

MANHATTAN HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
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Chanukah

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MALEK

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From the desk of the Editors

The *Gemara* in *Maseches Shabbos* discusses the well-known argument between *Beis Shammai* and *Beis Hillel* concerning the ideal, *me-hadrin-min-hamehadrin* technique for performing *mitzvas ner Chanukah*. *Beis Shammai* maintains that you start with 8 candles on the first night and *subtract* one each night, while *Beis Hillel* insists that you begin with just one candle and *add* one each night. A possible explanation for the position of *Beis Shammai* is that it is *k'neged parei hachag*; it corresponds to the bulls, the *korbanos* brought for the nations of the world on the holiday of *Sukkos*, which were counted down. The *Maharsha* explains that the *Gemara* does not mean to suggest that there is any connection between the *neiros* and the *parim*. Rather, it is presenting a precedent for making an exception, when appropriate, to the general rule of *ma'alín bakodesh v'ain moridin*, which calls for 'ever increasing levels of sanctity. Perhaps, though, we can discern a connection. In *Parshas Pinchas*, Rashi explains that we diminish the number of *parei hachag* each day to symbolize that the nations of the world will grow weaker over time, until everyone recognizes the true *Borei Olam*. The holiday of *Chanukah* is a celebration of *Geulah*; the specific *Geulah* we experienced in the days of the *Chashmona'im*, as well as the numerous other *Geulos* throughout time. For this reason we sing the beautiful *piyut*, *Ma'oz Tzur*, which recalls the redemptions from the many *galuyos* we have endured, and ends with a plea for the final *Geulah*. Based on this we can suggest that *Ner Chanukah* is closely connected to the *parei hachag*, for it, too, symbolizes the count-down to the ultimate redemption.

How appropriate it is, then, that the *parshiyos* which are read on *Shabbos Chanukah* each year are those that recount the stories of *mechiras* Yosef and the reunification of Yaakov *Avinu* and his family! Those stories highlight how the *sin'as chinam* of the *shevatim* toward Yosef led to the sale of their brother, and ultimately to *galus*. At the same time, we see the power of *ahavas chinam* to bring about *geulah* in Yosef's willingness to put himself in danger by ordering his guards out of the room, so as to spare those same brothers embarrassment when he revealed his identity.

MHS places a particular emphasis on *Ahavas Yisrael*. The atmosphere is constantly charged with love and happiness and we feel that there is always someone who cares.

We, the MHS students, know that it is incumbent upon every one of us as *B'nos Yisrael* to continue to follow our glorious *mesorah* and illuminate the world with the *Torah* and *middos tovos* our parents and *mechanchos* have taught us.

It's our hope that this edition of *Moadim* sheds light on the beauty and depth of *Chanukah*, enhancing the joy of the *chag* for each and every girl.

With love, wishing you a *Freilichen Chanukah*,

The Moadim Crew

Message from the Menacheles

In the *Haftarah* of *Shabbos Chanukah* the *Navi Zecharyah* evocatively depicts his vision of the golden *menorah* of the *Beis Hamikdash*. In his vision, *Zecharyah* sees oil miraculously flowing into the *menorah* of its own accord. The meaning of this prophetic vision, a *malach* informs him, is that success comes for the Jewish people, “לֹא בְחַיִל וְלֹא בִכְחַי אִם בְּרוּחִי”, ‘not by strength, nor by might, but by My spirit, says Hashem.’

In essence, this is the *menorah* that was present at the miracle of *Chanukah*, when a small amount of oil inexplicably kept the lights burning brightly for eight days. The *Chashmonaim*, who fought a spiritual battle for the survival of *Torah* life, were granted Divine salvation.

The oil is flowing into the collective candelabra of our lives on so many levels, *lehodos ule-halel*. Surely, as we sit around, observing the flickering candles reflected in the wide eyes of our beloved children, we are grateful for the *nissim venifla’os* that have brought us to this moment.

The lights of the *Menorah* are a rich and multi-faceted experience far beyond the scope of this paragraph or periodical, requiring intensive study and deep understanding. But something we can all relate to, is the gratitude owed to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* for allowing us to belong to a nation whose identity, whose *raison d’etre*, is the unadulterated *limud vekiyum haTorah* valiantly upheld by the *Chashmonaim* as they vanquished their enemies. I was immensely moved to read the accounts of “בְּאוֹרָךְ נִרְאָה אֹרֶךְ”, a glimpse into the *Teshuvah* odyssey of the three esteemed MHS families, the Gerbers, the Mandelbaums, and the Pensons. How compelling to read about the pride children take in parents who made such dramatic changes and who expressed joy and fulfillment as their lives were forever enriched. Their families bear eloquent testimony to the wisdoms they embraced. They, too, experienced *siyata diShmaya* as the oil flowed on. These riveting *teshuvah* accounts are particularly appropriate to relate on *Chanukah*. The *P’nei Yehoshua* explains that on that original *Chanukah*, while it would have been permissible to use the impure oil under the circumstances of general impurity (*tumah hutrah betzibbur*), Hashem wanted to indicate that in the aftermath of the collective national *teshuvah* process, the relationship between Himself and *Knesses Yisrael* had been fully restored. He transformed nature to demonstrate that fact.

It is my hope and prayer that the *Divrei Torah* and artwork in this lovely publication enhance your *Chanukah* experience and add to it a deeper dimension.

For my part, I am forever grateful for students who embrace the *Torah-true chinuch* they are privileged to receive in the hallowed walls of our beloved MHS. In a decadent world, they are pure cruses of oil who will b”H illuminate the world with their *Torah* and *ma’asim tovim*.

A freilichen Chanukah,

T. Yanofsky

With special thanks to Rebbetzin Peshi Neuburger, brilliant teacher and editor,
Mrs. Dena Szpilzinger talented layout advisor and
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Michali Rosenberg, Elky Schwartz and Chavi Weiner for a most impressive publication.

A Lesson on Emunas Chachamim

As we all know, the *mitzvah* of Chanukah isn't mentioned in the Torah, since it happened long after we received the Torah. However, Hashem is above time, and we can therefore learn about specific references to Chanukah in the Torah. Hashem used the Torah to create the world, so we know that everything that happened or ever will happen is mentioned in the Torah.

The first allusion to Chanukah that we find in the Torah is that the 25th word in the Torah is "*ohr*", which means light, hinting to the fact that we begin to light the menorah on the 25th day of Kislev. Another allusion to Chanukah can be found when the Torah describes the travels of Beni Yisrael from the land of Mitzrayim to Eretz Yisroel. The Torah writes that the 25th place where Bnei Yisroel camped was called "Chashmonah"—"וַיֵּצֵאוּ מִמִּצְרָיִם בְּחֹשֶׁךְ" (Bamidbar 33:29). This alludes to the Chashmonaim family who led the Maccabim in the battles against the Yevanim, after which they rested on the 25th day of Kislev.

