



# Menorah

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## *From the desk of the Editors*

The approach of *Chanukah* generates palpable excitement throughout the school, as girls work enthusiastically and earnestly on *Divrei Torah* and artwork to enhance the *Chanukah* edition of our *Moadim* publication.

*Chanukah* is notable in that it commemorates a time when the *Yevanim* did not want to destroy us physically, but rather, to infiltrate our minds and souls.

The *Gemara* states, “כשנכנסו יונים להיכל טמאו כל השמנים”, when the Greeks entered the Sanctuary they defiled the oils. The obvious question that arises is, if the *Yevanim* wanted to prevent the lighting of the *menorah* wouldn't it have made more sense to destroy the oil? Why did they choose to simply defile it? The intention of the Greeks was not to destroy the Jews; they saw value in Torah, but as a man-made work of literature rather than as a Divine manual for living. By defiling the oil they communicated the message that it was acceptable to light the *menorah* as long as it would not be viewed as a sacred rite with roots in a spiritual connection to Hashem. The Greek agenda was twofold: to remove the sanctity of lighting the *menorah*, and to put their cultural mark on the *Torah* and its values.

In our society today we are blessed to be able to practice freely as Jews. Even so, the secular culture is woven into our lives in ways that sometimes challenge us to recognize our distinction as Jews, and to maintain our devotion to *Torah* values. *Chanukah* is the perfect opportunity to reignite our allegiance to *Torah* and *mitzvos*. We are so fortunate as students of MHS to be guided daily to infuse all aspects of our lives with *Torah*.

May we continue to see the light of Hashem throughout the darkness of *galus*, and may we be *zocheh* to see the ultimate light of *Mashiach*. We hope this edition of *Moadim* will bring joy and inspiration to your *chag*. Thank you to everyone who has made this publication possible!

*A freilichen Chanukah,*  
**Moadim Crew**



# Message from the Menahel

The *Gemara* (*Maseches Shabbos* 23B) states הרגיל בנר הווין ליה בנים ת"ח. If a person regularly lights *Shabbos* or *Chanukah* candles, his sons will be *talmeidei chachamim*. This statement seems to be a non-sequitur. There is no apparent connection between the regularity of lighting candles and meriting children who are Torah scholars. The *Chidushei Harim* explicates this puzzling statement and points out that lighting candles within the context of the regular service of G-d can convey a vital message to one's children. הרגיל בנר: even against a backdrop of routine, and habituation, one must bring to bear the התחדשות, the vitality, that newly lit candles symbolize. This quality of vitality is essential in raising the next generation.

Among the themes that we will explore at this year's שבתון are תורה ותורה, כי נר מצוה ותורה אור, 'the flames of passion,' and the מדורת אש דר"ח, 'the flames of renewal.' As we forge ahead through the cold weather and bleak winter landscape, let us focus on the power of passion and renewal. I am always moved and inspired by the vitality, creativity and novelty that our students bring to קיום המצות. To illustrate this theme of התחדשות, I would like to share the following recent development. Due to the repeated urging of one of our freshmen last year, MHS students began placing money in the *pushka* daily, prior to communal davening, as a merit for *kabolas hatefilos*. A year later this young galvanizer is a sophomore, and MHS gives *tzedaka* regularly, yet with a passion and focus which is anything but routine!

May our students continue to tap into their vast reservoirs of creativity, and *koach hachidush*, to reach ever higher in their *avodas Hashem*.

**In honor of *Chanukah*, our superb editorial staff, Tamar Dan, Tova Schwartz, Ilana Katzenstein, Daniella Zlotnick, and Musia Kirschenbaum, have compiled a spectacular edition replete with *divrei Torah*, artwork and articles, which are truly qualitative.**

**With great appreciation to Rebbetzin Peshi Neuburger, a brilliant and talented editor who is devoted לַב וּנְפֹשׁ to our students and to Mrs. Sara Tandler, beloved *Moadim* faculty advisor.**

***Mrs. Tsivia Yanofsky***



# Questions posed to our Teachers Mechanchot

## **Was there a time in your life where you clearly saw the yad-Hashem? (Hashgacha Pratis)**

**Mrs. Badrian:** My husband worked for an engineering company whose offices were in the World Trade Center. On February 26, 1993 (Erev Shabbos) terrorists detonated a bomb in a sub-basement.

The building was evacuated and my husband walked down from the 89th floor in a smoked filled, pitch black stair-well. After many weeks of repair, the building reopened and my husband returned to work. A few years later the company was sold and close to 6000 engineers, including my husband, lost their jobs. Transitioning to a new profession and finding work was a challenge, but B"H we managed. The World Trade Center was attacked on September 11, 2001. The plane struck on the 89th floor. My husband still worked in the Wall Street area. As he emerged from the subway station, he saw the World Trade Center crumble to the ground. We clearly saw yad-HaShem and we were - and are - so, so grateful.

**Mrs. Yanofsky:** As a commentary to Mrs. Badrian's reflections, I recall that fateful morning, September 11, 2001. My father had a business meeting in one of the sub-towers of World Trade Center. Due to *Selichos*, my father arranged for the meeting to take place later on in the morning. He was en route when the buildings collapsed.

Many times in the administration of our school, I see *yad Hashem* in the form of information that I stumble across, or people whose paths cross mine, and who prove helpful to MHS. I am grateful for all of the special people that *yad Hashem* has sent my way.

**Rabbi Gelley:** Four years ago when the *matzav* in *Eretz Yisroel* was very tense, due to many suicide bombers and stabbings, Rabbi Gelley was planning a trip there and wanted to raise *tzedakah* for the victims of the attacks. He preferred to do so in an understated way, without fanfare, so he simply brought a box to every class he taught, and asked the girls to donate. After doing this for just one week, he was able to bring an envelope containing 5,000 dollars to *Eretz Yisroel*, hopeful that he would find someone who needed it. Once he arrived, his first priority was to look for an organization that would give the money to a victim or his family. Despite much searching, he was unable to find an appropriate recipient for the money. His last stop was Hadassah Hospital, where Rabbi Gelley imagined there would be, sadly, many victims. He went up and down every floor but did not find the right person until he reached the end of the seventh floor. There he saw a weeping mother who told him that her son had been injured in a bombing. Rabbi Gelley went into the room to see the boy, who related that he was engaged, but now, due to the accident, he was not sure if he would be able to work to support his wife. He explained that all he wanted was to pay his rent and buy furniture and basic food necessities. Rabbi Gelley asked him how much all of this would cost. The young man's answer: "\$5,000". Rabbi Gelley put the envelope on his bed and left.

-as told to Dini Bell by Rabbi Gelley

**Mrs. Nehorai:** My husband and I grew up in the same town. I was one of the few observant Jews at our school, and he was one of the many secular Jews. We didn't keep in touch until he contacted me post-college, as he was becoming interested in Judaism and remembered that I was religious. I gave him advice on what *yeshivas* to look into, things to study, etc, and a year later, he ended up studying in Israel. He contacted me when he returned (newly observant) from Israel the following year, curious about good kosher restaurants to eat at in Chicago- this was before iPhones!- and during that conversation I surprised myself by agreeing to go on a date. We were married six months later, in the shul where we had both attended Hebrew school. I never would have expected us to end up together, but Hashem is very creative!





**Ms. Lakritz:** I try to see the *Yad Hashem* every day. Whether it's catching the train by a hair, or missing the bus and recognizing that I wasn't supposed to be on it, I make an effort to recognize the moments in my every day. It takes practice and reminders.

**Mrs. Rosensweig:** When I was in seminary, one of my important notebooks went missing. I searched all over, but couldn't find it. More than a month passed, and then one day I found a missing camera. (Yes, in those days cameras were still separate devices from phones.) I decided I would drop everything and focus on returning the camera, and spent my whole lunch hour that day going from dirah to dirah, asking the entire seminary if they'd lost a camera. In the last dirah of all, I found the camera's owner...and remarkably, her roommate knew where my lost notebook was! It was as though Hashem was saving it for me until I had enough *hashavas aveida zechuyos*.

