

# MOADIM



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## *Message from the Menabeles*

*Chanukah* is closely associated with a cruse of pure oil. It was through *hashgacha* that the *Chashmonaim* found the cruse of pure oil which then miraculously proceeded to burn for eight days. Many of the commentaries ask why the miracle of the cruse of pure oil was necessary at all, based on the halachic principle of *טומאה הותרה בצבור*; when the majority of the Jews are impure, the *avodah* may be executed even in a state of impurity.

The *P'nei Yeboshua* responds to this question by conceding the point and stating that halachically the miracle of the oil was unnecessary. He suggests that this miracle transpired only to demonstrate *חיבה יתירה*, an added endearment to the Jewish people.

Through their many studies of *Tanach* and Jewish history, our students are privy to the many miracles and providential acts that Hashem performs for us, the Jewish nation. They learn and clearly see the tangible demonstrations of G-d's control over nature on behalf of His beloved nation, leaving an impression strong enough to last thousands of years.

The *nissim* of *Chanukah* entered our hearts and became a part of our national identity. Above all, they emphasize the *חיבה יתירה נודעת להם*, the fact that the Jewish nation is beloved to Hashem.

Every student at MHS is a valued and appreciated member of our student body, and above all, beloved to her Father in Heaven. May this *Chanukah* be an affirmation of that love and a source of true light, *כי נר מצוה ותורה אור*, for the entire *Klal Yisroel*.

A special thank you to Rebbetzin Neuburger, an erudite and beloved teacher, for editing this publication and for so much more.

Kudos to an outstanding editorial staff for a job well done.

A *freilichin* Chanukah and happy reading,

Mrs. T. Yanofsky

## From the desk of the Editors

The *Gemara* in *Maseches Shabbos* asks, “מאי הנוכה”, what is *Chanukah*?, and responds by explaining that we celebrate eight days corresponding to the miraculous eight-day lifespan of the oil. Interestingly, the Maccabees’ triumph is not listed as the essence of *Chanukah*. Rav Avram Yaffen questions why the *Gemara* ignores the obvious, and even greater, miracle - namely, that a small band of Maccabees defeated a vastly more powerful army? What is it about the small jug of oil that is more significant than the *neis* of the military victory?

*Chazal* explain that the *rabbanim* did not want to focus on a *neis* which was combative in nature, and which might be attributed to *derech hateva*; a natural course of events. Additionally, they did not want to glorify reliance on military might, but rather, sought to highlight our dependency on Hashem, who can bring relief through the military, as well as a variety of other ways. They avoid mentioning the human victory so as to de-emphasize the prowess of the Maccabees, and underscore, instead, the powerful hand of Hashem. Ergo, we focus on the miracle of the salvaged oil, which undoubtedly came about through Divine intervention alone. This message is relevant to our day-to-day lives. Nowadays, we no longer experience direct *nissim*, miracles that go entirely against nature. Nevertheless, we must still understand that it is Hashem Who stands behind every single event and victory, however natural and humanly driven they may seem.

It is our hope that you will enjoy the fruits of our labor, and that this publication will enhance your *Chanukah*. Much effort was invested and we thank all of those who contributed artwork and articles.

*A freilichen Chanukah* to all,  
The Moadim Crew

# Hailing Our Heroines: A Chanukah Tribute

Behind every Jewish redemption stand extraordinary women. *Chanukah* is no exception to this rule. While they were never formally entered into the canon of *kisvei hakodesh*, the narratives of *Sefer HaMaccabeem* and *Sefer Yehudis*, and particularly of the courageous women that they highlight, have been told and retold ever since the inaugural *Chanukah*. Who has not been mesmerized by the story of the beautiful and wealthy widow named *Yehudis*, whose shrewd mind and brave spirit led her to outsmart the cruel *Holifurnus*, and subsequently, to bring down the Greek army? And how many of us have been brought to tears by the account of *Channah*, a woman of unflinching faith, and her seven sons who, having been nurtured by their singular mother, boldly chose to defy a Greek tyrant in defense of *Hashem's* honor, though it cost them their lives? This *Chanukah*, we at MHS reflect on our own Jewish heroines; the women in our lives who have dedicated their hearts, minds, and souls to us, and to the future of the Jewish People.



*"I'm so happy we are making your grandmother's recipe," the tall woman said with a smile, "I loved your grandmother, I used to go hear her speak all the time." I looked at her confused; we were at a challah bake, and I was hosting a group of special women who study Torah with my mother.*

*"This recipe is not Rebbetzin Jungreis's recipe," I said with a smile, "it's Rebbetzin Kanievsky's recipe- she was the wife of the Gadol Hador- head rabbi of our generation."*

*"Oh," she said and paused, "oh- I thought it was Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis's challah recipe."*

*I laughed and told her something my grandmother always told me "My grandmother didn't belong in the kitchen."*

*True, she lived at a time where norms and convention dictated otherwise, but her irrepressible love for other Jews, the war inflicted scars of Jewish identity, and her drive to bring lost neshamos back*

*to Hashem led her on a different sort of path. With the *haskama* of *Gedolei Hador* she forged ahead- speaking at Madison Square Garden, army bases, the White House, and all over the world with a singular message of "Shema Yisrael."*

