

MANHATTAN HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
CHANUKAH 5784 – 2023



Chanukah

Batsheva Spira, 11th Grade

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From the Desk of the Editors

Sparks of Spirit, Unity, and Light

The lighting of *Chanukah* candles this year will be different. Amidst the family get-togethers, community donut parties, and wild *dreidel* tournaments, the candles will remind us that we have been here before.

We, as a people, have suffered harsh realities inflicted by powerful enemies who sought to crush our spirit; we have emerged victorious against frightening odds. We have done so by rekindling the spiritual spark inside of us, and responding to the Maccabean call of *Mi La'Hashem Eilay*. As we light the *neiros Chanukah* this year, we should reflect on the recent surge in spirituality among Jews who now feel tugged to their ancestral roots and *mesorah*. That phenomenon should allow us to hope for victory.

Additionally, this *Chanukah*, as we progress from the single candle on the first night, to two on the second night, all the way up to the eighth night when all eight candles stand tall together, we should see in those lights the many Jewish souls that, very recently divided, have quickly come together with pride and in *achdus*, out of a fierce love for the land whose destiny is bound up with ours. This metamorphosis should move us to yearn for continued unity.

Finally, and most obviously, the candles of *Chanukah* serve as a source of light. The flickering flames represent the eternal light of the Jewish people, that little bit of *or*, which, in the timeless words of the *Chovos Halevavos*, has the power to dispel much of the *choshech*. A thought which should bring forth *tefilos* for redemption.

We pray that ours is the last generation of *galus*, that we will be privileged to embrace the *geulah*, and that the *Chanukah* candles that we light all over the world will usher in the light of *Mashiach* and the great gathering of all "Jewish candles" - the men, women, and children who comprise *B'nei Yisrael* around the globe.

With many thanks to the many great lights who have brought sparkle to this edition of *Moadim*,
The Moadim Crew



Mari Rothman, 11th Grade



Bracha Gilbert, 10th Grade

Night #1



Mia Grauman, 9th Grade

The Spark of Hope

Throughout history, the word “light” has always been a metaphor for hope. There are endless phrases and idioms in the English language alone that use “light” and “hope” almost interchangeably, such as “light at the end of the tunnel,” “light of my life.”

The Chanukah story may be where the interrelation of these two words originate. Upon Greek invasion, the Maccabees, led by *Matisyahu*, rallied together to drive the intruders out of *Eretz Yisroel*. How could they have hoped to be victorious in the face of such animosity? From where did the thought of a victory spring? The Greek army was hundreds of times larger than the Jews, and many thousands of times more powerful. How could they even dream of a triumph?

Deep within the Jewish soul burns a flame, a connection to Hashem that can never be put out. Though it may become entrenched in sins and material distractions, there is always a steady flicker, a longing to fulfill the commands of G-d. It was this fire that kindled the hope for the liberation of *Eretz Yisroel* from the Greek occupation. Once a candle has been lit, no amount of darkness can put it out. The Maccabees refused to give up until, with the help of God, the entire land was freed from the evil entrapments. In fact, the victory wasn't considered complete until the *Menorah* had been relit and the lights had been restored.

Today, the Chanukah story hits home. Just as over 2,000 years ago, we now find ourselves battling a nation in a war that is not only physical, but deeply spiritual. We are, just as we were then, fighting to show to the world that Hashem does not and will never abandon His chosen people. We must never give up hope that Hashem can and will redeem us in an instant and fill the world with His light. Just as one small candle fills an entire room with light and expels any darkness, so too, one spark of hope vanquishes any doubt or fear. One good thought clears the path for many more to follow, and one good deed will tip the scale from evil and impurity to righteousness and holiness.

☺ Perel Shapiro

Based on a d'var Torah by Rabbi Yossi Tauber

Finding Hashem in Everyday Miracles

The Maharal asks the following question: Why does the Gemara emphasize the oil as the miracle of Chanukah when so many other sources reference the war as the central miracle of Chanukah?

The Maharal explains that the miracle of the oil was necessary in order to reveal *Hashem's* involvement in the Jews' military victory as well. If someone reads the history of Chanukah, they would conclude that an ancient Jewish group of fighters defeated a Syrian army. Everyone would agree that the triumph was huge, but was it truly a miracle? Perhaps the victory could be attributed to Mattisyahu's tactics and the bravery of the Maccabees?

The Rabbanim who lived during the time of Chanukah wondered if a holiday could be proclaimed just to celebrate a military victory. Wouldn't the day need to be invested with *kedushah*? For this reason, *Hashem* performed an open miracle to prove that He was behind the victorious war as well. One container of pure oil was found with the seal of the *kohen gadol*. How was it not contaminated? Then they lit the oil and it burned for eight days; this was a miracle that no one could deny. This was an answer to anyone's doubts.