**Mrs. Tendler:** Shaina Tendler and I attended the same seminary. A couple of months later, she convinced her mother that she had the right girl for her older brother. The rest is history.

**Mrs. Leitman:** Three years ago, my children convinced me to apply for U.S. citizenship which would make it legal for me to vote. But when I had my interview at the immigration office I was denied citizenship and told that if I wanted to obtain it, I would have to retain a lawyer and appeal again. My husband and I went to a top notch lawyer in Manhattan who we thought could help us. He advised me against applying because he believed I would be denied on moral grounds, as I had previously voted without legal citizenship, which, at the time, I didn't know I needed. He told me to wait three years before applying again, and advised me to stay in the country during those years to avoid deportation or denial to re-enter America. At this time, I had three children in Israel and a lot of family in Mexico whom I wasn't able to visit. I kept my faith in Hashem that this was a *nisayon* that I could handle, and that better this than *chas v'shalom* something worse. This past summer marked three years since my first application, and my husband and I hired another immigration lawyer, this time, a *Shomer Shabbos* Jew. I applied again, and was granted an interview in 2 weeks. While all of this was going on, my daughter-in-law in Israel was pregnant and overdue. The immigration lawyer mentioned that there might be a way for me to safely leave the country. I could go to the immigration office and, while it was very unlikely, they sometimes stamped green cards and cleared people for travel on the spot. We took his advice and, sure enough, they ended up stamping my green card right then there; that Tuesday my daughter-in-law had her baby. Another amazing thing that came out of all this was that during this whole time my son had been studying in Israel for his *semicha*, and I had always hoped for the *zechus* to make it to his *semicha* ceremony. As I write these words, I am en route to

*Eretz Yisrael* to attend that event! I always tell my children, every morning we say *Adon Olam*- remember, Hashem, not the immigration officer, is the Master of the universe.

**Mrs. Eisenberg:** My most profound experience of Hashgacha Pratis was how I landed up teaching in seminary. It was not so much a series of events, but a clear indication that Hashem is directly involved in my life. I was heavily immersed in the world of kiruv at that point: running an organization in Eretz Yisrael, teaching secular women in Tel Aviv and Nachlaot, and teaching on Aish programs. Something inside of me yearned to be a part of the Beis Yaakov world, and I started playing with the idea of teaching in seminary. I remember clearly the afternoon I was driving home, with a car full of children and thinking how much I would love to teach in sem, but unsure if it was the right thing to pursue due to my young family and time considerations. I davened to Hashem that if its right for me He should show me the way. Ten minutes later I was home and my phone rang. It was my principal from seminary who I had not seen or spoken to in 9 years, and he was calling to offer me a job. My mouth literally fell open!

***Is there a time when things seemed bad, but you ended up seeing the light at the end of the tunnel?***

**Mrs. Rottenberg:** I was a principal of an elementary school for ten years. Then a new executive director came in and wanted his wife to have my job so I was left without a job. I found a temporary job, and during the next two years I learned the computer skills that I would need for my present job. Then I came to MHS and I could not love my job more than I do now! At that time, I thought it was the worst thing that happened, but now I get to see how it turned out to be so wonderful.

**Mrs. Nehorai:** When my daughter was 1, the doctor found lead in her blood, and we then found out that our apartment walls contained lead paint, and were in need of repair. When the landlord botched the construction job, exposing asbestos and making the apartment unlivable, we were forced to leave our apartment (in the week of *Parshas Lech Lecha!*) For two months we stayed at someone's apartment, desperately searching for a good place to live. We experienced many financial miracles, including my husband's employers giving us thousands of dollars as a gift, just to help in the transition. We finally found a place that was perfect for our family, and this new location led to so many good changes in our lives. When we were in limbo, it was quite painful, but in hindsight, I'm grateful for the upheaval that led us to a happier life.

**Mrs. Rosensweig:** It was May of my senior year in college, and I was not looking forward to life after graduation. I had no job lined up and no apartment lined up,



and was very anxious about what would come next. The afternoon before graduation, I got a call and an interview for what became my first teaching job. That evening, I got an email about a lead for my apartment and a knock on my dorm room door from a classmate with a serious *shidduch* suggestion--of my future husband. *Yeshuas Hashem k'heref ayin*. Everything turned around so quickly.

**Mrs. Eisenberg:** When my shabbos table is filled with divrei Torah, when I prepare a class and everything comes together, when I watch my husband learn or give a shiur; there is no light in the world like the light of Torah.

***Have you ever experienced a Chanukah in Eretz Yisrael? If so, how has it inspired you?***

**Mrs. Yanofsky:** I recall meandering through the *Rova* in the Old City of *Yerushalayim* with my husband, as a newly married couple. My husband, who is always observant and informative, pointed out that the *menoros* were placed in stone indentations in the walls of the courtyards on the other side of the *mezuzos*. Then we went for dinner and *sufganiyot* to 'Off the Square', a charming restaurant that no longer exists. (Ask Mrs. Klugmann - she ate there, too.)

**Mrs. From:** My oldest grandchild, appropriately named Zohar, was born to our family of *Kohanim* on the second light of *Chanukah*. Shortly afterwards, my son made *Aliyah* with his family to *Moshav Gimzo*, a short drive outside Modi'in, (another *Chanukah* connection). Fast-forwarding thirteen years found me boarding an El-Al flight bound for Tel Aviv to celebrate his *Bar Mitzvah* milestone. I gladly left behind all the distracting noise of gaudy commercialism, pretentious "good cheer," and shallow wishes of "peace on earth" generated during the "holiday season," which permeates our *galut* existence. Lighting the *Chanukah* candles together with my family and all the families of the *moshav* emblazoned in my soul the certitude that "*kulanu b'yachad, am echad,*" and "*nes gadol haya po.*" All other lights pale in comparison.

**Ms. Lakritz:** Yes, my seminary year was my only *Chanukah* spent in Israel. I think what stays with me most is the quiet peace and glow I noticed externally and internally as I walked through the back streets of *Meah Shearim* to see all of the *menorot*.

**Mrs. Rosensweig:** The only *Chanukah* I spent in Israel was in seminary, and my main memory of what made it special was the company of my peers--which meant *tons and tons* of singing and Torah learning around the candles!

***Does your family play any fun original games for Chanukah? If so, please briefly describe what these games might look like.***

**Mrs. Yanofsky:** I have a distinct memory of my grandmother's *Chanukah* parties. They are part of the col-

lective treasure trove of memories of my youth that I access when I enjoy *Chanukah* parties with my own children and grandchildren today. Mrs. Tendler was always in charge of orchestrating the games, one of which she will proceed to highlight in the ensuing paragraph.

**Mrs. Tendler:** For years we have been playing a game at our *Chanukah* parties that we dub the "right/left game". Everyone gets a wrapped-up box containing assorted *Chanukah* presents. One reader stands up and recites a written rendition of the *Chanukah* story. When any one of the words 'right,' 'left,' or 'across' is read, the gift is passed in that direction. Ultimately, all the gifts end up in a random distribution and are opened and admired by their recipients. Occasionally, the gifts are humorous and entirely not age appropriate, such as when my grandfather won the lego set!

***Can you share an experience that brought light to your life?***

**Mrs. Yanofsky:** Each one of my children casts his or her own glow and brings a particular light to my life.

Ditto for each and every one of my students.