One question that arises upon studying the *mitzvah* of *hadlakas neiros* is why we make a *bracha* saying "אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וציוונו"—"who sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to light the Chanukah candles"—if Hashem only hinted to *ner* Chanukah in the Torah but did not outright command us to light the menorah? Isn't *hadlakas neiros* a *mitzvah miderabanan*? The answer lies in the Rambam's explanation in Mishneh Torah 11:3; while Hashem never commanded us regarding *ner* Chanukah, He did command us to obey the instructions of future *chachamim*. In fact, the Gemara in Sanhedrin (88b) says that we are supposed to be stricter with the instructions of our *chachamim* because they are more precious to Hashem than his own, just like the words of a child are more precious to a parent or a teacher than his own words. Chanukah was instituted by the *chachamim* after the Jews miraculously beat the Yevanim. It is Hashem who sanctified us and commanded us to obey the *chachamim* who instructed us to light the menorah.

The *mitzvah* of *ner* Chanukah teaches us a very important lesson about *emunas chachamim* and how careful we must be to follow every commandment of our *chachamim*, because they are so precious to HaShem.

☞ Rikki Shreiber



Rikki Genack, 11th Grade

Mitzvos: the Maccabees Dedication to Perform Them

The Midrash Toras Kohanim on Parshas Tzav states that the menorah in the Beis Hamikdash was lit from the fire burning on the *mizbeach ha'chitzon*. Based on this *midrash* and a Gemara in Yoma, the Rambam *paskens* that this is indeed the *halacha* for lighting the menorah. However, this *halacha* seems to conflict with the narrative of the Chanukah story as described in the Gemara. Specifically, how did the Maccabees light the menorah on the first night of Chanukah if they had no *mizbeach* to light it from? The earliest time they could have re-consecrated the *mizbeach* would have been the morning of the 25th of Kislev, because the *mizbeach* can only be made *kodesh* again with the morning *korban*. How, then, did they light the menorah without the *mizbeach* on the first night of Chanukah?

Sefer Siach Chochma cites an answer to this question in the name of Rav Eliashiv zt"l, saying that the Maccabees did not actually fulfill the *mitzvah* of lighting the menorah! The lighting was done as a *zecher*, with the intent to mimic but not actually fulfill the *mitzvah*. Furthermore, Rav Eliashiv suggests that they did not use the real menorah, which had either been stolen or left impure by the Yevanim. Instead, they built a newly crafted wooden menorah. While it did not fulfill the *mitzvah* of lighting the menorah, this lighting did still fulfil the goal of bringing light into the Beis HaMikdash.

This approach seems to fit well with a famous Pnei Yehoshua. The Pnei Yehoshua points out that it seems that the entire *neis* of the *shemen* was unnecessary, since the entire *tzibbur* was spiritually impure as a result of the battles with the Yevanim. In such a scenario, one is allowed to light the menorah in a state of impurity. The Pnei Yehoshua answers that the *neis* was a result of Bnei Yisrael yearning to do the *mitzvah* in its best possible form. In recognition of their yearning, Hashem brought about the possibility that they could do the *mitzvah* in this way. We should all be inspired by the Maccabees' dedication and inspiration, and perform our own *mitzvos* in the most meaningful way possible.

✍️ Miriam Landau



A Lesson in Gratitude

The holiday of Chanukah has many central themes. One of the primary themes is *hoda'a*: thanking Hashem for everything He does for us, whether we know about it or not. Part of thanking Hashem is making special *brachos* in specific situations. For example, the *chachamim* created a *bracha* that one recites when they see a place where a miracle happened: "ברוך... שעשה ניסים לאבותינו במקום הזה" — "...who made miracles for our forefathers in this place".

One might ask; can one say the *bracha* when one is reminded of a miracle, not just when one is in the spot where the miracle happened? A similar question is asked about someone who has not lit *neros* Chanukah and is walking down the street and sees a lit *chanukiyah*. Does that person have an obligation to say the *bracha* of "שעשה ניסים לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה"? The answer is—yes, he does. Why does he make the *bracha* even if he has not lit candles? The primary obligation of חנוכה and זכר הנס and פרסומי ניסא. Just seeing the candles is enough to remind him of the miracles Hashem did for the Jews during the time of Chanukah. One thus fulfills the obligation of remembering the miracle.

We learn from the above situation that not only does one say a *bracha* when one is in a place where a miracle happened, but also when one is reminded of the miracle. The *אבודרהם* explains the source of this *halacha* through Yisro's behavior when he joins Moshe in the desert. Yisro says that Bnei Yisrael is blessed. Even though he did not see all the miracles that happened to them, and he was not at any of the sites where the miracles occurred, he can still bless them. Why? Because by seeing Bnei Yisrael, who serve as a

reminder for the miracle, it is like he saw the miracles firsthand. This sets a precedent for making "שעשה ניסים" when looking at Chanukah candles on the street. Although the passerby did not see the candles being lit, he can still make a *bracha* because it reminds him of the miracle that happened.

The Rogatchover states that nowadays, we do not say a *bracha* when we see lit Chanukah candles. However, we can still learn from this *halachic* opinion about the nature of the *mitzvah* and the importance of פרסומי ניסא; once upon a time, we were able to make a *bracha* on simply seeing lit Chanukah candles. The importance of פרסומי ניסא teaches us a very important life lesson; the importance of gratitude and being able to recognize Hashem in the things we see.

🕯️ *Mikaella Inzlicht*
(הגיוני הלכה: Source)



Rina Szpilzinger, 12th Grade

A Lesson on Tznius from the Yom Tov of Chanukah:

On Pesach, we celebrate the massive, awesome *neis* of Yetzias Mitzrayim by having a *Pesach Seder* with our families in the privacy of our homes. On Shavuot, we stay up all night learning Torah in our homes to show our dedication to the Torah that HaKadosh Baruch Hu bestowed to Klal Yisroel through magnificent *nissim*. When it comes to these enormous *nissim* that HaKadosh Baruch Hu performed for us, we celebrate them in a seemingly private manner. However, why then do we place specific emphasis on celebrating what appears to be the quieter *neis* of the *pach hashemen* in a manner that publicizes the miracle to the world—through *persumei nissah*?