This is why the Gemara speaks about the miracle of the oil. We celebrate Chanukah by lighting a *menorah* because the miracle of the oil was *Hashem's* way of showing us that even the military victory was from *Hashem*. This is an important message that we should carry with us the entire year. We must try to see *yad Hashem* in every single aspect of our lives. Even when we do not witness open miracles, we should constantly remind ourselves that everything is from *Hashem*.

☺ Miriam Landau

Night #2



Sarah Wassner, 11th Grade

When Do We Thank Hashem?

In his *sefer* טעם ודעת, Rav Chaim Kanievsky addresses a famous question: Why doesn't על הנסים mention the miracle of the פך השמן when it discusses the miracles of חנוכה?

Rav Chaim Kanievsky explains that one is only obligated to give praise for a miracle when one has personally benefited from it. For example, we praise Hashem for יציאת מצרים because if our forefathers had not been redeemed from Egypt, we would still be slaves to the Egyptians today. Similarly, if our ancestors had not been saved by the miracle of Purim, we wouldn't be here either. We personally benefited from these miracles, and therefore we must praise Hashem for them.

The same is true of Chanukah. We are obligated to praise Hashem for saving the Jewish people from the Greeks and their terrible influences, as that salvation deeply affects us to this very day; if not for our victory in battle and our salvation from our spiritually terrible enemy, we would have ended up like all the nations of the world. This is why the end of על הנסים states, "וְיִלְעֶמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲשִׂיתָ תְּשׁוּעָה גְדוֹלָה וּפְרָקָן כְּהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה"—that Hashem performed a great salvation and victory as of this very day. The effects of our salvation from the Greeks are felt even today. However, this is not true of the miracle of the פך השמן. That miracle only benefited the Jews who lived during the time of the Chanukah miracle; it doesn't help us that our forefathers were able to light their מנורה seven days early. We need to publicize and recognize the miracle of the פך השמן, which is why we engage in פרסומי ניסא, publicizing the miracle, but since it doesn't directly benefit us now, we don't need to give thanks for it and don't mention it in על הנסים, our prayer of thanks to Hashem.

"Thank you" isn't just an empty phrase; it has to express a true appreciation. Saying "thank you" without thinking renders the entire phrase meaningless. Before we thank someone, we should take a moment to stop, appreciate and contemplate what we are thanking them for so that our thanks can have meaning and significance.

☺ Chaya Steinman

The Candles We Light

There is more than one command in *Yiddishkeit* to light candles. There are three: *Shabbos* candles, the *havdalah* candle, and Chanukah candles. They are each different from one another.

Shabbos candles represent *shalom bayis*, peace in the home. They are lit indoors. They are, if you like, *Yiddishkeit's* inner light, the light of the sanctity of marriage and the holiness of home.

Chanukah candles used to be lit outside the front door. It was only fear of persecution that took the Chanukah candles back inside, and in recent times the Lubavitcher Rebbe introduced the custom of lighting giant *menorahs* in public places to bring back the original spirit of the day. Chanukah candles are the light Judaism brings to the world when we are unafraid to announce our identity in public, live by our principles and fight, if necessary, for our freedom.

As for the *havdalah* candle, which is always made up of several wicks woven together, it represents the fusion of the two, the inner light of *Shabbos* joined with the outer light we spread during the six days of the week when we go out into the world and live our faith in public.

When we live as Jews in private, filling our homes with the light of the *Shechinah*, when we live as Jews in public, bringing the light of hope to others, and when we live both together, then we bring light to the world.

Especially during these trying times, we Jews might be tempted to live in the dark and bury ourselves in all our sorrow, grief, and pain. Alternatively, we can come together as one and spread the light of *Torah*, *Yiddishkeit*, and *simchah* everywhere! May we all be *zocheh* to hear only *bisuros tovos* and merit the coming of *mashiach*, especially in this month of *nissim*, *b'mheira b'yameinu amen*!

☺ Rikki Blachorsky

Night #3



Carrying the Light

When we light the Chanukah candles on all eight nights of Chanukah, we make a blessing for the miracles: *she-asah nissim la-avosenu*. The oil that should have lasted only one day lasted for eight days. The *menorah* staying lit on days two through eight was a miracle, but there was nothing miraculous about the first day; after all, there was enough oil for the *menorah* to stay lit for one day. What miracle are we making a *brachah* for on the first night of Chanukah.

Perhaps the miracle was the mere fact that the Maccabees even found one cruse of oil with its seal intact, undefiled. There was no reason to suspect that anything would have survived the Greeks' desecration to the *Bais Hamikdash*. Yet the Maccabees searched and found that one jar. Why did they search? Because they had *emunah* that something would survive even the worst tragedy. The miracle of the first night was that of *emunah* itself, the faith that something would remain which the Maccabees could use to begin again.