**Ms. Lakritz:** Anytime someone makes me laugh until I cry. Those experiences immediately lift a mood.

***What is the most creative Chanukah dish you have eaten/baked/seen at a Chanukah party?***

**Ms. Lakritz:** Every year I and my sisters on the East Coast get together and bake *Chanukah* cookies. We haven't really accumulated any specific cookie cutters so we just form the dough into *Chanukah* shapes. The cookies always turn out pretty lopsided, and we never have the patience to decorate them into anything fancy, but they always (well, mostly) taste good!

**Mrs. Rosensweig:** Is it against the rules to confess that *Chanukah* food is my least favorite of all Jewish cuisines?

**Reb. Neuburger:** Many of the specialty foods that our family enjoys at different times of the year were brought to us by very creative teachers. When one of my daughters was in elementary school, she came home one *erev shabbos Chanukah* with a jello *menorah*. The '*neiros*' were small plastic shotglasses filled almost to the top (but not quite) with yellow jello, and each 'wick' was made of a one-inch length of a single strand of pull-and-peel red licorice. So simple and so clever! It is now very much expected that I supply these dessert *menoros* for every family *Chanukah* party, and I even bring along some extra 'candles' for the people who want seconds when the *chanukiyos* are all devoured. A couple of tips are in order; if you cut the pull-and-peel strands and freeze them until they are stiff, it will be much easier to poke them into the jello. Also, regular teaspoons don't quite fit into the shotglasses - try to pick up some of those mini-spoons from Amazing Savings. *B'tayavon!*





# Halchos Chanukah

## חנוכה הלכות adapted from Rabbi Posen's Halacha book:

- חנוכה is a מצוה דרבנן of such importance that even if one cannot afford oil, and will be forced to sell the shirt off his back in order to purchase oil, he is obligated to do so. Additionally, one who is careful and particular with the הלכות of חנוכה will be זוכה to have חכמים בנינים תלמידי חכמים.
- It is forbidden to make use of or benefit from the light from the *menorah*. This even includes taking fire to light another *menorah*. This is why every *menorah* has a שמש.
- Once candle-lighting time is less than a half-hour away, one may not eat dinner until the candles are lit. This does not include a snack that is not an עיל המחיה מזונות or a drink.
- The candles should ideally be lit with as many people present as possible to accomplish נישא פרסומי. It is for that reason that all family members should arrange their days in a manner that allows them to be home, present, and assembled at the time of הדלקת נרות.
- Women do not perform מלאכה for the first 30 mins after candle-lighting. מלאכה includes household chores like folding laundry, loading the dishwasher, and - yes - doing homework!
- Women are equally obligated in the מצוה of הדלקת נר חנוכה because the harsh decrees of the יונים were imposed upon the women as well.
- It is interesting to note that women are entrusted with the *mitzvah* of נרות שבת while men are charged with the *mitzvah* of נרות חנוכה. This is because the purpose of נרות שבת is to illuminate the inside of the home- it follows that the woman who is responsible for preparing the home for *Shabbos* should therefore get the privilege of lighting up the home for *Shabbos*. The essence of the נרות חנוכה however is פרסומי נישא, for the outside world. Therefore, the man who represents his family to the outside, gets the privilege of fulfilling the *mitzvah* of lighting the *menorah*.
- There is no requirement to eat a סעודה on *Chanukah*. The obligation on *Chanukah* is simply “להודות ולהלל”, to praise and give thanks to Hashem for all the great *nissim*. We do, however, have the capacity to transform our *Chanukah* parties into a מצוה סעודות. By singing heartfelt *Chanukah* songs, sharing the *Chanukah* story, and reciting *divrei Torah*, we can elevate our parties to become expressions of “להודות ולהלל”.

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The *halachah* requires that even an *ani* who sustains himself from *tzedakah* is obligated to borrow oil or sell his clothes in order to purchase *shemen* or candles for *Chanukah*. The same *din* applies to the *Arba Kosos* on *Pesach*. Why is it that this ruling applies to these two *mitzvos* and no others? The *Gemara in Brachos 6* states that if a person intends to perform a *mitzvah* but is prevented from doing so because of an unexpected occurrence, *Hakadosh*

*Baruch Hu* considers it as if he completed the *mitzvah*. This applies to all *mitzvos* whose main focus is their fulfillment. So if you meant to do the *mitzvah*, it's considered as though you did. However, when it comes to *Ner Chanukah* and *Arba Kosos*, where the *mitzvah* is *Pirsum Haneis*, or publicizing the miracle, it's impossible to complete it with *machshavah* alone.



## Carrying the Message of the Chanukah Miracle

In his *sefer* entitled “ברכת יעבץ”, Rav David Cohen reflects on the wondrous miracle of *Chanukah*. Citing the midrashic opinion that מלכות יון is hinted to in the word “חשך” in *Parshas Bereishis*, Rav Cohen suggests that חשך may also refer to the צדוקים who were a major force at that time. The צדוקים emerged as a new sect of Judaism whose followers accepted the תורה שבכתב while disregarding תורה שבעל פה altogether. This movement spread and began to conquer the minds of regular, everyday people. Rav Cohen points out how the victory of *Chanukah* was two-fold, because not only did the חשמונאים defeat the Greeks, but also, the טהורים triumphed over the טמאים: the observant Jews prevailed over the צדוקים. Although the צדוקים did infiltrate the חשמונאי dynasty eventually, the *Chanukah* battle represented a spiritual win for those who stayed true to all of Hashem’s *mitzvos*. Throughout Jewish history, we have been attacked not only physically by our exter-

nal enemies, but also spiritually by new sects that cropped up internally in כלל ישראל, and threatened the continuation of our nation. Different groups developed, such as the Karaites in the eighth century, and the Reform Movement during the nineteenth century. These factions are often the most dangerous because they attack us on the basis of who we are and what we stand for. They attack the authenticity of our religion and often sweep hundreds along in their destructive path. We must look out for those movements, usually quite small, that turn up in our everyday lives and want to separate us from our *Torah*. Any new ideology that detracts from what we believe in and changes our laws is one that we must guard against. Each of us can experience her own, personal, miracle of *Chanukah* by fighting a little battle against the ideals that the secular world tries so hard to push our way.

🕊️ Yael Weinberg

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## The Pirsumei Nisa of Chanukah and Pesach

Most of us associate the *pirsumei nisa*, the obligation to publicize the miracle of *Chanukah*, to some degree, with the *pirsumei nisa* of *Purim*. The connection is obvious; they are both *chagim miderebanan*, and each celebrates a miracle that occurred to ensure the survival of *Klal Yisrael*. There is, however, an interesting connection between *Chanukah* and *Pesach* as well.

On *Chanukah*, there is a widely accepted *minhag* to light *neiros Chanukah* with a *bracha*, in *shul*, between the weekday *mincha* and *maariv*, and after *maariv* on *Motzai Shabbos*. It is most surely a beautiful sight to behold, especially in a large *shul*. It is, however, a somewhat perplexing *minhag*, because no one is *yotzei yedai chovaso*; with these candles, there is no fulfillment of the obligation to light, yet someone has recited the *brachos* aloud and everyone has answered *amen*. What is the source for this custom?

It is clear from the *Shulchan Aruch* that the reason for lighting in *shul* is *pirsumei nisa*. The *Vilna Gaon* explains that this *minhag* is actually related to a similar practice on *leil ha-seder*. On the first night of *Pesach*, after *maariv*, the *Vilna Gaon* would recite *Hallel* in *shul*, with a *bracha*. Many *shuls* today uphold this tradition (followers of *minhagei haGra*, and those who daven *nusach sefard*, among others). Still, we all recite *Hallel ‘al hakos’* during the *sefer*. The reason for the *Hallel* in *shul* is *pirsumei nisa*. So too, on *Chanukah*, we want to give higher profile to the miracle, and therefore light *neiros Chanukah* in *shul*. And while we may not be in *shul* when they are lighting these *neiros*, we all ought to internalize this message of the importance of publicizing the *neis* of *chanukah* in our own homes and lives.