The Chasam Sofer explains that the *neis* of the *pach hashemen* is different from any of the other *nissim* we *yidden* celebrate. The *neis* of the *pach hashemen* was a miracle that was seen by very few—only the *kohanim* in the Beis HaMikdash witnessed this incredible miracle. All other *nissim* that we celebrate as a nation are miracles that the entire Klal Yisroel witnessed together. For example, all of Klal Yisroel experienced *krias Yam Suf* together. It is specifically because the *neis* of the *pach hashemen* was done on such a small scale that we commemorate it on a large scale, in a public manner. By making it known to all Jews, we give validity to the *neis* and establish it as true.

However, perhaps there is a deeper explanation that can lend insight into our very own lives. Quiet miracles can achieve that which larger, more obvious miracles cannot. Large miracles often are done to prove a point; *Matan Torah* revealed Klal Yisroel as the *Am HaNivchar*, and *krias Yam Suf* made the whole world tremble. Small miracles, on the other hand, are much more personal. They connect the recipient to HaKadosh Baruch Hu in ways that larger, more glorious miracles cannot. It shows the recipient Hashem's closeness and endearment to them specifically, as they can clearly see that Hashem did something extraordinary for them individually. The actual act may seem to be "less," but the inner love for us can be seen so much more clearly. What is important is not always how great something seems to everyone around us; very often what is so much more valuable is how something small impacts us on a personal level. It is for this reason that we place unusual emphasis on publicizing the "smaller" *neis* of the *pach hashemen*; things done in private, more modest ways are often so much more valuable than things done in blaring lights for all to witness.

🕊️ Emma Cohen (Adapted from a Dvar Torah from Short Vort)

A Lesson on Enhancing Avodas Hashem

There is a halacha that states, "*tumah hutra b'tzibur*," (Pesachim 77a). This means that when performing an *avodah* that is for the entire nation, *tumah* does not make it *pasul*. Having this in mind, we ask why it was necessary for Hashem to perform the *neis* that allowed the pure oil to last for eight days of Chanukah. There was plenty of oil that was *tamei*, which, according to this *halacha*, would be allowed to light the menorah, since lighting the menorah is *avodas tzibur*.

The Kotzker Rebbe offers an insightful response to this question; while *tumah* does not affect the *tzibur* under normal circumstances, since this was a new beginning, rededicating the Bais HaMikdash, it needed to be perfectly pure, without any shred of *tumah*, even if the *tamei* oil was technically permissible.

This concept imparts a beautiful lesson that is especially appropriate for Chanukah. The war waged by the Chashmonaim was not for their lives, but for the soul of Am Yisroel. While many Jews had sunk to the depths of *chilul Shabbos* and neglecting *bris milah*, it didn't start there. It started with very subtle inclusions of Greek culture into the Jewish lifestyle. After years of debate among the different segments of the population whether these minor inclusions were harmful or not, Greek culture gradually seeped in, with devastating results. This is the lesson of Chanukah. It is our job to keep the oil pure, even if the alternative is technically 100% kosher. What is "technically kosher" today can lead to a "*treif*" tomorrow. Hashem performed the *neis* of the pure oil to help us realize the essential question of doing what is okay versus doing what is better. This lesson urges us not to cut corners in our *avodas HaShem*, but rather to try our best to make sure our actions are as pure as they can be.

🕊️ Shani Brody

Looking for Light in the Darkness:— The persistence of the Chashmonaim

Why do we celebrate eight days of Chanukah? The common reason cited is that the oil that should have stayed lit for one day remained burning bright for eight days. If so, why do we celebrate eight days of Chanukah? There was nothing special about the oil burning for the first day! As such, shouldn't we only celebrate Chanukah for seven days?

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l answers that the fact that Maccabees went looking and were able to find even one vial of sealed oil is itself a miracle that requires commemorating. Most people wouldn't even bother to search after such a devastating destruction. Yet, the Maccabees didn't despair and looked for an unopened vial. This is why the first night of Chanukah is commemorated, and we light the candles for eight nights.

This is the miracle of Chanukah. Although the Jewish people have been through countless hardships, we never lose hope or give up our faith. We continue to yearn for closeness to Hashem.

☞ Ruki Schwartz



Ellie Trapeo, 10th Grade

A Deep Perspective on Al Hanissim

On Chanukah and Purim, we recite Al Hanissim in *davening* and *benching*. The words of the *tefillos* on the two days differ in two significant ways. First, in the Chanukah edition, the *tefillah* states that Hashem stood with our ancestors “in times of trouble,” which is not mentioned on Purim. Second, on Chanukah, unlike on Purim, we mention the distinctive qualities of our side as compared to those of our enemy. For example, we mention the mighty versus the weak and the many versus the few. Why do we have this differentiation between the prayers on both holidays?

The Shaarei Orah answers that these differences reflect the goal and threat posed by each of our enemies. Haman, in the Purim story, wanted our people to be killed. Thus, our only options were succeeding by living or failing by dying. In contrast, the Greeks waged a different type of war. Their goal was to remove the Torah, destroying the Jewish soul. In such a situation, victory included actively resisting or aggressively reacting to their ideology. The choice of fully reaching out to Hashem became the antidote to the war. Thus, we could only be successful in the battle for our soul by fighting and showcasing our differences from our enemies through *tefillah* and *mitzvos*.

When the Jewish people felt the agony of being in a society where their Jewish souls were in danger of not having Torah in their lives and in the world, Hashem recognized and appreciated their perspective and thus allowed them to be successful. In essence, Hashem applied *middah k'neged middah*; because we acknowledged that the threat to our spirituality was indeed a source of distress to us, Hashem was willing to intercede. As long as we saw the difference between ourselves and our enemies, both spiritually and physically, and were bothered, Hashem readily saved us from our enemy.

Al Hanissim mentions the finding of a small, unopened, jug of oil. The concept of finding oil is *middah k'neged middah* in a beautiful way. We know that in many instances, Torah is equated with light. The Jewish people were engaged in a spiritual war against their enemies. They illuminated their hearts by keeping the *mitzvos*. They yearned to bring the beauty of the Torah back into the world. In that merit, Hashem rewarded them in kind by providing them with an unopened jar of pure olive oil in order to “lighten” up their lives.

May Hashem continue to bestow His light upon us.

🕊️ Lizzie Boczeko

The Truth about Nissim

We are quickly approaching the *yom tov* of Chanukah, the days in which we thank Hashem for all the נסים he did for us in the time of the מנכבים. One of the well known נסים that Hashem did for us relates to the bottle of oil. The oil that was found in the בית המקדש had enough capacity to burn for one night only, yet Hashem made a נס and it burned for eight nights. The ספר בית יוסף asks why we celebrate eight nights of Chanukah. If there was enough oil to burn for one night, then only the extra seven nights were miraculous. Shouldn't we celebrate for only seven nights?