*My grandmother was a modern day Yehudis. Yehudis was a young widow who had her own scars, and in the *Megilah* bearing her name, we read how she spent those lonely widowed years in her attic, praising Hashem for His kindness and immersed in *tefilah*. Out of her pain, out of her self-knowledge born of years of introspection and connectedness in that attic, came the clarity to know what had to be done to save the Jewish people.*

*A mission riding on such clarity takes on whole new dimension. I remember traveling with my grandmother, watching her walk up and down the aisles of the plane introducing herself to strangers and asking if they were Jewish. I remember the late nights; it would be 3:00 in the morning and she would still be talking to people after a speech. "Bubba let's go home; you need sleep" I would whisper in her ear. She would whisper back, "Sheifele- I don't like to leave if there are still people waiting to see me... I will sleep after 120." I remember long bumpy car rides through the countryside of Hungary looking for *kivrei avos*, and I remember arriving to be greeted by locked gates and an undeterred grandmother climbing over. "But why?" I asked. A piercing gaze and a reprimand: "Klal Yisrael needs our *tefilos*- and I'm one of the only survivors from our *mishpacha*." I recall living in Israel and feeling numb after the news of a terror attack, only to receive a call from my grandmother minutes later with the news that she is coming to Israel to be *menachem* avel the families, and to visit the wounded in the hospital. "And organize a big event for me in Tel Aviv" she would add, almost as an afterthought. "We need to wake up Tel Aviv; we need to bring them to *teshuva*."*

*I remember poor Israeli waitresses being told to have a seat at our table while they tried serving us coffee; they, in return, were served a lesson on *parsha hashavua*. Soon they were sobbing in my grandmother's arms*

only to calm down with one of her signature brachos. I remember all those who came back, who still come back, to tell of the brachos being miskayem, of finding peace with themselves, with others, a shidduch or children.

The stories don't stop, they continue to roll in, and now they roll into the lives of my children when people stop and share their life-changing

Rebbetzin Esther Jungries moments with them. Its because her story didn't end, and it never will. It is the story of picking up the pieces of your life and making something big and beautiful. It is the story of vision and knowing what needs to be done in the moment. It's a story about changing the world by knowing who you are. It's a Chanukah story. — Mrs. Eisenberg

When I think of heroines in Jewish history, I think of Esther and Yehudis. It's no coincidence that my mother's name is Esther Yehudis. Both of these women felt an overwhelming responsibility for the survival of Am Yisroel. My mother, too, inspired by her grandfather, Rav Shimon Schwab ז"ל, has devoted her time and talents to teaching Torah in a way that makes it relevant and inspiring to women of all ages and backgrounds. Although my mother has been asked to speak around the world, she is currently devoting her time to working with high school students as they slowly, but surely, strengthen their connection to Yehadus. She feels that investing in the future is the most worthwhile endeavor to be a part of. My mother's students have personally connected with her, because they feel as if she identifies with them, and truly believes in them. Many of them have even expressed that they have never before connected so strongly with a teacher. Above all, my mother is my personal role model and heroine. She has raised me with good values and a sense of inspiration. I see in her a person who truly devotes her life to her children and family. She instills within us with a desire to be just like her. — Ayelet Wein



Recently, in Mrs. Yanofsky's Mishlei class, she asked us who we think is a paradigm of someone who acts in the way of מעשה אדם (as opposed to מעשה בהמה); someone who is upright and influences others to be thoughtful; someone whose actions manifests to the highest levels. Someone answered Rebbetzin Kanievsky, another: Judge Ruchie Freier. What did I answer? My mom.

Ever since I can remember, I have gone to shul on Shabbos with my mother. When I was little, she always woke up early, got dressed, woke up the cohort of Shulman children, helped her sluggish five year old (me!) match her clothing with her headband and necklace (it was all very confusing), re-woke the said cohort, and davened brachos as she waited for everyone to get ready.

I remember watching her in shul as she davened. She treated tefillah with such reverence that even though I could not read out of a siddur yet, I sat quietly, not daring to make a peep.

As I learned to read Hebrew, I began selecting the same siddur my mother used so I could turn to her to see what page we were on. During layning, my mother shared her

Chumash with me so I could look on as she pointed to the words the Baal Koreh was reading aloud. Through these weekly rituals, my mother instilled in me a love for attending shul on Shabbos, and a sense of respect for tefillah.

When I was seven, one of my friends asked me if I wanted to join her at "groups". "No thanks," I responded. I didn't want to miss shul with my mom. — Chani Shulman



Everyone has that person she's compared to; the person with whom she is most identified. Somebody whom you don't recognize comes over to you? 9 out of 10 times that conversation will start off with "You're <insert name here>'s sister, aren't you?" Fortunately, or not, I don't have a sister, so for me it's always been my grandmother.

goodness it was nearly midnight, so that no one could see her. But what she remembers most is my grandmother; determined and proud, declaring to all who would listen, and those who could not, that one day everyone would read her paper; they would see. My mother didn't know who they were, but she was sure glad they couldn't see her right then.

