love, to connect. To welcome Hashem into our modest, humble abodes. **To light our ordinary lamps, with the knowledge that He takes pleasure in our light, that this is the place where He wants to rest. For we are His children. Ner Hashem Nishmas Adam.**

May we be zocheh to feel the Shechinah's loving presence in our homes. **May we feel His acceptance of our simple efforts, our simple homes and hearts.** May it be "lichtig" for all of us. May we be zocheh to be once again in Yerushalyim. **May the ner tamid be lit once more.**

Sincerely,

Mrs. Faigie Zelcer  
Penimi | *Director*

P: 718.514.2525 #101  
E: [fzelcer@penimi.org](mailto:fzelcer@penimi.org)

US: 1266 56th Street Brooklyn, NY 11219  
CA: 460 Champagneur Montreal, QC H2V 3P5