One of the most famous answers to this question teaches us a lesson we can incorporate into our day-to-day lives. The answer is based on a story in Maseches Taanis (25a). One Friday after candle lighting, Reb Chanina's daughter noticed the oil holder for the Shabbos candles was mistakenly filled with vinegar instead of oil and thought it would not burn into Shabbos. Reb Chanina told his daughter not to worry, as the same Hashem who causes oil to burn can just as easily make vinegar burn. Miraculously, the vinegar burned all Shabbos. We can see from this story that any natural occurrence is also considered a kind of miracle. We celebrate eight days of Chanukah instead of seven days because ה' wanted to remind us that everything Hashem does for us is a נס, and the fact that oil burns at all is itself a true miracle.

🕊️ Ilana Rosner

What's the Big Deal?

Chanukah is certainly an enjoyable holiday. We have donuts, light the menorah, spend time with family, and play *dreidel*. However, if we consider the reason we celebrate Chanukah, it can look a little over-hyped. We celebrate Chanukah because the oil in the menorah burned for longer than it was supposed to. If we take a look at all the other *yomim tovim* we celebrate, each commemorates a major event that shapes the nation we are today. On Pesach, we gained our freedom; on Shavuot, G-d revealed himself and gave us the Torah; and on Purim, G-d saved us from complete annihilation. Then, we have this holiday called Chanukah which we celebrate because some oil stayed burning for a few more days. How does that even begin to compare to all the other great events? This event doesn't seem to have changed our lives much. What would have happened had the oil not stayed lit? At the worst, we would have just missed a few nights and continued lighting the menorah the next week. Let's see if we could find something meaningful in this celebration.

Rabbi Fohrman offers a beautiful explanation of the meaning of Chanukah, drawing a parallel between the miracle of the oil and Moshe's encounter with the burning bush. After recapturing the Beis Hamikdash, the Jews do not have enough oil to light the menorah for more than one day, yet, miraculously, the fire stays lit, and the oil keeps burning without being consumed. This miracle is remarkably similar to something that Moshe sees in Parshat Shemot; וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה הַסִּנֵּי בֵּעֹר בְּאֵשׁ וְהַסִּנֵּי אֵינֶנּוּ אָכָל (Exodus 3:2) — Moshe sees a bush on fire, but the bush, much like the oil of Chanukah, is not being consumed.

Before Hashem calls out to Moshe from within the burning bush, the *pasuk* specifically points out that Moshe stops to see what is going on; “וַיֵּרָא ה' כִּי סָר לִרְאוֹת” — Hashem sees that he paused to take a look, and, as a result “וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו אֶל-לִקְיָם מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּנֵּי וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה מִנְּשָׂה” — Hashem calls out to Moshe. (Exodus 3:4). It seems that stopping to notice is the reason that Hashem reveals himself to Moshe at this point.

Many times, we see things that just can't be. Do we stop and ask ourselves what is truly going on, or do we allow our preconceived notions to change our perception of reality? The common thread between these two stories is that both are subtle miracles which change nature in slight ways. It would have been easy for these “small” miracles to be ignored, since they are so similar to regular life. It is important for us to recognize the small miracles in life, to realize that there is a transcendent force beyond us in the world, that is, G-d's power. G-d is almighty, and for Him, the miraculous is just as ordinary as the rules of nature.

The lesson of Chanukah is that we must leave behind our preconceived notions of “possible” and “impossible”; if we notice the miraculous events in our lives, and choose to live a life connected to Hashem, we can be subject to everyday miracles, and live our lives without being constrained by what we believe is possible. If we want to see the possibility of miracles, then we have to be open to the fact that anything is possible.

A freilichen Chanukah!

Leah Borenstein

(Based on an idea from Rabbi David Fohrman - Alpha Beta)

Glimpses of our Gedolim, Masters of our Mesorah



Chanukah was a topic which was particularly close to Rav Hutner's heart, and he tried to shed light on its significance through many of his ma'amarim. How fitting that his yahrtzeit is on Chaf Kislev, just five days before the start of Chanukah.

תנצב"ה

By: Frieda Bamberger

Rav Yitzchak Hutner, zt"l

Rav Yitzchak Hutner (1906-1980) was the revered and charismatic *Rosh Yeshivah* of *Mesivta Yeshiva Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin*. A disciple of the Alter of Slabodka, Rav Hutner distinguished himself as a master molder of *talmidim*. He refused to allow his *yeshivah* to offer a one-size-fits-all style of *chinuch*, and instead dedicated the better part of his days and nights to nurturing and developing the unique strengths and talents of each of his students. He was insistent on raising the banner of the honor of Torah, and would not settle for anything less than absolute allegiance to *Gedolei Yisrael*. His own close relationships were reflected in the breadth of his style, which creatively melded elements of two worlds - *misnagdim* and *chassidim*. In addition to his brilliant mind, he possessed a sharp wit; many humorous quips are quoted in his name. For example, as the *seudah* was being served one *Leil Shabbos*, the *Rosh Yeshivah* commented to the *talmidim* lining his dining room table that it is proper *derech erez* to wait until everyone is served and seated before starting to eat. He looked around. "But the real *nisayon* arises when the soup is placed before you.... You have to choose between hot soup and cold *derech erez* or warm *derech erez* and cold soup..."

Rav Hutner authored the *Pachad Yitzchak*, a multi-volume work of profound thought on the *Moadim*. On each *Yom Tov*, Rav Hutner would deliver discourses, which he called *Ma'amarim*, to many followers. In these, he'd reveal the hidden beauty and unfathomable depth of those special days.

The Supremacy of Torah in his Life:

In September 1970, Rav Hutner was returning from *Eretz Yisrael* to America when his plane was hijacked by a radical Palestinian group and taken to Amman, Jordan. Traveling with him were his daughter, Rebbeitzin Bruria David, the founder of *Beis Yaakov Yerushalayim* (BJJ), his son-in-law, Rav Yonasan David, *shlita*, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Yeshivas Pachad Yitzchok* and a number of close *talmidim*. There is a famous photograph which captures him sitting on the hijacked plane, calmly learning with his son-in-law. It is obvious how greatly he valued Torah, for he was engaged in its study even when his life was in grave danger. For two weeks, he suffered through the unbearable Jordan heat and a shortage of food and drink. All over the world, Jews davened for his safe return. There was abundant joy and relief when he was miraculously released right before *Rosh Hashanah*.