Agree or disagree with her, one thing everyone agrees with is that my grandmother just exudes confidence. When she tells you something, you believe it, or else. It takes a deliberate act of impressive self-will not to listen. But even with her natural leadership abilities, it was not easy for her. There were many challenges in the initial years, not the least of which was leading such a project in a world run by men. And as in all such cases, they did not make it easy for her.

The earliest memory I have of any of this is the tenth anniversary evening of Hamodia. I remember a big fancy party, with many women and men, and lots of running back and forth across the mechitzah, between the two sides of the room. I remember following my brother up to who seemed to me to be Superman-- it was Police Commissioner Kelly, Chief of NYC police department at the time, and I still have the picture of me in a little red dress, smiling happily, the commissioner's police hat draped over my small head.

My grandmother then spoke, her powerful voice resounding across the room. She stood in the women's section, holding a mike, as the crowd listened in respectful silence. But what I didn't know was that this was the first time my grandmother was speaking publicly, as the executive director and publisher of Hamodia. For me the night was all about cake, and just generally being adorable. For my grandmother, it was a moment she always knew would come. A moment toward which she had worked, for years. A moment that will always symbolize for all those who are close to her, her incredible will, outrageous confidence, and formidable array of talents. And yet, it was only the start.

— Tzipporah Braun

I'm still deciding how I feel about that.

My grandmother, Mrs. Ruth Lichtenstein, grew up in Israel, a descendant of the illustrious lineage of Gerrur rebbes. After she was married, she moved to America and began teaching Jewish history and Hebrew. Once her children (my mother included) were grown, she focused on a dream she'd always had -- continuing her father's legacy of writing and publishing.

My great-great grandfather had started the first ultra-orthodox Yiddish newspaper, called Hamodia, for chassidim in Poland. After the Holocaust he decided to try his luck at continuing on with that, and Hamodia was published in Yerushalayim in Hebrew. Now, my grandmother, all set in a house-robe and using the ironing board as the extra desk, put her first workers to work, intent on producing a professional frum newspaper for the American religious community.

Most of the good stories I get are from my mother. Like the time, late one night, when my grandmother, (still in her house-robe) drove around Borough Park with the first 50 papers in the back seat. It was my mother's job to run out of the car at each home, leaving the paper at the door for the new subscriber. Yup, she was the mailman. Thank



The greatest role model in my life is my mother. She is a doctor and the Rebbetzin of our West Hempstead community, and still manages to care for each of her nine children and grandchildren with love and dedication. Every year, my mother hosts at least 3 bake sales at our house to raise funds for the shul, and for people in the community who don't have enough money to support their families. She is constantly giving or doing chessed. My mother always works tirelessly to complete any task or project which is placed before her. There has never been a moment in time where my mother has said "Sorry, can't talk now." Although she works ten hours a day, she always has dinner ready for us and the table set when we come home from school. My mother always makes Torah and her family her priority, and that is what I want for myself as well. When I grow up, I want to be just like her. — Shoshana Schwalb

# *The Mothers of the Maccabeim*

*By: Dr. Shaina Trapedo*

With every passing year, from one Chanuka to the next, I am struck by the degree to which “modern” society increasingly resembles the emergent civil society of the Greeks during the last century BCE. 150 years after Alexander the Great’s death, during the time of the Maccabeim, Israel was dominated by the Syrians under the rule of King Antiochus, who was a strong advocate of Hellenism, the spread of Greek culture.

During the Hellenistic period, Athens was considered the most prestigious seat of higher education. Emphasis was placed on philosophy, rhetoric and politics, which became the standardized curriculum and primary disciplines of study. As a complement to intellectual pursuits, gymnasiums were under construction all over the empire to function as training facilities for competitors in public games. When those seeking social and spiritual self-satisfaction were not at the “gym,” they could be found at the theater. Greek language and literature spread throughout the former Persian Empire with featuring tragic scenes of violence and suffering. In short, Greek culture valued higher-education, political diplomacy, exhibition of the body and sensationalized forms of popular entertainment. Does any of this sound familiar? Would you use any of these elements to describe contemporary American culture?

As the most advanced people on the planet based on their achievements in science, philosophy and art, the Greeks believed that their superiority should be extended to the rest of the world, even using force when necessary. Rabbi Mansour argues that even a cursory survey of Greek culture reveals Hellenism as the antithesis of Judaism. They stressed the primacy of man, in both body and mind, and what man can accomplish both physically and intellectually. While they believed in several gods, these gods were usually portrayed as petty, jealous criminals constantly arguing with one another while man was the greatest of all the creations. Judaism is just the opposite. We uphold the

importance and purity of the soul over the body, and the value of what man can accomplish in his service to Hashem, the one true G-d who is beyond our full intellectual comprehension.

It wasn’t long before the Greeks realized the threat Jewish life posed to the continuity and growth of Greek culture. Therefore, as we’ve seen in history time and again, Antiochus undertook a systematic effort to destroy the Jews. In reading the historical accounts of this period recording in the Talmud and the Book of Maccabeim, what struck me most was the Greeks’ unusual military tactics. Traditionally, women and children are afforded certain rights during times of war. However, during this period of Jewish history, the Greek soldiers mercilessly persecuted them, often using women and children to emotionally and psychologically torture the Jewish people into submission. In fact, the

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mothers were often the ones who were held responsible, and punished, for the circumcision of the infants. Why not the fathers, who certainly had a more instrumental role in the actual bris milah ceremony?