🕊️ Zahava Giloni



# Dispelling Darkness

We light the first candle of *Chanukah* on the 25th day of *Kislev*. We increase the candles by one on each night of *Chanukah*, until we finally kindle 8 lights on the last night. This custom of lighting the number of candles corresponding to the days of *Chanukah* is described by *Chazal* as a *hiddur mitzvah* – a better, or more beautiful, way to do the *mitzvah*. The essential, basic *mitzvah* is to light just one candle on each night of *Chanukah*.

This lone light suffices to remove the darkness. How does a single candle achieve such an amazing feat? The answer lies in the deeper meaning of the story of *Chanukah*.

The Torah tells us that before the world was created there was emptiness and darkness, and *Chazal* understand the word “darkness” to be representative of the *Yevanim*. This is because the *choshech* referenced in *Breishis* is not just a physical darkness. There are two types of light; one can be seen with our physical eyes, while the other is perceived through our *chochmah* and spiritual vision. The *Yevanim* tried to dim the light of the Jewish *neshama* by attempting to persuade the Jewish nation to extinguish the light of *Torah* and *Mitzvos*, and abandon their faith and traditions. This light, the light of *Torah*, is the “*Ner Elokim Nishmas Adam*” of *Klal Yisrael* which the *Chashmonaim* fought hard to preserve. There is a numerical hint in *Sefer Breishis* which connects this spiritual light to *Chanukah*; “*ohr*” (light) is the 25th word in the *Torah*, corresponding to the 25th day of *Kislev*, the first day of *Chanukah*.



Sara Sash, 11th Grade

When the Greeks stormed into the *Beis Hamikdash*, they made everything *tamei*. My father explained to me that the word *tamei* actually derives from the word “*atum*,” describing something that is blocked and opaque. This stands in contrast to something that is *tahor*, which is related to the word “*zohar*” in Aramaic, or “*tzohar*” in Hebrew (as in the light in Noach’s *teivah*). Both words depict some form of visible light. Hence, the Greeks attempted to block out the light of *Judaism* with their *tumah*. The *Chashmonaim*, however, fought back, and found one bottle of oil. Just one bottle that was *tahor*, and inside of it, enough oil to light the *menorah* for one day, and dispel the *tumah* that darkened our spiritual sight.

They lit this *menorah* believing that it would only last one night - not nearly enough time to obtain new oil - but feeling that one night was enough. When we see a problem, do we give up on our mission because we cannot at that moment perfectly fulfill it? Do we abandon our goals because we cannot fully achieve them? Or do we at least do what we can in the hope that we, or others who follow us, will ultimately realize the dream with the help of Hashem? After all, none of us can ever achieve grand visions all by ourselves. We are all links in an unending chain of *Mesorah*, and can leave it to others to complete what we cannot. The *Chashmonaim* recognized that if one has an opportunity to light the flame of *Torah* and dispel the darkness, he should take the chance, even if it only lasts for one day. The rest is up to Hashem. So they lit the *menorah*. And that one light naturally dispelled the darkness for one night, and miraculously for seven more. But more miraculous even than those seven days, is the fact that it has continued for more than 2,000 years. And it all began with one light in the midst of darkness.



# Spotlight San Jose CA 95125

It is particularly timely that we feature San Jose in our Chanukah edition of **Moadim**. San Jose's Am Echad shul has experienced its own miracle of growth over the last couple of decades. We are pleased to introduce Chedva Levine, a senior here at MHS, to tell us about her hometown.

## **So Chedva, let's start with the basics. What brought you to San Jose?**

I moved to San Jose in 2007, when I was five years old. My parents decided to move there after my father graduated from the University of Pennsylvania law school and decided to pursue a career in *kiruv*. He became the rabbi of the local Orthodox shul, *Am Echad*, a job he holds to this day.

## **You don't currently live in San Jose most of the time. How is San Jose different from the other places you live, namely Passaic and Brooklyn?**

That's a great question. I would say the most unique aspect of San Jose is the beautiful diversity of the community. The shul has constituents from all around the world, including people from France, Israelis, Moroccans, Persians, New Zealanders, Scottish, Russians, and British, as well as a few Americans. This geographical medley doesn't create a divided community; on the contrary, it brings us all together. *Simchas Torah* is a day that really encapsulates the togetherness within our community. When I watch the men, of all ages and backgrounds, dancing elbow-in-elbow with the young boys,



**The Shul**



**Some community members in the main sanctuary**



**At a Hachnasas Sefer Torah, my father looks over the shoulder of the sofer**



**The kosher makolet, with a deli store which serves as our only restaurant**



**Interior of the store, which was founded by community members, the Haluyan family who pay tribute to their Israeli heritage by stocking it with Israeli products**

bridging the divides across age and culture, I realize that there's no place like this. This inclusivity extends to guests as well. We have a *Hachnasas Orchim* initiative led by a community member that facilitates meals and rooms for any guests who need to be put up. We also have *chesed* organizations that provide food for people who just moved in, or recently had a baby. When I was there, I was a leader of the weekly kids' groups which took place Shabbos mornings. This gave mothers a chance to go into davening.

## **What do you think has changed over your time in San Jose?**

Well, for one, a lot more people have heard of Silicon Valley, as technology has continuously grown and become more innovative since I moved there, the year the iPhone came out. But in a more meaningful way, the shul has grown from 30 members when we first arrived, to over 90. This is due to the commitment of my parents, as well as other community members. These astounding numbers don't even reflect the greater good which has been accomplished within the community. We have so many people who have joined and become frum over the years; it's really incredible.

**Thank you Chedva, for giving us a taste of what San Jose is like. It sounds incredible!**

It really is and it's exciting for me to share this.



## San Jose Fast Facts

1. **SIZE:** San Jose is the 10th biggest US city by population, with 1.99 million people, as well as the largest city in the Bay Area (bigger even than better known San Francisco!)
2. When California first joined the US in 1848, San Jose was the capital of the state.
3. **WEATHER:** San Jose's weather is Mediterranean-ranging from the 50's to 70's on average throughout the year. San Jose has a yearly average of 301 days of sunshine.
4. **PRICE:** San Jose has a very high cost of living. The median price for a house is \$991,000 and in the Jewish neighborhood, Willow Glen, the median price is an astronomical \$1.2 million. (This is not for an especially nice house- this house, a few blocks away from me, is going for around \$1.3 million. (as found on Zillow)
5. San Jose is in the richest metropolitan area in the USA, as part of Silicon Valley, where one quarter of the families earn over \$200,000 annually, and the average household income is \$117,474. (Of course, this means everything else costs more too, like houses as listed above or even gas prices where the average price is \$4.15 a gallon.)

## Jewish Life in San Jose

It's not easy to be frum in San Jose.

There is one restaurant and one kosher grocery store in San Jose, and in Palo Alto, a half-hour away, there's a bagel store.

Jews first moved to San Jose after the Gold Rush in 1848 and founded the first bikur cholim society in 1861. San Jose and the Greater Bay Area are an example of what Jewish life is without Torah... nothing. The intermarriage rates in Silicon Valley are around 80 percent (r'!!!) and studies done by the Jewish Federation show that the Bay Area is the least religiously connected Jewish community in the country.

Only 3% of the 350,000 people surveyed consider themselves Orthodox.



## The Job Market

The main source of income in San Jose is tech, of course.

With more than 7,000 technology companies, the technology industry is responsible for employing more than 300,000 people.

Because of all the jobs and businesses located in San Jose, the city is able to fund programs to improve infrastructure, such as building nice libraries and parks. Cisco and Adobe are two companies based in San Jose, and Google and Apple both have huge offices located there as well.