Rav Hutner on Chanukah

In *Pachad Yitzchak*, Rav Hutner highlights the singular experience which the *Chanukah* lights provide for us. Unlike previous subjugations endured by *Klal Yisrael*, the unique danger posed by *Yavan* resulted from their determination to convince us that they had a wisdom which could compete with the *Chochmas HaTorah*, and thereby do away with the distinction between us and the other nations of the world. The antidote to their proposal can be derived from the *halachah* which requires us to learn something we enjoy. The only joy that provides *ta'anug ha'amiti*, or true pleasure, is learning *Chochmas HaTorah* which connects us to its Giver and the power of eternity. And in that connection, lies the difference between our wisdom and theirs. The triumph of *Chanukah* was that it freed us from the spiritual darkness which results from enjoying other branches of wisdom as if they were equivalent to Torah. Gazing at the *Neiros Chanukah* brings to mind the *Or HaTorah*, the pure light of Torah's *Nitzchius*, and ought to be an exalting experience.

Based on ideas from Chanukah In a New Light by Rabbi Pinchas Stolper, and "Chanukah Incandescence from the Pachad Yitzchok," by Rabbi Yaakov Feitman (Yated Ne'eman 12/14/16)

From the collection of Rav Hutner's Quotable Quotes:

"Torah is not built - it's planted."

"Live a broad life, not a double life."

*Rav Yitzchak Hutner
dancing with
Rav Moshe Feinstein*



As my grandfather, father, and brothers were all *talmidim* of Yeshivas Chaim Berlin, the teachings, vignettes, and axioms of Rav Hutner have forever enriched my family's world view. One story that figures prominently in the Yanofsky family lore truly captures Rav Hutner's keen ability to shape *talmidim* by honing in on their potential talents and aptitudes.

At one Purim *mesibah*, 6-year old Eli was dancing and tapping to the rhythm of the festive music. Rav Hutner took note of the child at the back of the room. After Purim, he summoned Eli's father, a *talmid* who would become a noted *rav* and *posek*, and told him to buy a piano because his child was musically gifted. A few days passed and, again, Rav Hutner cornered Eli's father, this time to ask if the piano had been purchased. He admitted that it had not, muttering something under his breath about the steep price of pianos. Rav Hutner purportedly said, "Sell your couch if you must, but buy that piano!" Being a devoted *talmid* who could not disregard the directive of his beloved *rebbe*, Eli's father purchased the piano. Today, Eli is a fine *talmid chacham* and a sought after musician who leads one of the top orchestras in the world of Jewish music. Just one of countless personalities nurtured by the *mechanech* par excellence, Rav Yitzchok Hutner, z"l



*Rav Hutner at a Purim
celebration in his yeshiva*



Rav Hutner at the wedding of Jules Brody

My grandfather's close relationship with Rav Yitzchak Hutner, zt"l embodied the mandate of *Chazal*, עשה לך רב. My "Papa," R. Yehuda Yudel (Jules) Brody z"l passed away recently on ח' תשרי, and in addition to feeling a tremendous personal void, my family is saddened to have lost the man who was our link in the glorious chain of *Klal Yisroel*. Papa's connection to Rav Hutner began with his own grandfather, Rav Shlomo Glass, who held positions of leadership and was on the board of

Directors in Chaim Berlin and its close affiliate, the Yeshiva of Eastern Parkway. Papa's father, Rav Eliezer Brody z"l, learned in Slabodka, the *yeshiva* where Rav Hutner spent his formative years, and the two enjoyed a warm friendship. My grandfather's unusual proficiency in learning was recognized when he was quite young, and allowed him to skip the eighth grade and enroll early in the high school of the *Mesivta* of Chaim Berlin. He studied in Rav Hutner's *shiur* for over ten years, and was appointed to write his *rebbe's* official lecture notes for more than a year. The Torah of Rav Hutner was very dear to my grandfather, and his deep wish to disseminate it moved him to facilitate the publication of "*Chanukah* in a New Light," "*Purim* in a New Light," and "*Reshimos HaLev*." This necessitated purchasing hundreds of copies of each *sefer* to help defray the cost of publishing. (To this day, there are stacks of Rav Hutner's *sefarim* piled high in my grandfather's office, should anybody want them.)

The points of connection between Papa and his revered *rebbe* spanned many decades, and are too numerous to list. Yet there are some highlights. During the late 1950's and early 1960's, Papa regularly attended the public *shiurim* of Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, which he would later relay privately, word-for-word, to Rav Hutner. Most fittingly, my grandparents asked Rav Hutner to honor them by being the *Mesader Kiddushin* at their wedding in 1966. Thankfully, he managed to make it despite a major blizzard which complicated travel conditions that night. Four years later, when Rav Hutner's plane was hijacked, Papa used all of his political connections to try and rescue him. On *Chanukah*, which is celebrated just days after Rav Hutner's *yahrzeit*, my family will certainly reminisce with pride about Papa's close association with, and the boundless *hakaras hatov* he felt toward, this *gadol b'Yisrael*.

🕊 Shani Brody



Toras HaNazir, authored by Rav Hutner, zt"l at the age of 18.

ושמחת בחגך: SPOTLIGHT ON SIMCHAH SHEL MITZVAH

What Lights Up Your Life?

The online shiurim of Rabbi Yitzchok Breitowitz from Ohr Somayach. Unbeknownst to him across the ocean in Israel, he has added a deeper dimension to my life through his Torah thoughts on the yomim tovim, parshah, and Jewish thought.
💖 S. Tendler

The yemei iyun at MHS, which always fill me with the desire to climb higher and work on myself to become a better person

The davening of young children. Siddurim held upside down, mumbo jumbo syllables which mimic what our davening sounds like to them, but faces which are so earnest, and reflect their absolute confidence in Hashem's attentiveness to them.
💖 Reb. Neuburger

Knowing that there is a Plan
💖 Basya Saperstein

Singing and davening to Hashem through song...kumzitz style
💖 Ayelet Reichman

My teachers!
💖 Naomi Hymowitz

Watching my grandmother prepare her candles on Motzei Shabbos, in preparation for the next Shabbos.
💖 Frieda Bamberger

Playing games and spending time with family on Shabbos and yom tov!
💖 Noa Szpilzinger

Being able to bring a smile to my adorable little sister's face every Tuesday night at My Extended Family.
💖 Ariella Gold

Walking through the doors of MHS
💖 Lily Perl

Doing something for someone else.
💖 Esti Goldberger

The smiling faces of my family members as we sit in a circle on the floor playing dreidel
– Tamar Abittan

The bright dancing lights of the menorah
– Basya Saperstein

Knowing that no matter what happens Hashem will always be there to guide me through everything and every stage in my life

🕊️ *Esther Ryba*

Seeing everyone singing Acheinu together before each mincha!

🕊️ *Rikki Klein*

The hugs and words of encouragement from my friends who I know are always there for me.

🕊️ *Chana Sava*

Those “aha” moments when you see how everything and anything connects to Torah.