In addition to the more popularized edicts passed by the Syrian-Greeks, the outlawing of circumcision, Shabbos, and Torah study, the Gemara relates a decree which, at first glance, seems highly irregular and irrelevant, but actually helps us answer our question: why did the Greeks target the Jewish mothers? In addition to overtly anti-

Semitic edicts that hindered religious observance, the Jews were also commanded to write, “I have no portion in the G-d of Israel” on the horn of an ox (Midrash Rabbah, Bereshis 2:4). Issued by the most intelligent philosophers and heads of state at the time, what did this seemingly irreverent decree seek to accomplish?

Having spent years teaching my university students about rhetorical strategy and the subliminal power of advertising, I am convinced modern-day marketing principles stem from Greek culture. One effective technique companies use to imbed their product into your subconscious is repetition. While you might cringe at those Geico commercials with that talking lizard, sure enough, after repeated exposure, you know with certainty that they can save you 15% or more on your car insurance. This is the tactic the Greeks employed to erode the resistance of the Jews by having them write the words “I have no portion in the G-d of Israel” on ox horns. While there are many explanations offered by our sages as to the significance of the horn, I’d like to share a personal thought based on a shiur by Rabbi Mansour. In 2000, the British museum had an exhibit about the historical period surrounding the miracle of Chanukah that featured several artifacts, including horns. Don’t let Rosh Hashana mislead you. In ancient Greece, horns were not exclusively used as instruments; they were also used for drinking. More specifically, they were used as baby bottles. Mothers would hallow cow horns, wrap a small piece of leather around the tip, and bore a hole so that babies could drink milk their mothers or nurse maids expressed. This Greek edict effectively secured “advertising space” in every Jewish home, with mothers being their intended audience.

The Greeks had previous experience with the threat of strong mother figures. Sparta was a city-state of ancient Greece that was renowned for the superiority of their warriors and the freedom and rights granted to their women. Spartan women were expected to produce

strong and healthy children who would be loyal to their state. In Spartan culture, a mother’s love was replaced by a mother’s pride in her son’s bravery in battle and disgust with any sign of cowardice. “Come home with your shield or on it” was reputed to be the advice one mother gave her son as he went off to war. She may well have been speaking on behalf of all Spartan women, whom the Greeks believed had far too much influence on their children and the production of this nation of warriors. Aristotle even argued that women specifically were responsible for the downfall of Sparta.

In this light, the Greek decree concerning the ox’s horn was not an arbitrary annoyance—it was an attack mounted against the mothers of the Jewish nation. While many of their older sons were off in the hills fighting with the Maccabeim, the Greeks attempted to break down the fortitude of the Jewish people from infancy by bombarding the women with painful propaganda: this baby that you are nourishing, this living, breathing promise of the future of your people, will not have a “portion of the G-d of Israel.” Your efforts are useless. Surrender now.

Though the Greeks were wise to target the family unit by afflicting the Jewish women, they clearly underestimated their opponents. Jewish women are strong. They carry

the success of a nation on their shoulders as they are entrusted with the responsibility of physically raising and spiritually rearing the future leaders of Klal Yisrael.

For me, the importance of the family unit, steadfastly supported by the woman, is really what Chanukah celebrates, and I see this reflected in the specifics of the mitzvah of lighting the menorah. Though there are many time-sensitive mitzvos that women are

exempt from, there is no distinction between men and women with regards to this obligation. Though many families have a custom that each person, or several people, in the home light their own menorahs, the actual

As my own family gathers to light our menorah, I take the occasion to reflect on the mothers of the Maccabeim, who taught their sons, and daughters, to never lose faith and never give up fighting against the odds.

requirement for the mitzvah is that one menorah must be kindled in each home on behalf of the entire family. And while it is usually the father who lights for his family, a woman may perform this act on behalf of her family in an equally valid way if he is away or traveling. As my own family gathers to light our menorah, I take the occasion to reflect on the mothers of the Maccabeim, who taught their sons, and daughters, to never lose faith and never give up fighting against the odds.

Although I don't teach math, there is one formula I believe is irrefutable: knowledge of our past plus increased efforts in the present will equal a future for the Jewish people. In comparing the way the menorah was lit during the time of the Beis Hamikdash to today, the Lubavitcher Rebbe notes that while the same number of candles



Image Source: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/19/aa/f9/19aa995dea392d99b9677d7f069e89f.jpg>

on were lit everyday in the Temple, on Chanukah we add a light each night. This increase of the flames of the menorah as the holiday progresses signals that when “spiritual darkness encroaches the Jewish community, as it does in our own times, there is a different mode of practice required.” We kindle the lights when darkness is falling, direct the light to the outside world by placing our menorahs in windows and door posts, and constantly increase the number of flames, thus signaling that we cannot sustain ourselves by remaining on the same level. Every new day requires even greater illumination.

This Channuka, as we recognize the collective power of our Jewish femininity and role of women in Klal Yisroel, I take such pride and comfort in knowing that my Manhattan High School students fervently dispel darkness and bringing the dazzling light of Torah and Mitzvos into this world each and every day.