So it has always been in Jewish history. We experienced hardships that would cause any other people to give up in despair: destruction of the *Bais Hamikdash*, the massacres of the Crusades, the Expulsion from Spain, the pogroms, and even the recent attack by Hamas. But somehow, as Jews, we did not sit and weep. We gathered what remained, rebuilt our people, and lit a light like no other in history, a light that tells us and the world of the power of a Jew, the power to overcome every tragedy and refuse to accept defeat. The power to replace darkness with light.

~ Adina Altusky
Adapted from Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt"l.

Battling for Torah: In Those Days, and in This Time

In *Al HaNisim* we thank *Hashem* "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 wrought on our behalf during trying times in Jewish history, specifically *Chanukah* and *Purim*, when we were miraculously saved from the plans of our enemies to destroy us.

The Ponevezher Rav, Rabbi Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, asks a question on a portion of these words of gratitude. Why do we thank *Hashem* "for the battles"? Are we bloodthirsty people who relish war? The answer he provides contains an important lesson of dedication to our principles in the face of adversity. Even today, it is premature to express thanksgiving to *Hashem* 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 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 against that which threatens 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 God and His *Torah*. It is for giving us the courage to fight these "battles" that we express thanks to God in the *Al Hanisim* prayer.

During these difficult times in which our brothers and sisters in *Eretz Yisrael* are living through a terrible existential crisis and are battling the forces of evil in a fight for the very existence of the Jewish homeland, we in America are in pain and terror as well. We daven and learn in their merit, and we think about them constantly. One genuine way to join the war effort is to continue waging our personal battles against the non-Jewish culture surrounding us, and to put up our lines of defense against the technology that threatens our very souls. If we do so, we can truly praise *Hashem* this *Chanukah*, as we recite and sing *Al HaNissim*, thanking *Hashem* for giving us the courage to continue the good fight.

☺ Golda Bamberger



Batsheva Malavsky, 9th Grade

Night #4



Rachel Sash, 10th Grade

The Greeks and the Chosen Nation

In *Bereshit Rabbah*, Rabbi Shimon Ben Lakish relates the pasuk “וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תְּהוֹ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹמוֹ” (Bereishit 1:2) to the different exiles: “וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תְּהוֹ, זֶה גְלוּת בָּבֶל... וְהוּא, זֶה גְלוּת... מִדִּי... וְחֹשֶׁךְ, זֶה גְלוּת יוֹן, שֶׁהָחֹשֶׁךְ עֵינֵיהֶם שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּגִזְרוֹתֵיהֶן”—Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish explained the pasuk as referring to the exiles. ‘And the land was תְּהוֹ—this is the exile of Bavel...’ and ‘וְחֹשֶׁךְ—this is *Maddai*... ‘and darkness’—this is the Exile of Greece, which darkened the eyes of Yisraell with its decrees.” (Bereishit Rabbah 2:4)

What does the *midrash* mean when it says that their eyes were “darkened by the decrees”?

The Rokeach explains this concept beautifully. The five decrees issued against the Jews were all against *mitzvos* which, if violated, subject the person to *kareis*, a punishment that removes a person from the laws of *Hashem*. The Greeks didn’t ultimately care whether or not the Jewish people worshiped the same idols as they did. Rather, they wanted the Jews to feel that they had lost their close relationship with *Hashem* so that they would no longer identify as the Jewish people, the Chosen Nation.

The *Mishnah* in *Pirkei Avot* (3:14) explains our relationship with *Hashem*. The *Mishnah* states that first of all, “חֲבִיב אָדָם שֶׁנִּבְרָא בְצֶלֶם”—every living human being is precious because they are made in the image of *Hashem*. This concept is accepted by both us and the Greeks. All humans are special.

What the Greeks were trying to do was take away our special relationship with *Hashem*, which is described in the next part of the *Mishnah*: “חֲבִיב יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁנִּקְרְאוּ בָנִים לְמֶקוֹם. חֲבִיב יִתְרָה נֹדַעַת לָהֶם שֶׁנִּקְרְאוּ בָנִים” —“*Bnei Yisrael* are beloved, as they are called children to *Hashem*—an extra love is known to them because they are called children of *Hashem*.”

Further, “חֲבִיבֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁנִּתְּנָן לָהֶם כְּלִי חֲמֻדָּה: חֲבִיב יִתְרָה נֹדַעַת לָהֶם שֶׁנִּתְּנָן לָהֶם כְּלִי חֲמֻדָּה שֶׁבּוֹ נִבְרָא הָעוֹלָם” —“*Bnei Yisrael* are beloved because they were given a precious vessel; an extra love is known to them that they were given the precious vessel through which the world was created.” We are especially beloved to *Hashem* because we have a precious vessel - the *Torah*.