Whether it's understanding a pasuk in a way I've never seen it before, seeing my students recognize Torah and yad Hashem in history, or watching my children's excitement at learning a pasuk or letter of the aleph-beis for the first time, that passion and thrill that comes from seeing Torah come alive keeps my world bright.

🕊️ *Mrs. Levinson*

Sitting around the shabbos table, sharing divrei Torah, and getting closer to Hashem as a family.

🕊️ *Rashi Bell*

The electric energy of classroom learning. After pandemic teaching, I don't think I'll take a face-to-face fully-attended class for granted again.

🕊️ *Mrs. Rosensweig*

My grandchildren!

🕊️ *Mrs. Leitman*

זאת חנוכה...the last night... seeing all the מנורות with all the flames lit and burning brightly! It fills me with such love, gratitude, and pride!

🕊️ *Reb. Fink*

Observing students reveling in their learning. When students report an epiphany or a class that really resonated with them, I am so grateful to work together with colleagues who are a *guiding light* to our students.

🕊️ *Mrs. Yanofsky*

The bursts of color in nature. Flowers. Fruits. Vegetables. Birds. Fish. Rainbows. All could have been presented to us in black and white. Instead, a panorama of rich color fills the world, leihanos bahem b'nei adam, so that humankind will find pleasure in creation.

🕊️ *Reb. Neuburger*

Lighting the candles together with my family

Rachel

Each spark of the Chanukah candles

Batsheva Benitzhak

The sound of laughter and cheerfulness as we sit around the table eating delicious latkes and sharing Divrei Torah

Yehudis Kundin

באורך נראה אור (תהלים לו)

'By Your light we will see light.'

As we gaze at the *neiros Chanukah*, we reflect not only on the light of the *menorah* which far exceeded the Jewish people's expectations, but, as well, on the many times in our history where a spark of Torah's light has done the same, and forever ignited the *neshamos* of Jews whose eyes dared to see it. Can you share with us your pride in a close family member or friend who, with insight and courage, chose to embrace that light?

My father and mother were both raised in secular, upper class American homes. My mother, in particular, traveled all over the world and enjoyed all the luxuries one could dream of. Still, she felt as if something was missing. Often, when people meet individuals who have committed themselves to a more religious lifestyle, they ask if something went wrong during their childhood which led them to make such a dramatic change. In my mother's case, nothing at all went wrong, and she suffered no loss. Nor did she feel that she sacrificed greatly as she took on the observance of *mitzvos*. Her move towards *Yiddishkeit* was entirely positive, and as a result of that move, my mother believes she gained everything.

Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis was a major inspirational figure in my mother's heroic life transformation. After stumbling upon a class given by the rebbetzin, my mother became passionate about Torah and determined to learn it. Every day since then she wakes up to a life of purpose; she feels fulfilled, rather than empty.

I am forever grateful and feel extremely proud to have such incredible parents. I look to them for guidance in every situation, and am mesmerized by the way that they bring Hashem into all circumstances, good or bad. Growing up in the home they have created has shaped me as a person and a Jew, and I hope, one day, to replicate their amazing ways.



Mrs. Penson with Reb. Jungreis
at Hineni's Jubilee Dinner

🕊️ Rebecca Penson



My father grew up in a traditional Conservative Jewish household. His family attended *shul* on a weekly basis, but they drove to get there. They kept kosher in the house, but ate dairy anywhere. As my father became more curious about his religion he wondered who had written the Torah. When he posed the question to his Conservative rabbi, the response was, 'a group of men got together and wrote it.'

At college, my father attended a party where he noticed a man wearing a *yarmulka* and *tzitzis*, and the image stuck with him. That summer he traveled to Israel to place out of the college language requirement. Towards the end of his trip he took a tour of the Old City in Jerusalem. As he walked through the ancient streets, the legendary Rabbi Meir Schuster approached him and asked if he wanted to learn *Talmud*. My father had never seen a *daf* in his life and replied, 'I have an hour.' The rabbi led my father to the *Aish Hatorah* dining room where he recognized the man from the party. It was he who told my father to sign up for the well-known Discovery class. A few days later my father was enrolled.

In that class they explained why it would be impossible for man to have written the Torah. My father had never before thought about G-d and how He might have authored the Torah. He found the class to be very compelling, but needed to be sure, so he stayed up the whole night arguing with the rabbi.

The following semester, my father returned to college, now keeping the fourth commandment, *Shabbos*. He spoke with the Reform and Conservative rabbis on campus, and was disappointed to discover that their theology was hard to understand, and not nearly as convincing as what he had learned at *Aish*. He decided then that if he was going to become religious, he would do it right. He set up a variety of *chavrusas*, and tried to learn as much as he could, quickly. As a result of his recognition of "*Torah min hashamayim*" my father began to observe more and more *mitzvos*, and returned to *Aish Hatorah* every summer until after he was married.



Adina Coan, 10th Grade

I derive so much *chizuk* from watching the way in which my parents perform *mitzvos*; every time it's like their first time. My mother always says that she wishes she had been born religious so that she could have observed the *mitzvos* from her earliest years, but I know that she and my father are on a much higher level than all of us for choosing to bring the light of Torah into their lives, and spreading it forward for generations.