Chari Golding

# Reflections From Rav Gavriel Friedman

We were privileged to have Rav Gavriel Friedman speak to us about *Chanukah* and the goal of the *Yevanim*. Haman, the villain of the Purim story, wanted to kill out all the Jews—*physically*. In the *Chanukah* narrative, on the other hand, the *Yevanim* wished to bring about our *spiritual* death, by cutting us off from Torah, and attempting to convince us to assimilate into their culture of worshipping the body and the mind. The question is: which one is worse?

Rav Gav powerfully answered that if we think that Haman's attempt to physically annihilate our nation was worse, then we don't understand what it means to be Jewish. As Jews, we are focused on the internal— the spiritual — and ought not be as attentive to the physical. We do not care who the best athlete in the Olympics is, as the Greeks do, but, rather, concentrate on our souls and inner strengths. The near-tragedy of *Chanukah*, which was so much worse than that of Purim, was that the Greeks, whose name “*Yavan*” (in Hebrew letters) is even spelled beautifully and symmetrically, tried to convince us to adopt their external culture as opposed to the internal values of our religion. This is even reflected in the donuts we eat on *Chanukah*— the *sufganiyos* look ordinary and plain on the outside, but hidden inside them is beautiful and delicious cream. The miracle of *Chanukah* is that we prevailed, as we always will, and maintained our spirituality. Every time we grow a step closer to Hashem, or learn another part of Torah, we are rebelling against the *Yevanim* who tried to steer us off our path.



— Noa Klein

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## Celebrating the Light in the Darkness

We find ourselves in ‘dark times.’ We leave our homes before sunrise and come home well after nightfall. We generally don't see the light of day. Winter is indeed a dark time.

This darkness goes all the way back to the month of *Marcheshvan*. The days get shorter and we experience the noticeable absence of *Yamim Tovim*. *Kislev* continues this dark theme; that is, until *Chanukah* comes around on the twenty-fifth. On *Chanukah*, the intense darkness is broken by the light of the *menorah*. So important is our appreciation of this experience, that *halacha* demands that we wait for the sun to set completely before lighting. Why must this darkness precede the light?

Indeed, as the question implies, light is best perceived through a lens of darkness. One can only see the stars once the sun is down. Similarly, proper *pirsumei nisa* occurs when the *menorah* is lit in the dark, when its visibility is greatest. Actually, the whole *Chanukah* miracle was performed against a backdrop of darkness. The oil lasted eight days, but, antecedent to that, there was only a single jar of oil. The Jews won the war, but they were vastly outnumbered and nearly didn't. The Jewish People survived as a nation, but only after a period of rampant assimilation among the Hellenistic Greeks.

Undoubtedly, our survival as a nation today is, as well, an open miracle. Despite facing persecution and forced assimilation throughout the generations, the Jewish People remain alive with their faith intact. Despite all the darkness,

the light remains. During our daily recitation of *Shema*, we attest to our continued faith, even through the darkness. We cover our eyes, and from that place of darkness, we declare our faith that Hashem is the one and only G-d. The light that is our survival amidst all the darkness is what we celebrate on *Chanukah*.

— Sarah Nordlicht

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## Eight Uplifting Days of Chanukah

The *Maharal* explains the significance of celebrating specifically *eight* days of Chanukah, by emphasizing the meaning behind the number eight itself. The number seven represents *teva*, nature, as there were seven days of Creation, six plus *Shabbos*. The number eight, therefore, represents '*l'malah min hateva*', that which is just above nature, as it is precisely one more than seven. The eight days of *Chanukah* celebrate the *nissim* that Hashem did for us *b'yimei Chanukah*, which were, of course,

supernatural occurrences. The *Maharal* further observes that the best time to light *neiros Chanukah* is immediately after the day becomes night, a moment of stark contrast which aptly represents the difference between *teva*, and the '*l'malah min hateva*' *nissim* Hashem performed for us. We must internalize this contrast since we are surrounded by a society dominated by attention to *teva* and ordinary activities. *Chanukah* serves as a reminder for us that the *ikar* and focus must always be on our extraordinary relationship with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* and His Torah.

— Zahava Giloni, Source: *Maharal, Ner Mitzvah*

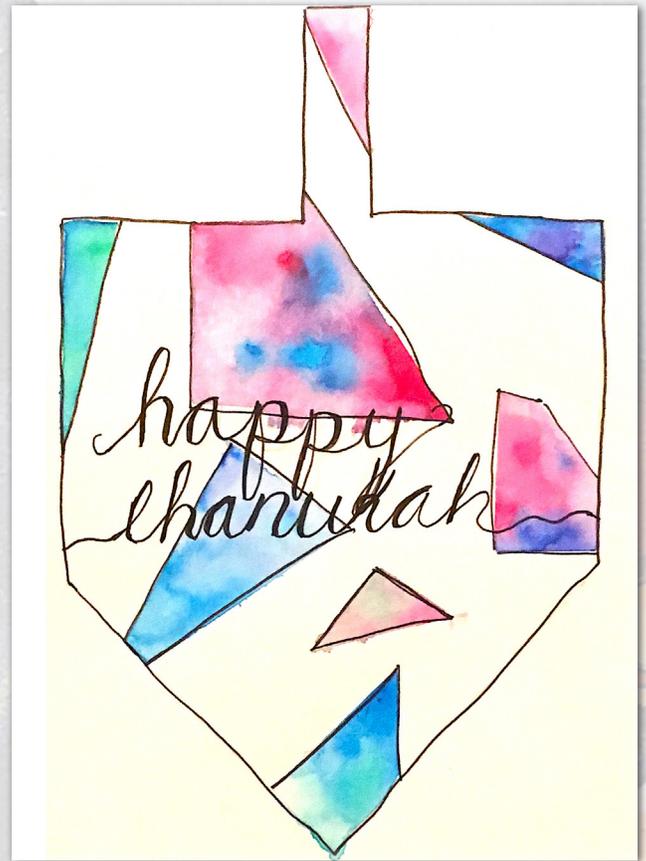
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## Hashem's Love for His Children