### SOURCES:

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## Hidden Connections

There are two seemingly unconnected statements which are juxtaposed in the *Gemara Shabbos*. The first is that a *ner Chanukah* which is raised higher than 20 *amos* is not in fulfillment of the *mitzvah*. The second is that when the Torah records that Yosef was thrown into a pit which was 'empty with no water,' it means that it was empty of *water*, but did, in fact, contain snakes and scorpions. Why would the *Gemara* place these two statements side by side when they appear to have nothing to do with each other?

What is the problem with a *ner Chanukah* that is higher than 20 *amos*? While an elevated candle *does* bring some light into the darkness, it is way too high to allow you to see the smallest details on the floor, and so it does not help you find your path. The *Chanukah* light is meant to bring light into our lives, to penetrate the depths of our hearts, and to give us clear direction. Therefore, we are not *yotzei yedai chovaseinu* with a candle that is higher than 20 *amos*.

How could the brothers not have seen that there were snakes in the pit? The Torah tells us: הַבּוֹר רֵיקָה - אין בו מים - there was no water, and so the pit ap-

peared to be empty. But hidden in the cracks of the pit there were snakes and scorpions. Had Yosef's brothers looked carefully enough, they would have seen them, and perhaps thought twice about what they were doing.

The *ner Chanukah* must be close enough to guide you, and every action that a person takes must be put near the light, and considered closely and carefully. What will be the unexpected results of my deed? Is it proper? And so, the two Talmudic statements are placed next to each other, to teach us to be impacted by the light provided by the *neiros* to become people who notice all of the tiny cracks and holes in the lives of those around us, so that we can work toward fixing and lightening them.

This is the greater message of *Chanukah*. To take the *Ohr Hachadash* that the *Chashmonaim* lit and allow it to guide us through life. To scrutinize all that we do by their light of spiritual renewal, and see if our deeds are not just 'basically' okay, but instead, truly worthy.

🕊️ Nava Shwalb



Rivka Notkin, 11th Grade



# עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל חַי



**Leah Harris, 11th Grade**

*Leah Harris*

Am Yisroel Chai. The Jewish nation will live on, continuing to defy the odds in greater measure than any other nation. Less than a century ago, our grandparents were forced to wear yellow stars. They were shamed, beaten, and starved for being Jewish. Thrown into concentration camps and killed. Although many lost faith, in each generation there have been individuals who continued to see Hashem's light. מעט מן האור דוחה הרבה מן החשך. Just an ounce of light can dispel darkness. The few who remained built the powerful Torah infrastructure we enjoy today. Our shuls, schools, and yeshivos were sparked by the torches those individuals held, continuing our legacy. Many tried to destroy us, yet here we stand. Am Yisroel Chai.

🕯️ *Leah Harris*



# The Power of the Menorah

There is a well known *Midrash* that takes note of the *smichus parshios* between the *korbanos* of the 12 *nesiyei hashevatim* at the end of *Parshas Naso*, and the commandment to light the *menorah* given to Aharon immediately afterwards, at the beginning of *Parshas Behaalosecha*.

The *Midrash* explains that Aharon thought that his *shevet*, *Shevet Levi*, was excluding him from taking part in their *korbanos* because of his involvement in the *Chait Ha'eigel*. To dismiss this idea, Hashem told Moshe to reassure Aharon that his absence from the *shevatim's* procession would be more than compensated for by his greater destiny; he will be in charge of the *menorah*, which will "forever give light." The *Ramban* explains that this phrase is an allusion to the *Chanukah menorah*, which is lit "forever," even in *galus*.

It is interesting to note that the *menorah* service of the *Batei Mikdash*, through the lighting of the *Chanukah* candles which commemorate it, continues long after both *Batei Mikdash* have been destroyed. Why? And why did Aharon have the *zechus* to personally receive this *mitzvah* of the *menorah* from Hashem? How does his involvement in the *Chait Heigel* tie into all of this?

The *Cheit Ha'eigel* was the result of *Bnei Yisrael* losing their faith in Moshe and Hashem, and mistakenly turning to *avodah zarah* for guidance. Unfortunately, Aharon was involved in this departure from *Yiddishkeit* and is considered imperfect because of it. Why should an imperfect individual merit such a holy job of lighting the *menorah*, especially after the *Midrash* reminds us of Aharon's involvement in the sin?



Chavi Golding, 11th Grade



In fact, Hashem gave the *mitzvah* of the *menorah* to Aharon not in spite of his sin, but because of it. This was not a reward; rather, it was an opportunity for atonement. Via the *menorah*, Hashem provided Aharon with a path to *teshuva*. In fact, the *menorah* itself can be seen as a direct reparation for the *Cheit Ha'eigel*, a sort of measure-for-measure. Both the *eigel* and the *menorah* were the results of gold being thrown into a fire and miraculously emerging as a fully formed golden object.

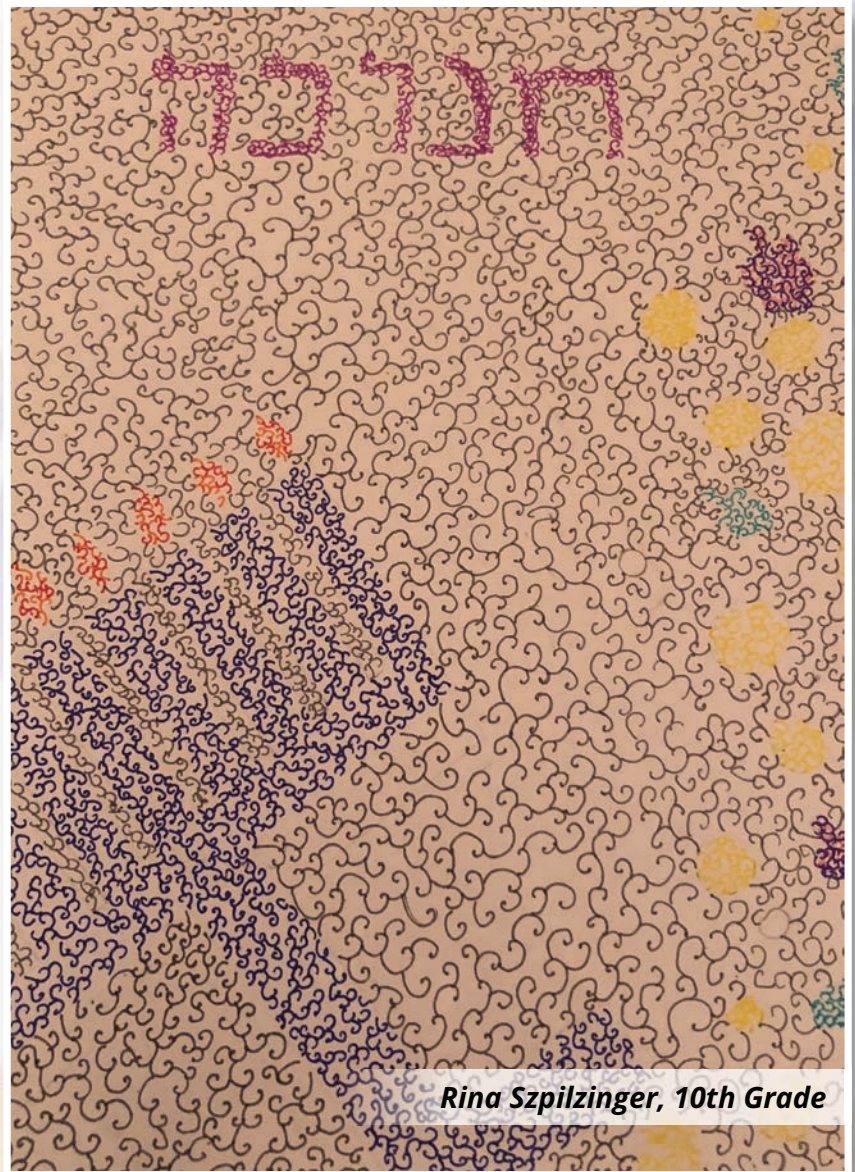
As we know from the *Chanukah* story, the *neis* of the oil lasting for eight days is symbolic of Jewish survival - completely miraculous. During that era, Judaism was under assault by a culture immersed in *avodah zarah*. Many Jews were leaving their communities and giving up on their *Yiddishkeit* to succumb to a hellenistic way of life.