Shanna Gerber

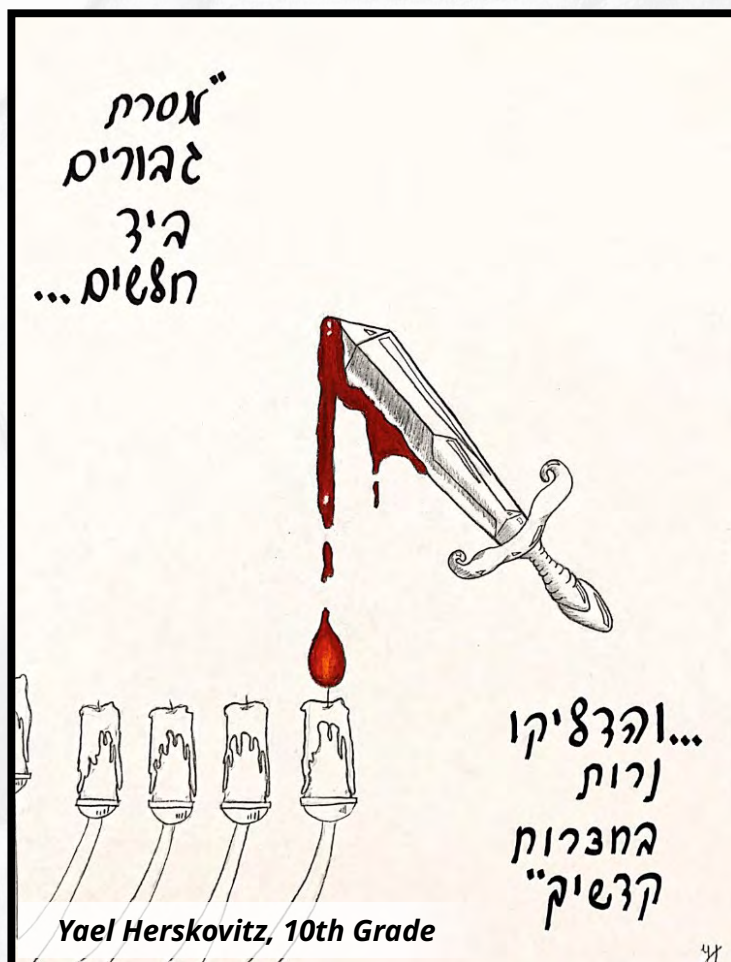
My mom wasn't a 'traditional' *ba'alas teshuvah*. She was raised in a home which observed many Orthodox customs. She attended an Orthodox Jewish day school and *shul*. Yet, there were many traditions which were not a part of her life. My mother considers her enrollment in the NCSY youth movement to be the greatest gift she ever received. "I am not sure why I was sent there. But I do believe it was G-d's message to me, letting me know there was more. There was more for me within my religion, more for me in my connection to Hashem, and more for me as a Jew." She remembers her first authentic *Shabbos* and the feeling that a precious gift had been handed straight to her, Hashem's daughter. She recalls closing her eyes and feeling absolutely sure that everything in this world comes from Him. It was hard to go back to *Shabbos* with her family, knowing that something was missing. So she began to observe *Shabbos* on her own. When the light was shut off, she sat in the dark. At times, she needed to sacrifice more than she ever realized she would, or could. But she was committed. And she remained true to that commitment even outside the privacy of her home. She was determined that "*Shabbos* would be a true day of rest for the rest of my life (no pun intended)."

My father's story is much different. He grew up fully Conservative, was educated at a local public school, and received some Jewish instruction at a Hebrew school which met on Sundays. When he was thirteen years old he attended a friend's *bar mitzvah*, where, for the first time, he experienced an Orthodox *shul* service. He didn't step foot into another one until he was a student at Rutgers University. There he would frequent the Friday night services in the Orthodox *minyan* at the Chabad House, simply because they moved faster. Never, though, did he believe in their ideals, nor did he feel he belonged. He thought "you just had to grow up religious to be religious."

It was only later in his college career that my father learned that he could change. He recognized that he had fallen prey to the materialism which plagues western culture. He became more open to the values of the Chabad House and realized that "there was a bigger purpose." During his last year at college he started to think about his future, and understood that it would be impossible for his children to have any sort of connection to G-d since he had nothing to pass on. Jewish identity had been important to his family for generations; sadly, however, religious practice had never been a part of that. My grandfather z"l

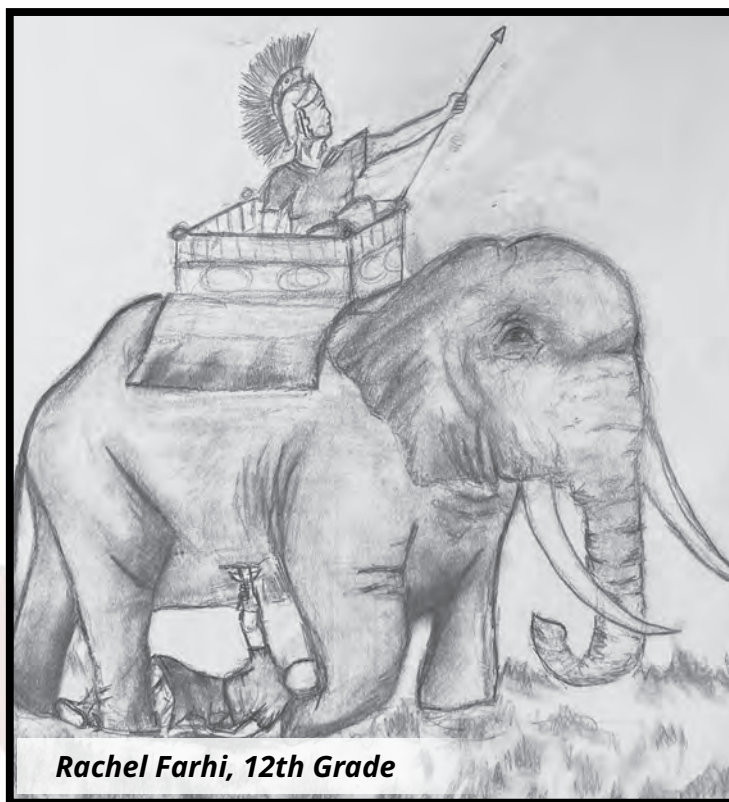
attended a Jewish day school and taught my father the little that he knew. Yet, my father acknowledged that he knew even less about his religion than his father, and wondered, 'what will become of my descendants? It's hard to be Jewish if you don't know anything.' Now on Friday nights, he looked for, and found, truth in Orthodoxy. He began to feel that he was part of a longer chain of history. And that "becoming a *ba'al teshuvah* doesn't take away your degrees or experience, it just strengthens them."

Which led to a major decision: he started attending a *yeshivah* for post-college *ba'alei teshuvah* and ultimately married a fellow *ba'alat teshuvah* whom he met at Rutgers. My mother. Together, they have brought forth the generation that my father dreamed of raising; one that knows *Yiddishkeit* and appreciates it. They are nurturing children who are committed to being better and reaching higher, just as our mother was, and is. My brothers and I are humbled by the spiritual accomplishments of our parents, and look forward to living up to them.