The most notable *neis* that occurred during *Chanukah* was that *Klal Yisrael* triumphed over the *Yevanim*, despite their significantly smaller number and weaker status. The secondary miracle was that the *Maccabeem* found a small jug of pure oil that exceeded its potential and lasted for eight days. If this is the case, why is lighting the *menorah* the main focus of *Chanukah*? It would seem more appropriate, instead, to display a symbol of the *Maccabee* victory - perhaps a *Magen David* or a lion - on our doorposts. Additionally, one may ask, why is *Chanukah* the only holiday that has both *mehadrin* and *mibadrin min hamehadrin* ways of enhancing the *mitzvah*?

To answer these questions, we can consider the following litmus test: to know if a caregiver is a parent or a housekeeper, we look at how they change the clothes of a soiled child. If the caregiver kisses the child as she finishes, we know that she must be the mother. If, on the other hand, she simply disposes of the dirty clothing and moves on, sans affection, we know that it must be the housekeeper.

It is similar with us, *Bnei Yisroel*. Hashem promised our father, Avraham, that his nation would never be destroyed. Accordingly, there was no way that Hashem could have allowed us to be completely defeated by the *Yevanim*. Losing the war would have resulted in the complete annihilation of the Jewish nation. Of course, our victory over the Greek



Chava Milo

army was a great miracle, yet the mere fact that we triumphed was not the *biggest* miracle - as this was *promised* to us. It was the finding of the jug of oil which showed the great love of Hashem for His children, as *that* was never guaranteed to us.

Just as Hashem extended this extra *chessed* to us, we, too, go above and beyond what is required of us by basic *Halacha*, and display our love for Him by enhancing the *mitzvos* of *Chanukah* through the performance of extra *bidurim*. We show Hashem that we are not interested in simply fulfilling the *mitzvos* to be *yotzei yedei chovoseinu*, but rather, because we love Him.

Our *Maariv davening* reflects this idea. We praise Hashem for redeeming us from Egypt by saying:

ויוצא את עמו ישראל מתוכם לחירות עולם - המעביר בניו בין גזרי ים סוף; Hashem took **His nation** out of *Mitzrayim* and **his sons** across the *yam suf*. We are referred to as a nation with respect to *yetzias mitzrayim*, and as sons in regard to *krias yam suf*, because had we stayed in Egypt any longer, we would have sunk to the fiftieth gate of *tumah*, and would never have been able to leave. This would have resulted in the annihilation of the Jewish people, and to be true to His word Hashem needed to prevent this by taking us out of Egypt as a nation. *Krias yam suf*, on the other hand, was something that Hashem had never promised to our fathers. It was an extra way of showing us love, especially because it was accompanied by many miracles. Accordingly, in relation to *krias yam suf* we are referred to as children who experienced Hashem's fatherly love for us.

We find this idea in the *Chanukah davening* as well. In *Al Hanisim* we say:

ולעמך ישראל עשית תשועה גדולה ופורקן כהיום הזה  
ואחר כן באו בניך לדביר ביתך... והדליקו נרות  
בחצרות קדשך

and for Your **nation**, Israel, you brought about a great salvation...and after that Your **sons** entered Your palace...and lit candles in Your holy courtyards. In highlighting the miracle of winning the war, the *tefilah* refers to us as a **nation**, but when it focuses on the miracle of the *menorah*, it identifies us as **sons**. As explained, the miracle of finding the pure oil was Hashem's way of showing His love to us, the pure love of a parent to a child.

May we all be *zocheh* to continue being loved by Hashem, and to feel and express the love we have for our Father in heaven.

— Adi Hacker



## Not Even a Drop

There is a *halacha* that “*Tumah Hutra B'tzibur*”, which means that if an *avodah* is being performed for all of *Am Yisrael*, and the majority of *Kohanim* are *t'meiim*, then *tumah*, ritual impurity, does not impede the service. If that is the case, why did *B'nei Yisrael* need the *neis* of the pure oil? Lighting the menorah is an *avodas hatzibur*, a communal service, and everyone was in a state of *tumah*, so they could very well have used impure oil!

The *Kotzker Rebbe* makes the following distinction: while *tumah* does not generally disrupt the service of the *tzibur* in a situation such as this, on *Chanukah*, there was a new beginning. It was a rededication of the *Beis Hamikdash*, and that could not even involve a morsel of *tumah*. It had to be perfectly pure. It may have been technically “kosher” to use the impure oil, but for a circumstance such as this, Hashem deemed it proper to perform a *neis*.