Indeed, the wave of Jews turning their backs on *Yiddishkeit* at that time was reminiscent of the first such national episode, the *Cheit Ha'eigel*. And just as Moshe, at that time, had screamed out, "Whoever is for G-d come with me!" to rally *Bnei Yisrael* against the corruption of the *cheit ha'eigel*, so, too, did the Maccabees cry out "*Mi laHashem Eilai!*" to mobilize their forces against the *Yevanim*. The *Yevanim* were eventually defeated and the *Beis Hamikdash* was restored, in large part through the miracle of the *menorah*. The *menorah* was a way for *Bnei Yisrael* to do *teshuva* for their sins and return to their faith, just as it had served as an atonement for Aharon's sin. By lighting the *menorah* in the *Mishkan*, Aharon confirmed his faith in Hashem, and Hashem confirmed His faith in Aharon.

The *menorah*, which continues to be lit throughout the years of the diaspora, represents the everlasting nature of Judaism. Just as the flame in the *Beis Hamikdash* continuously burned, so, too, does Judaism continue to endure. The story of *Chanukah*, one tiny sliver of the tortuous history of the Jewish people, reminds us that many powerful nations – like the *Yevanim* – have come and gone, but the tiny nation of *Bnei Yisrael* continues to survive. And the reason for its endurance is its steadfast faithfulness to Hashem and the Jewish ideals.

Of all the *keilim* of the *Beis Hamikdash*, only the *menorah* remains, because the role of the *menorah* continues to be crucial today. We are constantly facing the outside world, and continually being challenged by competing, conflicting cultures. Each year, we count on the *menorah* to shine with the light of *Yiddishkeit* and remind us of the ideals that we are fighting for. The *menorah* reminds us that we have within us the strength of Aharon who bounced back from his *cheit*, and that it is never too late for one to do *teshuvah*.

*Chag Chanukah Sameach!*



**Rina Szpilzinger, 10th Grade**



# A Time of Chinuch

*Chanukah* is among the most beloved of our *chagim*, celebrated by Jews of all stripes and in all communities. The holiday's name, *Chanukah*, is derived from the Hebrew word "*chanoch*", meaning 'dedication.' Indeed, as its name suggests, *Chanukah* is a time when we commemorate and publicize the rededication of the *Bais Hamikdash*, and particularly of the *mizbeach*, following the victory of the *Chashmonaim*. We observe the use of the word "*Chanukah*" in this context many times in Jewish sources, such as *Chanukas Hamishkan*, *Chanukas Hamizbeach*, and also when we celebrate a new home with a *Chanukas Habayis*.

Moving beyond the literal meaning, Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch points out that the name *Chanukah* also connotes learning and education, as it is related to the word *chinuch*. Indeed, it is *minhag Yisrael* to spend time on *Chanukah* learning with one's children by the light of the *shamash*. But is there a still deeper connection between *Chanukah* and *chinuch*?

The Rambam expounds on the connection between light and knowledge. During the creation of the world, Hakadosh Baruch Hu said "yehi or", commanding not only the creation of physical light and the consequent reduction of darkness, but also the light of knowledge and wisdom that thereafter illuminated the world. We further learn that the Torah is compared to light as explained by the Alshich Hakadosh, for within the Torah lies the wisdom, eternal purpose, and the entire intent of *brias ha'olam*. The *neros Chanukah* commemorate the rekindling of the spark of Torah within the Jewish nation. The objective of *chinuch* is very much the same.

The elemental *mitzvah* of *neiros Chanukah* is, as the *Gemara* notes, *ner ish u'beiso*; the head of the household lights one candle for the entire family each night. A higher level of *hiddur mitzvah* is achieved by lighting "*ner lechol echad v'echad*"; each member of the household lights his own *menorah*. And finally, the *Gemara* goes on to describe a third, even higher level of performing the *mitzvah*: "*mehadrin min hamehadrin*." This requires lighting the candles

in increasing order, beginning with one candle on the first day, and continuously increasing until the eighth night. Perhaps implicit in the *Gemara's* explication of these increasing levels of *hiddur* is a message about the ideal approach to *chinuch*. It may be possible to accomplish the bare minimum goals of *chinuch* in a static way, akin to lighting the same candle night after night of *Chanukah*. However, to be truly immersed in, and successful at, *chinuch*, one must be *mosif v'holeich*; continually adding on, teaching more, and learning more, each and every day.

The *Gemara* in *Shabbos* continues: "*ner Chanukah mitzvah lehanicha al pesach beiso mibachutz*." The *Menorah* should ideally be placed just outside the house, facing the street. The stated reason for this *halachah* is to allow for *pirsumei nisa*, by maximizing the publicizing and proclamation of the *neis*. The *halachah* states that the *menorah* should be placed on the left side of the door, opposite the *mezuzah*. Many *mefarshim* expound on the significance of this layout, noting that right and left are not objective ordinal directions like north and south; rather they are subjective, relative to one's point of view. In reality, both the *mezuzah* and the *menorah* are on the right side of the door, when viewed from the alternate perspectives of those who are entering or exiting. When we exit our home, bracing ourselves to face the outside world and its influences, the *Menorah* is located on our right, to remind us of our heritage and our values. This is, perhaps, another *remez* to *chinuch*. As children leave home to establish their own households, they take with them values of their family and the *chinuch* instilled within them.

As *Chanukah* is celebrated and we relay the stories of "*rabim biyad me'atim*", the victorious rise of the *Maccabim*, and the rededication of the *Mizbeach*, let us be *mosif v'holeich*, and continue to influence, inspire and educate about the meaning of this candle, as we rekindle it again.

☞ Elky Schwartz



# The Purpose of the Chanukah Candles

In his famous halachic work, *Moadim U'zemanim*, HaRav Moshe Sternbach *Shlita, Ra'avad* of the *Edah Charedis*, wonders who ordained the Rabbinic commandment of lighting candles on *Chanukah*. Rav Sternbach questions whether the *Chashmonaim* themselves decreed that everyone should light *Chanukah* candles in their own homes, or whether, initially, they required simply establishing *Chanukah* as a holiday of praise and thanksgiving, as the lighting was limited to the *Beit HaMikdash*. Rav Sternbach cites the words of the Talmud, "in another year, they were established as *Yamim Tovim* of praise and thanksgiving." From this source, it appears that the initial ruling of *Chazal* did not include the commandment of lighting candles. On the other hand, Rav Sternbach quotes *Megillas Antiochus*, which mentions that the Jews celebrated these eight days "as days of feasting and joy like the holidays mentioned in the Torah, and of lighting candles to proclaim the victories HaShem had accomplished for them." Here it seems clear that during the times of the *Chashmonaim*, the Jews did light candles.

Rav Sternbach explains that the *Chashmonaim* declared these days as a time of joy, thanksgiving, and praise, and also decreed that candles should be lit

in commemoration of the miracle. At the time of the *Chashmonaim*, when the menorah was lit in the *Beis HaMikdash*, not everyone lit in his own home. Instead, says Rav Sternbach, *Chanukah* candles were lit only in shuls and at celebrations. The *mitzvah* of candle-lighting incumbent upon the individual was established later by *Chazal*. Rambam (*Hilchos Chanukah* 3.3) suggests that the initial decree was limited to joy and praise, and after the destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash*, *Chazal* established a new *mitzvah* of lighting candles in individual homes. As a further proof, the words of the *piyut Maoz Tzur* - "מיננרו ריש ועבק הנומש ימי הניב ינב" - hint that the initial holiday was only song and joy. Due to the dangers of the diaspora, it was often risky to display the private *menoros* in Jewish homes for all to see; the custom reverted, therefore, to include the initial decree of lighting at celebrations or in shul, which would be visible to the entire community. *Hadlakas ner Chanukah* in shul is not merely a custom; the initial commandment dates back to the *Chashmonaim*. Fortunate are we to fulfill the brilliant words of our sages from different generations.