Hashem wants us to know about the unique love He has for us; the *Mishnah* says “נֹדַעַת לָהֶם”—it is made known to us. We have to always keep in mind that our special relationship with *Hashem* and *Torah* is what makes us special. We can never forget that, even when it seems hard. This is what the Greeks were trying to take away from us. This is what the Maccabees had to reaffirm. Our relationship with *Hashem* and *Torah*, our commitment to something higher, is what makes us unique. It is our purpose in life. Even when times are rough, as long as we stay committed and on the right path, we know *Hashem* is with us, guiding us, and doing what’s best for us.

🕊️ Malka Schiffman

Night #5



The Meaning Behind the Name "Chanukah"

The Ra"n suggests that the reason we call this holiday Chanukah is because "חנוכה"—they rested on the 25th of *Kislev*, because it was then that they finished the battle. If so, why is Chanukah named "they rested on the 25th" and not "they won the battle on the 25th"?

Bnei Yisrael could have won the war without realizing that it was a *neis* from *HaShem*. The fact that *Bnei Yisrael* stopped and rested shows that they focused and realized that winning the battle was all a *neis* from *HaShem*. Chanukah is named, not for the battle itself, but for the reflection afterward, and the acknowledgement that all was a miracle from *HaShem*.

The miraculous military victory seems to be the central miracle of Chanukah. After all, *Al HaNisim* does not even mention the miracle of the oil. Instead, it focuses on the battle against the *Yivanim* and winning the war. One explanation for the miracle of the oil is that *Hashem* made the open *neis* of the oil specifically so that *Bnei Yisrael* would realize that the battle was also miraculous. This teaches us to recognize *Hashem's* hand in everything that happens.

☺ Malka Rosenholtz



Batsheva Rogosnitzky, 10th Grade

Night #6



Menucha Glatzer, 10th Grade

The Light We Bring

There are not one, but three separate *mitzvos* which involve lighting candles. There are *Shabbos* candles, the *havdalah* candle, and Chanukah candles. Each of these types of candles serves a different function. *Shabbos* candles represent *shalom bayis*, peace in the home. They are lit indoors. They are the inner light of the Jewish home.

Chanukah candles are customarily lit outdoors, noticeable to the public eye. This public lighting represents the light that we Jews bring to the world. We each serve a prestigious role as a representative of Judaism, an *ohr la'goyim*. When we are proud of our *yiddishkeit* and live by our lofty, uncompromised values, we complete our role as a piece and part of the *kiddush Hashem* of *Am Yisroel*.

The *havdalah* candle, which is always made up of several wicks together, represents the fusion of the two, the inner light of *Shabbos* joined together with the outer light represented by Chanukah. The *havdalah* candle represents the *kiddush Hashem* we make during the six days of the week when we go out into the world and live our *emunah* and *yiddishkeit* in public.

Atara Lipshitz, 9th Grade



When we live as Jews in private, we fill our homes with the light of the *Shechina*, and when we live as Jews in public, we bring authentic, everlasting, and illuminating light to the world.

There have always been two ways to live in a world that is full of darkness, hardships, and tears. We can wallow in the darkness or we can light a light, and as the saying goes, a little light drives out much darkness. May we all fuse the inner lights of our home and the light we bring onto the world and create an uncompromising and radiating light that will illuminate the darkness of the world.

☺ Miri Brody

Night #7



Ellie Trapedo

The Constant Light of Torah and Mitzvos

Chazal tell us that “*haragil b’ner*”—someone who is consistent about lighting candles— will be blessed with children who are *talmidei chachamim* (Gemara Shabbos 23b). The *Rishonim* explain this statement by invoking *Mishlei* 6:23, which states “כִּי נֵר מְצִנָּה וְתוֹרָה אֹרֶךְ”—that *mitzvos* are candles and the *Torah* is light. I would like to raise two questions about this statement in the *Gemara*. First, what is the connection between lighting candles and having children who are *talmidei chachamim*? Second, what is the connotation of the word “*ragil*” in this ma’amar *Chazal*? “*Ragil*” means to be ordinary or to be accustomed—how does merely being accustomed to doing a mitzvah produce something as extraordinary as *talmidei chachamim*?

I want to offer two explanations to these questions, together with my own observations. The first answer is from the Shem M’Shmuel, who explains that just like a candle flame is constantly rising upward, so too, a *yid* should always be rising upward in their observance of *mitzvos* and should always perform *mitzvos* with a sense of newness and freshness. When a *yid* is accustomed to performing *mitzvos* in a way that imitates a candle, with a sense of newness and growth, such a *yid* will be *zocheh* to children who are *talmidei chachamim*. The attitude of constant growth will have an inspiring impact on the children.