This insight is specifically apropos to the story of the *Chashmonaim*. They were fighting for the spirit and soul of *Am Yisrael*. The desecration of *Shabbos* by the Jewish people did not happen overnight. At first there were subtle, seemingly innocent inclusions of Greek culture into the Jewish lifestyle. It wasn't at all clear that these small behaviors would be harmful. But after a while, they seeped in and brought about devastating results. This is the lesson of *Chanukah*: we must keep our oil pure even if the alternative is technically not forbidden.

— Rena Seidemann



Chanie Malek

## Parallels Between Chanukah & Purim

*Chanukah* and *Purim*: two *chagim* of great significance placed one after the other in the Hebrew calendar. Each holiday is associated with a ‘toy’. The *dreidel* and the *gragger*. It is interesting to note that both need to be spun, the *dreidel* from above, and the *gragger* from below. In some measure, we are in control of our lives through the decisions we make, but on *Chanukah* the *dreidel* reminds us that ultimately the world is spun and guided from Above.

There are two concepts in Judaism that are hard to reconcile: How is it that HaShem knows and plans everything and yet we have the ability to choose our own path? And because it is so difficult to comprehend the co-existence of these two truths, we often focus on them one at a time.

On *Purim*, we twirl noise-making *groggers*, spinning them from below, to remind ourselves that we have total *bechira* and considerable control over our lives through the decisions that we make. Every one of our choices will, and does, play an important role in the evolution of spirituality in the world.

On *Chanukah*, we consider the opposite message. We spin the *dreidel* from its top onto the table. We start off the spin, let go, and watch it clatter to a stop. This is to teach us that although we do have a hand in how our lives play out, it is Hashem Who ultimately has the final 'say'. It is a reminder that no matter what happens in life – it's all for an absolute good which is carefully and lovingly directed by Hashem.

There is one object, however, that can be spun from above and below - a *Sefer Torah*. Torah is the guide that can help us understand how both of these things can be true – that Hashem has a righteous and meaningful plan for the world, yet that I can find my own place within it, and contribute in a significant way.

– Mia Lubetski, Adapted from a Chanukah Pocket Dvar Torah



# Chanukah: Saving Our Torah

The *Kedushas Levi* asks: Why is it that *Chanukah* does not fall out when the moon is full, as do a number of our other *yomim tovim* - namely, Purim, Pesach, and Succos?

He explains that there are times when Hashem brings about *nissim* for *Klal Yisrael* because the *goyim* want to physically harm us. There are other times when Hashem performs *nissim* to protect *Bnei Yisrael* from those who, while they may not seek to physically wipe us out, wish to separate us from the Torah.

*Chanukah* commemorates a time when the *Yivanim* did not want to harm *Klal Yisrael* physically, but, instead, intended to attack us spiritually by taking the Torah away from us. This idea that the focus of the Greeks was to destroy, not us, but rather our connection with Torah, is presented by the Rambam in the first *halachah* of *Hilchos Chanukah*:

בבית שני כשמלכי יון גזרו גזרות על ישראל ובטלו דתם ולא הניחו אותם לעסוק בתורה ובמצות...

Based on this distinction, the *Kedushas Levi* understands why other *yomim tovim* coincide with a full moon and *Chanukah* does not. He explains that, according to the *Zohar Hakadosh*, *Klal Yisrael* is compared to the moon, the *levana*. Therefore, *Purim*, *Pesach*, and *Succos*, which celebrate the physical salvation of *Bnai Yisroel*, all occur while the moon is brilliant and full, to signify that the *nais* was brought about to save the Jewish people. In contrast, *Chanukah* marks a redemption, not from physical harm, but from the spiritual death which would surely have resulted from our separation from Torah.

Consequently, the *yom tov* of *Chanukah* falls out specifically when the moon is *not* full to remind us of this difference. (The *Kedushas Levi* further points out that *Shavuos*, too, does not fall out during the full moon, because the *yom tov* is about the Torah, and not about the physical protection of *Klal Yisrael*.)

In the centuries since the *Chashmonaim*, *Klal Yisroel* has endured so many tragedies, and, as well, experienced numerous *nissim* which have protected us both physically and spiritually. Frequently in our history, the source of our identity, the Torah, has come dangerously close to being forgotten. I have heard stories about my



namesake, my great grandmother, Rebbetzin Tova Gittel Adleman- Goldstein, who lived in the United States at a time when the fulfillment of *mitzvos* was a daily struggle. Far from trying to hurt her, America was ready to embrace her, but her observance of Torah was threatened by the rules and customs of the culture around her. My other great grandparents, who miraculously survived the Holocaust, have told stories which I have heard firsthand, describing their fight to keep *kosher*, sanctify *Yom Kippur* and even maintain the distinctly Jewish patterns of behavior (such as *netilas yadayim*) which we take for granted. The lives of my grandparents illustrate for me that both forms of attack on the Jewish people of which the *Kedushas Levi* speaks will ultimately be opposed by Hashem through the kinds of *nissim* we appreciate on each of our holy days.