✍ Rivka Notkin

Source: HaRav Moshe Sternbach *Shlita-Moadim U'Zemanim* (Volume 2, Chapter 149)



Abby Harris, 9th Grade

Abby



## *Al HaNisim*

*For the miracles, and for the salvation, and for the mighty deeds, and for the victories, and for the battles which You performed for our forefathers in those days, at this time.*

With this prayer, we offer heartfelt praise to Hashem for the miracles that He performed on our behalf during terrifying times in Jewish history, specifically *Chanukah* and *Purim*, when we were miraculously saved from the plans of our enemies to destroy us.

The *Ponovizher Rav*, Rabbi Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, questions a portion of these words of gratitude. Why do we thank Hashem “for the battles”? Are we a people who relish war? His answer conveys an important lesson of dedication to our principles in the face of adversity. In the context of the *Chanukah* miracle, it is premature to express thanksgiving to G-d for the Jewish victory over the

Greeks, since that is an ongoing battle. The forces of evil and decadence, the forces which wish to smother the holy wisdom and ideals of the *Torah* – the legacy of the Greek culture and its influence on civilization at large – are still very much present and powerful in the world around us. The end of this battle will take place only with the arrival of *Moshiach*. There is, however, one thing for which we can give our thanks to Hashem, and that is the very fact that we are still determined, despite all of the difficulties, to keep up the fight threatening our holiness. Despite the powerful forces of immorality and evil surrounding us on all sides, the Jewish people have continued to wage a fierce battle on behalf of G-d and His *Torah*. It is for giving us the courage to fight these “battles” that we express thanks to G-d in the *Al HaNisim* prayer.

☺ Frieda Bamberger

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## *Little Lights, Big Accomplishments*

The *Rema* (O.C. 671:4) rules that the *Chanukah* lights must be individual *neiros* (“lights,”) not a *medurah*, or one big torch. At first reading, this seems strange. If we light a number of small *neiros* to publicize the *neis*, wouldn’t one huge fire be an even better way to do this? Rav Pam believes that this *halachah* communicates the idea that we should not consider small accomplishments insignificant. In fact, he suggests that it is the source of the expression “a bit of light can dispel a great deal of darkness” (*Rav Pam on the Haftaros*).

It is so easy to feel overwhelmed by the challenges of our modern world. We see contemporary society moving away from traditional values in so many ways. We see actions that were once prohibited as illegal being flaunted. We see a society and its leaders who often seem to lack all sense of goodness, decency and modesty. What can we do?

Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach offered a *mashal* which makes Rav Pam’s insight even clearer. Imagine, he said, the richest man in the world, sitting in a room with all his wealth. But the room is dark and the

rich man cannot see his wealth. As a result, the rich man does not even know he is rich. But, let a little light into the room, and he will be able to see his wealth and appreciate his riches.

That, according to Rav Pam, is one of the lessons of *Chanukah*. Just a little light can change our perception of ourselves and the world. If we understand that “little” things make a big difference, we will see that our keeping the *halachos* of *tznius*, can set a shining example for the world. We will see that our “little” acts of kindness to our friends, our families, to the sick and the poor, can bring real light into the lives of other people.

The little lights of *Chanukah* remind us that each of us is rich with talents and possibilities if only we open up and let our lights shine through. Maybe single-handedly we won’t change the world, but together all our little lights can dispel a huge amount of darkness.

☺ Adina Hoffman





## The Power of a Gadol R' Shteinman

On Chanukah, we focus on nissim; large, small, revealed, hidden, past, and present. In every generation, the Jewish people are gifted with gedolim whose wisdom and compassion bring about miraculous moments. We include the following story in our Chanukah issue because it highlights one such 'miracle.'

There was once a boy who strayed from the path of *Yiddishkeit*. At the time, he was living in Tel Aviv with his secular cousins, but he was originally from *Bnei Brak*. One day he announced to his family that he was planning to marry out of the faith. Shocked and saddened, they requested that he come home to his family in Bnei Brak for just one *Shabbos* before the wedding. They hoped that the warmth of a family *Shabbos* might move him so deeply, that it would be difficult for him to go through with the marriage. He agreed to come home, provided that everything was on his terms: he would do as he pleased throughout the *Shabbos*, and not be pressured into participating in any observance which held no interest for him. His family agreed and he came. True to his word, he spent that *Shabbos* smoking, on his phone, and violating numerous other *halachos* of *Shabbos*. On *Shabbos* afternoon his father mentioned that he was planning to attend R' Shteinman's *shiur*, and asked if he wanted to come along. Not expecting a 'yes,' the father was quite surprised when his son expressed interest in going. After the *shiur* R' Shteinman called the young man over and begged him to return to *Yiddishkeit*.

24 hours later, the boy was a changed man. He returned to an entirely *frum* lifestyle and didn't look back. His family understood the greatness of R' Shteinman, and were not at all surprised that he had been able to effect such a dramatic change. They did, though, have one question for the boy: why had he agreed to come to the *shiur* in the first place?

His response was remarkable: he had come because of an event that took place many years before, when he was in the 4th grade. In celebration of a *siyum*, his rebbe had brought the class to R' Shteinman, who tested each of the boys. He asked every *talmid* a question related to what he had learned, and when he answered correctly he was rewarded with a taffy. When his turn came, this boy did not know the answer. R' Shteinman asked him another question, but he didn't know the answer to that one either, so R' Shteinman asked him a 3rd ques-



Only Setareh, 10th Grade

tion. When he couldn't answer the 3rd question, R' Shteinman moved on. But later, the *Rav* called him over and explained to him that learning *Torah* is not only about the successful attainment of knowledge; it is primarily about trying. And because all of the rest of the boys had tried only once, each of them had gotten only one taffy. 'You, on the other hand, tried 3 times so you get 3 taffies!'

It was because of that interaction, and the wisdom and kindness of R' Shteinman, that the young man had agreed to come to his *shiur* on *shabbos*!



# The Niss of Sfum Tzara Agra

The branches kept knocking on the windows, rammed against the glass by blasts of snowy wind. But the seventh and eighth graders ignored the drama outside the *davening* room and continued to look in their *siddurim* as they recited the final words of the daily *perek* of *Tehillim*.

Then, Mrs. Gottesman, the principal cleared her throat. We all looked up.

"Girls, do you know why we say *Al HaNissim* right after *Modim*?" She searched around the room, looking for someone who might know the answer. I shrugged.

"To remind us," Mrs. Gottesman continued, "that even when it's not a special day for recognizing what Hashem has done for *Klal Yisrael*, we still need to appreciate what Hashem does for each of us every single day - *al nisecha sheb'chal yom imanu*."

Wow, I thought. Later that day, I took out a pad of yellow sticky notes from my supply box and stuck it on the page of *Modim* in my *siddur*. Maybe it would remind me to have extra *kavanah* even after *Chanukah*. The post-it disappeared a few weeks later, and I never remembered to replace it.

It was the beginning of ninth grade, and I would sit in the library at the front of my grade's section where incidentally I had an excellent view of the senior section. Esther Mehlman would daven *Shemona Esrei* there in the front every day. I noticed that as she bent low for the few seconds at the beginning of *Modim*, she would intentionally smile. Every single day.