The second explanation is that of the *tzadik* and ga’on HaRav Yechiel Michel Stern, shlit”a, with whom my family is *zocheh* to be very close. In his *sefer* *Yam HaChochma*, Rav Stern provides a unique explanation to these questions in the name of his grandfather, Rav Yaakov Yosef Herman zt”l. R’ Stern explains that before the advent of electricity, all children and family members would quickly come home before night time, eat dinner and go to sleep before it became dark. When the children woke up in the middle of the night because they were thirsty, they would call out to their father for water. In those houses where the father was “*ragil b’ner*,” i.e. staying up late with a candle burning to learn *Torah*, the vision of their father’s consistent dedication to *Torah* as well as the sweet sounds of learning would make a tremendous impression on the children. This would in turn bring about a love of *Torah* in themselves and would cause them to grow into *talmidei chachamim*. Thus, the “*ner*” that *Chazal* referred to was not necessarily specifically Chanukah or *Shabbos* candles, but the candle used for learning *Torah* in the home.

While the Shem M’Shmuel and Rav Michel Stern appear to have two completely different explanations, I believe that they both leave us with a similar message: when parents are consistent in the home about growing in *Torah* and *mitzvos*, they create an environment which produces children that ultimately *iy”h* become *talmidei chachamim*.

May the light of Chanukah continue to inspire us about how special it is to have the opportunity to do *Hashem’s mitzvos* and learn His *Torah*, and may we be *zocheh* to raise *doros yesharim* of *talmidei chachamim*.

🕊️ Sari Schwartz

Night #8



Noa Abehassera, 10th Grade

The Significance of the Soreg

The Mishnah states that the Greeks broke down the *Soreg*, a wall surrounding the *Beis Hamikdash*, in thirteen places (Mishnah Middot 2:3). When the Jews rebuilt the *Soreg*, the leaders told the Jews to bow down at each of these thirteen areas. What is the significance of this wall and the number thirteen, and why were the Jews told to bow?

Firstly, we need to understand what the *Soreg* is. The *Soreg* is the closest boundary where non-Jews can enter into the *Beis Hamikdash*, while Jews can go further. We know that all nations had the ability to come to the *Beis Hamikdash* to pray or bring a *karban*. The Greeks specifically targeted the *Soreg* because it represented the special holiness of the Jews, whereas the Greeks wanted to prove that the Jews were not a superior or distinct nation, and that everyone was equal.

Why was the *Soreg* specifically broken into thirteen sections? As we all know, *Hashem* has thirteen middos. These attributes were told to us so that we can learn from them and try to emulate *Hashem*. When the Greeks created thirteen breakages in the *Soreg*, the Greeks were essentially trying to destroy our unique relationship with *Hashem*. When the leaders commanded the Jews to bow down after the thirteen broken sections were restored, it was so that the Jews would subject themselves to all of *Hashem's* thirteen middos. This showed that their relationship with *Hashem* had withstood the attempt of the Greeks to destroy it.

This idea can be very impactful on us today. When Israel is at war, we all feel so much sadness and pain. We may feel hopeless; it can seem that our enemies are destroying whatever we have left. We have to remember that if we continue to serve *Hashem* and maintain our relationship with Him, then no enemy can destroy our connection to *Hashem*.

☞ Kayla Francis

The Message of the Oil

One of the most frequently-asked questions about Chanukah is the mystery of why we celebrate Chanukah for eight days. There was enough oil in the flask for one day, so shouldn't we only celebrate for seven days?

There are a myriad of answers to this question. One answer is that it was a miracle to even find the flask, still sealed and intact. That is what we commemorate on the first night of Chanukah.

We can take this concept one step further. Imagine the state of destruction and ruin the *Bais Hamikdash* was in after the *Yevanim* attacked. The *Chasmonaim* could have easily given up hope of ever finding a flask of oil for the *menorah*. Yet they didn't give up; they kept looking and searching until one was found. When the flask was finally found, they would have noticed that there wasn't enough oil to light the *menorah*. They could have given up and walked away. Yet they didn't just walk away; they lit the *menorah*, and it stayed burning bright for eight whole days.

The message we should all take from this is that we should never give up. When things look bleak and despairing, we should just remember that if we try a little harder, if we search a little longer, then we will be able to find our own "flask of oil."

Most importantly, we should never underestimate ourselves. Even if we think we only have a little "oil" left inside of us, we never know how far it can take us. The miracle of the oil lasting for eight days is a reminder to us that although we may think we don't have what it takes, we truly have much more potential than we think we have.