☺ A Tenth-grader

My mother was born in Lexington, Kentucky and grew up in a conservative Jewish home. The synagogue was a very important part of her life. She attended synagogue regularly, read from the Torah at her *Bat Mitzvah* and was very close with the rabbi. Throughout her childhood my mom noticed some inconsistencies in her Jewish upbringing. She remembers being told not to turn on the lights on *Shabbos* in their synagogue, but then driving home and going shopping after services. They were taught in depth about the rules of *kashrus*, and the synagogue had a kosher kitchen, but once they stepped outside of the building, people did as they wished. They would never eat a cheeseburger but would go out for dinner and eat steak that was presumably slathered in butter. At Sunday school they learned about keeping kosher, *Shabbos*, and other *mitzvos*, but were never actually expected to observe them. When my mother was 16 years old, the rabbi left for Cincinnati to ensure that his own children would be able to attend a Jewish day school. She noticed that he began to wear *tzitzis* and was becoming more observant himself. Eventually, he was replaced by a woman rabbi. My mother no longer felt so comfortable in the synagogue, and could not connect with the new rabbi. Before long, she disengaged entirely. At seventeen, she began to date a local boy who was not Jewish. Her parents panicked, as they were concerned that she would follow in the footsteps of her sister and marry out of Judaism. They immediately withdrew her from college and sent her to New York City where she lived in married housing with her sister and brother-in-law. As soon as my mother arrived in New York, she knew that she could not make excuses anymore. In Kentucky people would think, "I can't keep *Shabbos*, I live in Kentucky! I can't keep kosher; I live in Kentucky!" But here she was in New York City, the hub of Judaism. She became strictly kosher, wore only skirts, and immersed herself in the Jewish community. Of course, that was not so easy living with her sister and her non-Jewish husband, so she moved to her own apartment on the Upper East Side. There, she enrolled in college and found a job working at Macy's in Herald Square. One day she got a call that her grandmother was very sick, so she took the first Greyhound bus back home. After Bubby passed away, my mom came back to New York knowing that she had lost her job because she had just run down south without giving any notice. Although she was upset, she knew that Macy's was not the right place for a Jewish girl to work. One day, she was walking on the Upper West Side and walked into a *seforim* store, West Side Judaica. The store was owned and run by a family of *Chassidim*. My mother recalls browsing the shelves. One of the men walked up to her and asked what she was doing there. She replied that she was looking at the books. He responded, "No, what are you doing here - as in *life*?" She explained that she had just lost her job. He asked her when she could start. And that was the beginning. The family took her in, let her read any *sefer*, and listen to any of the Jewish music CDs. She left work whenever there was a lull to learn at the Jewish Renaissance Center of the Upper West Side. She became involved with Chabad of the Upper East Side and eventually helped begin Chabad of Hunter College. This past month marked the 20th anniversary of my mother's becoming religious. I am really proud to be the daughter of a *ba'alas teshuvah*, and have learned from my mother to appreciate Judaism and not take my upbringing for granted.



Rachel Farhi, 12th Grade

🐾 Danielle Mandelbaum

Rabbi Hertz Frankel, z"l

My great-grandfather, Rabbi Hertz Frankel, z"l, was an exemplary role model and well-known educator. He recently passed away, after dedicating his entire lifetime to *chinuch*. He was an outstanding principal and scholar, who imparted many beautiful lessons to his pupils. Of the myriad lessons one can learn from him, a vital one is to rise to the occasion when community leadership is needed.

Many years ago, there were no Jewish schools for children with special needs. Upon hearing that a boy in the community was going to be sent to a mental health institution, my great-grandfather immediately stood up and took charge. He helped establish the first ever school for observant children with special needs in Brooklyn. Countless lives have been impacted by that single act.

In addition to the schools he founded, my great-grandfather served as the highly respected principal of the Satmar Girls School for sixty years. He was fiercely protective of the girls in his charge, and took initiative to defend their well-being and maintain the quality of their education. Just after he was appointed to be head-of-school, which happened shortly after the Holocaust, the local government misappropriated one of the school's buildings to be used for a New York City housing project. As soon as Rabbi Frankel got wind of this, he led the entire cohort of girls outside, where they staged a demonstration. This caused quite a scene, and the very next day the government returned the property!



*Rabbi Frankel, with his
great-granddaughter, Aliza Herzog*

Chinuch, meaning 'education,' shares the same *shoresh* as the word *Chanukah*, meaning 'dedication.' On *Chanukah*, we celebrate the rededication of the *Beis Hamikdash*, which began with a miracle that brought light into the darkness. When we educate children, we illuminate their lives, and the lives of their families with whom they share all that they have been taught. My great-gransfather gave tens of thousands of children the ability to bring light into their homes. May we all continue to flourish in our learning, and thereby be sources of light in *our* homes. Happy *Chanukah*!

🕊️ Aliza Herzog



*Rabbi Frankel gently chastising
a little girl for misbehaving*

Bobby Spitzer's Yahrzeit

Somewhere in that mountain of wrapped presents, I always knew, was a gift selected just for me. And as soon as my name was called, it would be my turn to receive hugs and kisses from Bobby Spitzer, whose smile spoke more loudly than her words. As the years went by, Bobby Spitzer did not have the strength to wrap the gifts herself, but it was she who personally handed them to each of us, with all her heart. So every year on *Chanukah*, all of her descendants would gather in our Great-Aunt Edith's house in Boro Park to reconnect, to celebrate, and mostly to feel the warmth, and stand in the presence of our extraordinary matriarch.

Bobby Suri Spitzer lived a long and full life. I was very young when she passed away, but now know that she experienced her fair share of ordeals. She never knew her father, who passed away when she was only five months old, on the third night of *Chanukah*. She was raised by her mother (and grandmother,) until the age of twenty-two, when her mother passed away as well. Orphaned now of both parents, she and her siblings were cared for by their grandmother and extended family. In 1944, shortly before *Pesach*, Suri was taken from her hometown, Hajdúnánás, Hungary, to a ghetto, and soon after deported to Theresienstadt, a labor camp. Fortunately, she survived the war along with her grandmother. The two women returned home to Hajdúnánás, where Bobby married my great-grandfather, Menachem Mendel Spitzer, on April 4, 1948. Together, they had four children; Edith, Judy (my grandmother), Miriam and Mechel. When the communists invaded Hungary in 1956, their *Yiddishkeit* was threatened, and the Spitzers spared no effort to find passage to America. They travelled by train, first to Austria where they were placed in a DP camp for a year and a half, before being allowed entry to the United States in 1958. The Spitzer family settled in Crown Heights, and later in Boro Park, where Bobby lived for the rest of her life. I admire the strength with which she endured her hardships, and am well aware that because of it my family and I are here today.

As her *Yahrzeit* approaches, I recall the כ"א כסלו eight years ago, just four days before *Chanukah* of 5774, when שרה בת חיים - my Bobby Spitzer, passed away. I was only nine years old, and my interactions with my great-grandmother had been relatively few, but somehow I knew that this loss was irreplaceable, and I sat in my room crying.

And when that *Chanukah* arrived, her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren received *Chanukah* presents which had been bought and wrapped before Bobby Spitzer's *petirah*. It was both painful and heartwarming, and felt as if she had left a goodbye gift for each of us. Surely, though, the most valuable gift she left to her family was the rich legacy of endurance and commitment to *Yiddishkeit* which she modeled for all of us.

☺ Mindy Weiss

L'iluy nishmas:

כ"א כסלו – Bobby Spitzer (Yahrzeit on שרה בת חיים)

חיים בן יצחק הלוי – Bobby Spitzer's father
(Yahrzeit on 3rd night of Chanukah, כ"ז כסלו)



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