— Tova Schwartz

## The Flicker of Lights

The *Mishna* writes that the oil and wicks used for *Shabbos* candles must produce a steady, non-sputtering flame. In regard to *Chanukah* candles, the *Talmud* teaches that this rule does not apply. Even oil that produces a weak, flickering flame is acceptable. Why is there a distinction between the two lights? Why are some oils permitted for *Chanukah* candles, yet forbidden for *Neiros Shabbos*?

The Sages explain that *Shabbos* candles should be lit from high-quality oil in order to prevent situations where one may be tempted to relight a flickering candle, and thereby desecrate *Shabbos*. *Chazal* were more lenient regarding the quality of oil needed for *Chanukah* candles, because they were not concerned that one would try to relight a flickering candle. On *Chanukah*, after all, there is no requirement to relight extinguished candles, and it is forbidden to derive benefit from the light of the candles.

Rav Kook explained that the special rules of *Chanukah* lights reflect the political struggles of the *Chashmonaim*. They did not descend from the house of Dovid, which was compared to a



Ayli Tarakoby

candle that would never be extinguished. Consequently, their dynasty was like a flickering flame. Yet, because of the many threats to the spiritual and political survival of the Jewish People which prevailed at that time, the temporary rule of the *Chashmonaim* was vital in providing them with years of stability.

Throughout our history, we must remember that we often *need* these lights, even if they are flickering, to carry us through times of *galus*. The lights of *Chanukah* are described as holy - "*Kodesh Heim*"- and we should recognize that they, too, are guided by Hashem. We pray that one day the lights of the Jewish nation will once again resemble those of the *Shabbos* candles, pure and unflickering.

— Rivka Notkin

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## *Shedding Light on the Menorah*

Rav Yosef Massas, a former Chief Rabbi of *Haiifa*, offers a unique understanding of the significance of the *menorah* in the *Beit Hamikdash*. He suggests that the *menorah* is comprised of allusions to all of the Jewish holidays. The 7 branches represent the 7 days of the week; Shabbat stands in the middle, and is surrounded by the days during which we look forward to and prepare for it. The 22 *gevi'im* represent the 22 holy days in the Jewish calendar. There are also 11 *kaftorim* representing the 11 *Roshei Chadashim* (*Rosh Chodesh Tishrei* is excluded because it is *Rosh HaShanah*). Finally, the 9 *perachim* on the *menorah* correspond to the 8 days of *Chanukah* and the one day of *Purim*.

— Essie Abittan, Source: *Darchei Avosainu*, translation by Rabbi Lebhar of *Magen Avot*

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## *Miracle of Light*

Light

Where do you come from,

Where do you go.

I see you peeking through the morning haze, hoping to break through and spread your warmth.

I see you shining in a dark room, a beam of light illuminating, overcoming the darkness around you.

I see you smiling on the the faces of young children, eager eyes shining bright.

You are everywhere.

A miracle,

That has no beginning and no end.

— Shira Jacobowitz

# A Nation's Present

רעות שבעה נפשי ביגון כחי כלה... ובידו הגדולה הוציא את הסגלה

I walk through a red and green Manhattan,  
sidewalks lined with trees and tourists and I know  
these aren't my streets.

Zip up my coat, I tell myself, ignore  
the invading cold, look down  
keep walking past the decorations  
and the lights which I know  
are not my lights.

But I won't pretend to understand why  
they give presents, nor do I  
pretend to care. This  
is what matters to me:

I know of the days when parents would give  
their children some money  
to deliver to the *melamdim*  
the teachers  
and would also give to their  
children whose hands would tug theirs  
who'd want money too. (Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky)  
I know of a Nation that appreciates

the givers of Torah.

And I know of another nation,  
one that was blind to the true beauty  
of Torah. Greeks would slaughter  
those who'd study in secret  
so a generation of children  
was strange to learning His  
Sacred Word.

I know of presents given to children  
who still tried to dive into the unfamiliar depths  
because it was their truth. (The Ponevezher Rav)

I know of a Nation that can't break  
its tradition and can't break  
its spirit, that can't forsake Torah.

Though I have to walk  
past the song and light and color  
of gods who are not my G-d, I know  
it doesn't matter.

Only He is my G-d,  
and it fills me with warmth to know  
I have the greatest present.

I am His.

— Tamar Spoerri



# Recipe: Dreidel Pops

## Ingredients:

- Pretzel sticks
- Marshmallows
- Hershey Kisses
- White chocolate chunks or chips
- Food coloring
- Frosting

## Directions:

1. Stick a pretzel stick into one side of each marshmallow.
2. Place a pan on the stove to create a hot surface. Stick the flat side of one Hershey kiss to the hot pan for a few seconds, then stick it to the other end of the marshmallow. Repeat to all the marshmallows.
3. Melt the white chocolate in a double boiler or in a microwave. Add the food coloring and mix.
4. Take each marshmallow pop, and with a spoon, coat the marshmallow with the colored chocolate. Lay on parchment paper until the chocolate hardens.
5. With a piping bag (or a ziplock bag with the end snipped off), decorate the dreidle with a  $\text{ש ה ג נ}$ .



— Becky Bral, Source: Tasty: Dreidel Pops





CHAVI GOLDING

חגיגת חמשה עשר