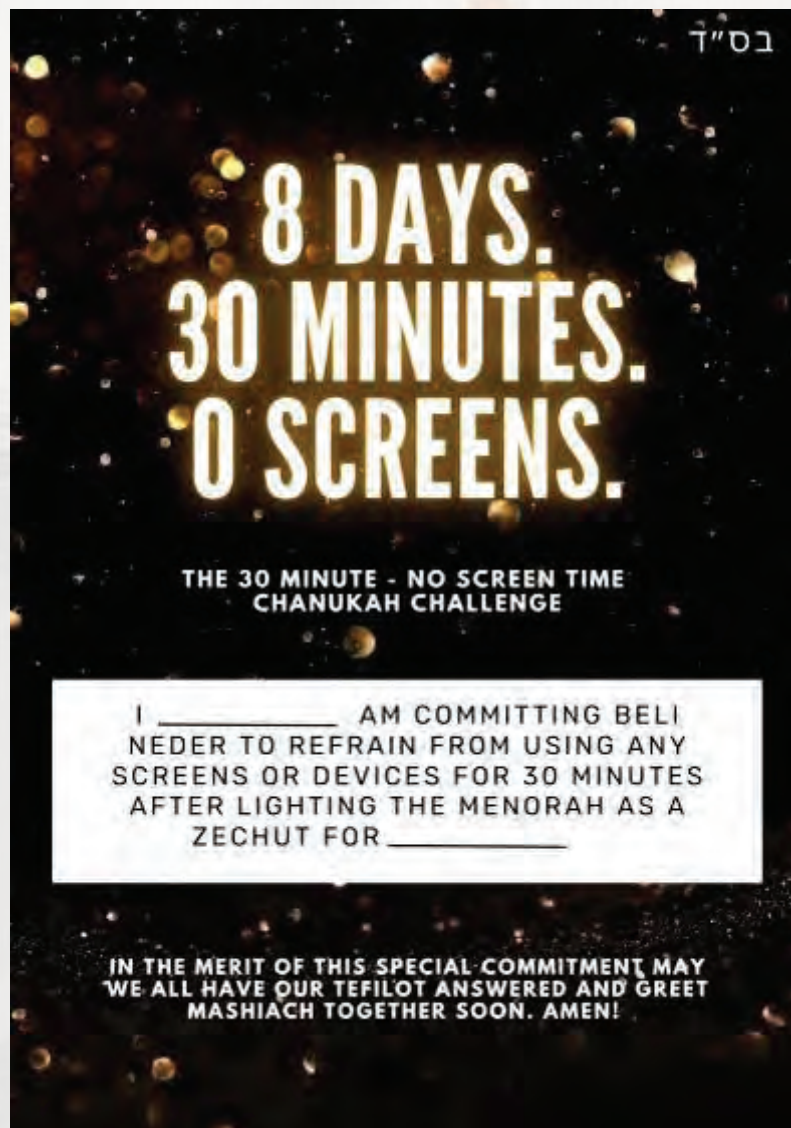
☞ Ruki Schwartz



This Chanukah, Spark Some Conversation

Elevate the conversation around the menorah with some of these conversation starters:

1. *Lehodos u'Lehalel* - What miracles have you or your family experienced this year? What moments or events of *hashgachah pratis* can you point to with appreciation?
2. *Mehadrin min hamehadrin* - When is "good enough" good enough? When is "good enough" not good enough?
3. Oil and water don't mix - Why is it that as much as we try to mingle with the nations of the world, we just can't seem to fit in? In what ways are we like the oil, rising to the top?
4. *Bayamim haheim bazman hazeh* - What do we learn from the blatant anti-Semitism today? What can we learn from the past about confronting anti-Semitism?
5. "A little bit of light dispels much of the darkness" - what is a light that you use to dispel darkness and despair?



לא בחיל ולא בכח כי אם ברוחי אמר ה'...

This Shabbos Chanukah we will read, once again, the haftarah that details the puzzling prophetic visions shown to Zechariah Hanavi in preparation for the return of the Jewish people from Bavel to Yerushalayim. Among them is the nevuah of a miraculous, continuously-fueled menorah, and its message to Zerubavel, the descendant of David HaMelech who will lead his people back to their homeland and initiate the building of Bayis Sheini. Lo b'chayil v'lo b'koach ki im b'ruchi amar Hashem. Not by might nor by power, but by My spirit, said Hashem of Hosts. Hashem assures Zerubavel, whose material and military might fall short of the arsenal at the disposal of the surrounding peoples, that ultimately, it is the Divine Spirit which will help him win the day. This year, these words resonate with greater force as we take strength from that promise, and pray that it will come to pass for us as well. We understand, of course, that it is up to us to search deep within ourselves and find the bitachon which allows us to perceive the Ruach Hashem as it touches His people.

What has inspired you to grow in your *bitachon*, rather than fall prey to terror and anxiety?

