Chanukah & Courage

*Source Sheet by* [*Melissa Kansky*](https://www.sefaria.org/profile/melissa-kansky) *(Sefaria)*

“The miracle wasn't that the oil lasted an additional seven days, but rather that those ancestors lit the first wick at all, without being certain that the light would last long enough to complete the rededication of the Temple. The miracle was that they took the chance, a risk, a leap of faith. They took the first step even though they were not sure they had enough resources to succeed. What is the real miracle of Chanukah? It is the miracle of human courage that empowers us to take risks for the future even in our imperfect, uncertain world. It is the courage, even in the darkest of times, to create our own light.”

– Rabbi Laura Geller

**Where are you in this story?**

 1. When have you been courageous?

 2. What prevents you from acting courageously?

 3. What about your life would be different if you had more courage?

 4. What advice would you give yourself to demonstrate more courage and begin a task, despite uncertainty of its success?

Chanukah - Hillel vs Shammai
Source Sheet by Robbie Medwed (Sefaria)
שבת כ״א ב:ה׳
ת"ר מצות חנוכה נר איש וביתו והמהדרין נר לכל אחד ואחד והמהדרין מן המהדרין ב"ש אומרים יום ראשון מדליק שמנה מכאן ואילך פוחת והולך וב"ה אומרים יום ראשון מדליק אחת מכאן ואילך מוסיף והולך

Shabbat 21b:5
The Sages taught in a baraita: The basic mitzvah of Hanukkah is each day to have a light kindled by a person, the head of the household, for themself and their household.

And the mehadrin, (those who are super strict in the performance of mitzvot), kindle a light for each and every one in the household.

And the mehadrin min hamehadrin, who are even more meticulous, adjust the number of lights daily. Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel disagree as to the nature of that adjustment.

**Beit Shammai** says: On the first day one kindles eight lights and, from there on, gradually decreases the number of lights until, on the last day of Hanukkah, they kindle one light.

**Beit Hillel** says: On the first day one kindles one light, and from there on, gradually increases the number of lights until, on the last day, they kindle eight lights.

שבת כ״א ב:ו׳
אמר עולא פליגי בה תרי אמוראי במערבא ר' יוסי בר אבין ור' יוסי בר זבידא חד אמר טעמא דב"ש כנגד ימים הנכנסין וטעמא דב"ה כנגד ימים היוצאין וחד אמר טעמא דב"ש כנגד פרי החג וטעמא דבית הלל דמעלין בקדש ואין מורידין

Shabbat 21b:6
Ulla said: There were two amora’im in the West, (Eretz Yisrael). who disagreed with regard to this dispute, Rabbi Yosei bar Avin and Rabbi Yosei bar Zevida.

One said that the reason for **Beit Shammai’s opinion** is that the number of lights corresponds to the incoming days, i.e., the future. On the first day, eight days remain in Hanukkah, one kindles eight lights, and on the second day seven days remain, one kindles seven, etc.

The reason for Beit Hillel’s opinion is that the number of lights corresponds to the outgoing days. Each day, the number of lights corresponds to the number of the days of Hanukkah that were already observed.

And one said that the reason for Beit Shammai’s opinion is that the number of lights corresponds to the bulls of the festival of Sukkot: Thirteen were sacrificed on the first day and each succeeding day one fewer was sacrificed (Numbers 29:12–31).

The reason for **Beit Hillel’s opinion** is that the number of lights is based on the principle:

One elevates to a higher level in matters of sanctity and one does not downgrade. Therefore, if the objective is to have the number of lights correspond to the number of days, there is no alternative to increasing their number with the passing of each day.

Source Sheet created on Sefaria by Robbie Medwed

Answer in complete sentences:

1. Which Rabbi’s opinion do you agree with? Explain your answer