That week, our teacher Mrs. Mizrahi had been telling us how the *Sefer HaChinuch* teaches, "Man is acted upon according to his actions; and his heart and all his thoughts always follow after the actions that he does." If you smile when thinking about the ways in which Hashem is good to you, then you'll feel thankful towards Him, I hypothesized. I tried it for the next month. I felt more connected when I did it, but soon I forgot about my resolution.

*Yamim tovim* exist for us to become transformed. Every event we experience should ideally uplift us spiritually. But inspiration fizzles and commitments dissolve and we are reminded time and time again that we are only human. That's how we were created to be.

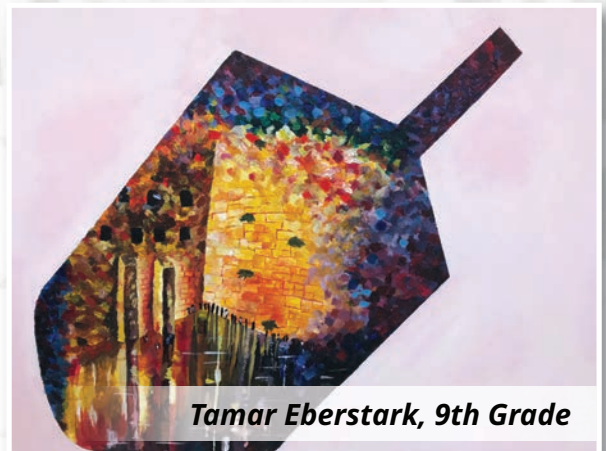
Over the past few months, Rabbi Taub has explored the concepts of *teshuvah* and *nisyonos* with us. We control so little of our lives, he emphasized, yet our goal should always be to come closer to Hashem. It doesn't matter if we fail to achieve, as long as we're trying to get there. I've learned from this class to value my efforts, because that's what matters to Him. When, during the days of Matisyahu, the Jews used a small *pach shemen* to light the *menorah*, Hashem saw to it that the oil lasted for eight days. They struggled to serve Hashem, He knew, and He rewarded them. To me, this is the ultimate miracle that defies reason: every day, the Ruler of the entire universe treasures our tiny efforts. To us, they are pitifully small. To Him, they last forever.

☺ Tamar Spoerri

## Moadim Art Winners



Chanie Malek, 10th Grade



Tamar Eberstark, 9th Grade



## A Light for Everyone

The highlight of *Chanukah* is, of course, *hadlakas haneiros*. Every year, we all wait eagerly to light the candles and be inspired by their flickering flames and the *neis* they represent. There are many *halachos* concerning *neiros Chanukah*- who lights, how to light, and where to light. What about the types of oil and wicks that we may use for *neiros Chanukah*?

The general answer the *Shulchan Aruch* offers is that all types of oils and wicks are *kasher* for *ner Chanukah*, even if they are inferior and do not glow brightly or remain lit for very long. In contrast, when it comes to *neiros Shabbos*, only certain types of oil and specific kinds of wicks are permitted. In fact, on Friday night it is customary in many *Ashkenazic shuls* to recite the *perek mishnayos* in *Maseches Shabbos* called '*bameh madlikin ubameh ain madlikin*,' which describes which oils and wicks are acceptable for *Shabbos* candles.. The question is, however, why are those oils and wicks which are not permissible for *neir Shabbos*, specifically allowed on *Chanukah*?

The *Mishnah Berurah* explains the difference between the two standards based on the following *halachah*: On *Chanukah*, the *mitzvah* is the actual lighting of the candles. Therefore, if the *neiros Chanukah* become extinguished before the desired time, we do not rekindle them since the *mitzvah* has already been performed. To take this concept further, although certain wicks and oils are inappropriate for *neiros Shabbos*, they are entirely acceptable for *neiros Chanukah* because the essential part

of the *mitzvah* is the act of lighting, rather than the lights themselves.

The *Sfas Emes* explains that this ruling can be understood not only from a halachik perspective, but from a spiritual one as well. Sometimes, a Jew does not achieve *aliyas hanefesh* on *Shabbos*; he does not follow the exact laws of *Shabbos* regarding the restricted oil and wicks, or the other *halachos* of the day, and consequently never reaches the high *madreiga* which is possible on *Shabbos*. When it comes to *Chanukah*, however, a Jew can experience a spiritual elevation even without attention to every detail. Every Jew has a *nekuda*- a personal point of attachment - a *pintele Yid*. For many Jews, the simple action of lighting the *menorah* can ignite the special spark within.

As *frum* Jews, we should always strive, to the extent that we can, to bring out the *pintele yid* in every Jewish soul. We are fortunate to observe *Shabbos* and perform *mitzvos*, and *Chanukah* is a time for each of us to experience an uplifting of the *nefesh*. My great grandfather Rabbi Zalman Adleman was somebody who understood this concept very well. He was very instrumental in the creation of an organization called NCSY, which brings young Jews into the fold of *yiddishkeit*. He understood the special light of each Jewish soul, and made it possible for its flicker to become a flame.

☺ Tova Schwartz

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## Appreciating the Teva in Our Lives

When we discuss the *chag* of *Chanukah*, a famous question comes up: Why is the *neis* of *Chanukah* celebrated for eight days?

Understandably, it was a tremendous *neis* that the *shemen zayis* lasted for seven extra days; why, though, do we celebrate an additional day?

There is a very powerful lesson to be learned from this practice. The added day - the eighth - reminds us that although we may think otherwise, *teva* is also a *neis*. Sometimes we may think that it's only those *Hashgacha Pratis* stories that are truly miracu-

lous, but, in fact, this is not true. There are so many aspects of our lives which are seemingly natural, but they, too, are *nissim*. The very fact that oil, when lit, can fuel fire is a tremendous *neis*. It takes greatness to realize that Hashem is helping us even in those seemingly natural instances. So the next time that anything basic happens to us, something that seems to be simply a part of the natural manner of the world, we should stop and thank Hashem for it. This is the crucial lesson of the eight days of *Chanukah* - as opposed to seven.

☺ Adielle Rosenblum





# אותיות החנוכה

- ל. מה היו גזרות היוונים?
- מ. מי קרא "מי לה' אליו"?
- נ. מאיזה פרשה בספר במדבר קוראים בכל יום של חנוכה?
- ס. באיזה משחק יש מנהג לשחק בחנוכה?
- ע. מה מוסיפים בתפילה בחנוכה?
- פ. מדוע שמים את המנורה בצד הדלת או בחלון?
- צ. סוג של אבן
- ק. על מה גזרו היוונים לכתוב "אין לנו חלק באלקי ישראל"?
- ר. מהי אחת מהמצוות שאסרו היוונים?
- ש. לפי איזה תנא, מדליקים שמונה נרות ביום הראשון של חנוכה ופוחתים אחד בכל יום?
- ת. את מה השתדלו היוונים למחות?

**Send in your answers to [Moadim@manhattan-hs.org](mailto:Moadim@manhattan-hs.org) by the 4th night of Chanukah to be entered into a raffle!**



# חידון חנוכה לפי

- א. מי היה המלך היווני?
- ב. את מה חיללו היוונים?
- ג. מה היו המעשים שעשו היוונים ליהודים שגרמו לפריצת המלחמה?
- ד. כיצד נקרא בית המקדש ב"על הניסים"?
- ה. איזו 'מצוה ביום' תקנו חכמינו בחנוכה?
- ו. באיזה יום של חנוכה חל ראש חדש?
- ז. מהו השמן המובחר להדלקת נרות חנוכה?
- ח. מי מסרה את נפשה ונפש משפחתה שלא לעבוד עבודה זרה?
- ט. החשמונאים היו \_\_\_\_\_ היונים היו \_\_\_\_\_.
- י. צייני שלשה מבני מתתיהו המכבי?
- יא. מהו התאריך בו מתחיל חג החנוכה?