When we contemplate the events of October 7th, we see the paralysis of all infrastructure, security and communication. Only the *Ribbono shel Olam* was able to mastermind that. This exceptional reality reinforces for me that we are in His great Hands, בידו אפקיד רוּחִי, and that there is a far greater plan we cannot see. Rav Nachman in *Likutei Moharan* shares that the message of the *dreidel* is that "upside down" is never by chance and never the full "story." Hashem is behind it all, every position, the "gain" as well as what appears to be the "loss," and I derived so much strength from this understanding.

🕊 Mrs. Friedman-Stefansky

The school-wide *Tehillim* GroupMe chat which constantly floods our phones is my source of *chizuk* during these difficult times. Girls in all grades commit to saying a *perek* or a few *perakim* at a time and we complete the whole *sefer* multiple times a day. Personally, it is my reminder to focus when I have a small gap in my day. At times, it is hard to believe that everything will be ok, but every time I get a message from the *Tehilim* chat I smile, and feel sure that Hashem will ultimately reveal Himself to us with clarity, *b'meheira v'yameinu, amen*. May we hear *besuros tovos*.

🕊 Golda Bamberger

Seeing how the news made no sense, how people who had always seemed to share (or at least sympathize with) our views turned around, and how some who had never even cared about Israel suddenly seemed to be obsessed with its existence, was a big factor in strengthening my *bitachon*. When Ivy League college students, supposedly the best and brightest in the country, can't seem to give a basic explanation as to why Jews are the enemy, and why they support terrorists, it is very clear that Hashem is in control of the chessboard, making the moves, placing the kings and the pawns. That keeps me calm, because the more chaotic and upside down the world becomes, the more aggravating the news is, the more I am convinced that Hashem is running this world. Who would believe that in a technologically sophisticated age, people have found a way to use that very technology to deny visuals as fake concoctions of AI. Many have said that the Holocaust could never happen again because we now have access to real time media; scarily, that is not true, people deny these atrocities just the same. And yet, there have been other *galuyos* where Hashem has empowered our enemies before saving us. Ultimately, He brought the *geulah*, and the celebrations of *Purim* and *Chanukah*. May this dark time *be"H* end the same way!

🕊 Leah Borenstein

Simchas Torah (literally "joy of Torah") is a celebration of a new cycle of Torah learning, a celebration of Jewish life itself. The significance of the surprise attacks occurring on such a day is obvious; for Jews in Israel and, indeed, across the world, high spirits and holy celebration became shock and agony in an unexpected twist. Yet I believe the atrocities committed on that specific day also reflect a message of hope. This war highlights a value very precious to the Jewish people: the inestimable worth of life. Whereas Hamas battles bitterly on the side

of destruction and death, Israel and its people fight for security, decency, morality, preservation -- life. We celebrate *Simchas Torah* because we love life, while our enemy Hamas loves death. The IDF's resilience and faith very strongly contrast to these terrorists' murderous ambitions, and inspire me to hope for the eternal pulsating of the Jewish heart-beat.

🕊️ Serach Soloveichik

Is there a particular *mitzvah* that you have come to observe more scrupulously during these trying times?

Watching soldiers just a few years older than me sacrificing their lives made me think. It seems like Hashem had to bring the war practically to my doorstep to inspire me to do actions that will make me a better person. I've come to understand that while I may not be able to change the entire world, I can start by changing myself. So, I decided to participate in a wonderful program that someone emailed out to the whole school. The idea was simple: sign up, write one thing in your life that you've decided to change for the better, and in return, receive the name of a soldier. In the *zechus* of this soldier, I've been reciting the first *berachah* of the *Shemoneh Esrei* with much greater *kavanah*. I now feel a personal connection to and responsibility for this particular *chayal*, which goes well beyond knowing his *Tehillim* name.

🕊️ Batsheva Spira

During this sad and turbulent time, one *mitzvah* that I'm trying to fulfill more scrupulously is *Kabbalas Shabbos*. *Shabbos* is the day of rest when we feel Hashem's holiness surrounding us - it's just Hashem and us. Just as on *Chanukah* we kindle lights that illuminate the darkest of nights, on Friday night we light two little flames to dispel all the distractions and darkness of the week; it offers a little haven amidst our *galus*. Since October 7th, I decided that no matter what, I will try my best to carefully *daven* every word of *Kabbalas Shabbos*; to say the words for those on the battlefield who cannot, for those of our nation who are unable to do any *mitzvos* anymore, for those that do not know how to *daven*, and for our brothers and sisters who will, *b'ezras Hashem*, return.

🕊️ Zeldy Itkin

Saying *Shema* from a *Shema* card.

🕊️ Chaya Steinman

Is there a particular *pasuk* or *tefilah* that encapsulates your feelings as we navigate our way through this *tzarah*?

