

In a commentary on the lighting of the Menorah (golden candelabra in the Tabernacle and Temple) in the Book of Leviticus, the Talmud (Bavli, Tractate Shabbat 22b) offers an interesting interpretation. Leviticus 24:3 orders the Kohanim (Priests) to light the Menorah 'from evening to morning, before the Eternal continuously'. The Talmud then asks the question: why does the Menorah need to be lit at night? In true rabbinic style, the Talmud answers its own question: "Didn't the children of Israel, all forty years that they walked in the wilderness, walk exclusively by God's light, the pillar of fire? Rather, the lighting of the Menorah is testimony to humankind that the *Shechinah* (Divine Presence) rests among Israel."

This is a beautiful text that speaks directly to the experience of Hanukkah and the mitzvah of *pirsumei nisa*, the 'publicizing of the miracle' through lighting our *hannukiyot* in our window sills, sharing our light for all the world to see. Hanukkah

family heirlooms, we are still encouraged to sit with the question that the Talmud poses. What does it mean for us to shine our light 'from evening till morning', in the gathering darkness of our times?

Many of us were shocked and heartbroken to hear of the attack on the rabbinic home in Monsey as well as the other antisemitic incidents during the days of the festival. There is no denying that the United States are experiencing an uptick in antisemitic harassment and violence. It is natural for us to feel unsettled by it, to doubt the assumptions that Jews are safe in the United States – the most welcoming and hospitable of nations in much of Jewish history. The impulse to turn inwards is a normal and understandable one. And yet, we are called to shine our light for all humanity. Not in spite of the darkness, but because of it. Shining our light is not meant to drain us; to tap us out; to feel that we must do the hard work of confronting bigotry when we all know that the moral answer is