A *pasuk* that I try to live by is in *Sefer Tehillim*: שׁוֹיִתִּי ה' לִנְגִדִּי תָמִיד. Ever since I learned that this was one of the four favorite *pesukim* of Sarah Schenirer, it has imprinted itself in my heart and gives me so much strength. I feel - literally - as if He is right there next to me (and He is!!) During these last weeks of war in *Eretz Yisrael*, it has been excruciating for all of us. We *daven*, we look for ways to help, we want to show our brothers and sisters in *Eretz Yisrael* that we live in the spirit of כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲרֵבִים זֶה לָזֶה, and are

feeling with them. Throughout it all, we work to keep our אמונה and בטחון strong, and for that I find focus and strength in this *pasuk*. No matter what I'm doing, no matter where I am, no matter what I'm feeling: Hashem is there beside me! And that counts for everything!! A *Freilichin* חֲנוּכָה!

🕊️ Reb. Fink

גַּם כִּי־אֵלֶךְ בְּגִיַּא צְלִמּוֹת לֹא־אִירָא רַע כִּי־אַתָּה עִמָּדִי שְׂבֻטְךָ
(Tehilim:23) וּמִשְׁעֲנִיתְךָ הִמָּה יִנְחַמֵּנִי:

Rabbi Taub explained that when Dovid *Hamelech* said "*lo ira RA* - I will not be afraid of BAD," he meant that he might feel fearful, but he knows that whatever happens is not *bad* because he is in Hashem's hands. So is *Eretz Yisrael*. So yes, I can be nervous and anxious, but I also have to remember that it's all in Hashem's hands, so it can't be "bad." I must have *bitachon* and ultimately, "*schar bitachon hu bitachon*," having *bitachon* is truly a reward to myself!! I feel less anxious and more of a sense that I'm being taken care of by Hashem.

🕊️ Rachel Diamond

Yes, and it's the *tefilah* of הַמִּלְאךְ הַגּוֹאֵל. I always tried to say it every night before going to bed simply because that's when you say it; nothing more. It wasn't until recently that I stopped to think about what it really meant. It was an eye opener to think

that here I am in my own home, safe and secure, yet I still ask for a מִלְאךְ to watch over me. Imagine how the soldiers fighting in Gaza or the families stuck in war zones are begging Hashem for safety every day. *They* are the ones who really *feel* the need for מִלְאכִים to watch over them. Now every night, when I say הַמִּלְאךְ הַגּוֹאֵל I stop and give it so much thought; in that moment I appreciate being in a place where I feel protected and safe, and not in a situation of constant fear.

🕊️ Shoshana Giloni

אלה ברכב ואלה בסוסים ואנחנו בשם ה' אלקינו נזכיר
(Tehillim (כח:כ)

These well-known words serve as a powerful reminder that our fate rests in the hands of Hashem; they emphasize the potency of our *tefilos* which are the only true salvation from our adversaries.

🕊️ Matea Frieber

When were/are you truly able to feel "אחינו כל בית ישראל"?

During these trying times, my mother seized the opportunity to organize an event for our *shul*. For weeks, people dropped off toys at our house, filling our living room and entryway. My aunt runs an organization in Israel called One Family which helps families who have suffered a loss due to terrorism by providing moral and financial support, and everything in between. All the collected toys were sent off to One Family for distribution to the children of affected families or to those who were stuck in bomb shelters. The many different types of neighborhood residents who participated in this project gathered together in our *shul*, and I truly felt a sense of oneness with the Jewish nation as a whole.

🕊️ Batsheva Spira

While this has probably been the scariest time to be an outwardly professing Jew for many people, it has also been a time during which people have felt tremendous pride to be a part of *Am Yisrael*. From the amazing *chessed*, to the huge *nissim*, to the rally, there is a constant *kiddush Hashem* going on and I feel so privileged to be a part of it.

🕊️ Mikaella Inzlicht

At *minchah*.

🕊️ Ellie Trapedo

The unity of בני ישראל became palpable when, subsequent to attending the rally in Washington, D.C., I witnessed videos of that monumental event. To be Jewish is to feel a spiritual connection that transcends individual differences, and in observing in the overhead shots the sheer magnitude of the numbers of Jews who gathered to help fellow Jews, I realized that I was just one tiny dot in a vast assembly demonstrating in support of our nation.

🕊️ Matea Frieber

When I *daven* in the library, I truly feel like we are *acheinu kol Bais Yisroel*.

🕊️ Basya Saperstein

When I see all the different types of Jews who took time out of their very busy lives to travel to Washington. From Texas, California, Chicago, Florida. As a people it doesn't matter where you come from. You're Jewish. Smiling. Happy to see each other.

🕊️ Faygee Hersko



Tehila Samai

Tehila



אותיות החנוכה

- כ. מהו התאריך בו מתחיל חג החנוכה?
- ל. מה היו גזרות היוונים?
- מ. מי קרא "מי לה' אלי!"?
- 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"?
- ה. 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 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?



