

CHABAD
DED
RESEARCH UNIT

הב

שבת..... *for Friday nights*..... קדש

Friday 29 November 2013 - 26 Kislev 5774
Sedra Miketz - Chanukah

CHANUKAH FOR THE WHOLE YEAR

IN JEWISH LIFE THERE IS A CONSTANT PROCESS OF RECHARGING BATTERIES, of strengthening a person's spiritual dimension. We journey through the Jewish calendar, encountering a variety of festivals and special days. Each one has significance both in itself and also carries over to the rest of the year. Each of the eight lights of the Chanukah Menorah tells a story, imparts a teaching, relevant for the whole year. Let us look at at four such teachings which we can carry with us into the months ahead.

The Flask of Pure Oil

The miracle of the Menorah began with finding the flask of pure oil. Remember? When the victorious Maccabees entered the despoiled Temple they wanted to light the Menorah. But the Greeks had defiled all the oil. Then, a flask with the seal of the High Priest was found. This was only enough for one day, but miraculously it burnt for eight days, till new oil could be prepared.

The teaching for the whole year is that in every Jew there is just such a flask of pure oil: the Neshamah, the Divine Soul. This source of spiritual energy can never be destroyed, however much, in some sense, the person may have lost his or her way, leading to apparent spiritual desolation. The flask with the sacred and pure oil is always there, with miraculous power: we only have to look for it, both in others, and also in ourselves. This gives us a very positive way to look at people!

JUDAISM FOR TOMORROW'S WORLD
www.chabadresearch.net - cru@lubavitchuk.com

Constant Increase

On Chanukah we light one candle on the first night and two on the second, and so on. A simple message: *increase*. This dynamic principle is the essence of business life in our modern world. It is also the key to healthy Jewish experience. The spiritual status quo is good for today. We can enjoy it and thank G-d we have reached this point. Yet we also know that, hopefully, tomorrow will be a little bit better. More Torah studied, more Mitzvot carried out, more tangible love of one's fellow, more love of G-d expressed in prayer. This dynamic teaching helps us move forward in life...

Reaching for the Beyond

The Maccabees were a tiny group of dedicated men and women determined to preserve Judaism. Rationally, one might say that they embarked on an impossible task. Yet their dedication and their ability to transcend all limitations led to success: they reached towards G-d from their deepest essence, beyond all selfish and even rational limitations, and G-d responded. For us too, throughout the year there are opportunities which call for utter dedication. Can we rise to the occasion? Can we reach for the beyond? The answer is Yes!

Miracles

An important aspect of the response from G-d was in the form of miracles: the miracle of the victory, of finding the oil, of the fact that the flames of the Menorah lasted for eight days. Hence Chanukah is an eight day Festival. The number 7 expresses our conventional view of Nature, as in the 7 days of the week. The number 8 goes beyond Nature, both in our relationship with G-d and in His miraculous response. At the same time, as we advance in knowledge and skill, guided by G-d, what seemed miraculous in one epoch becomes commonplace in another.

The Chanukah lights leave us with the message that what we call "miraculous" is part of our bond with the Divine. As Jews, we have survived on miracles for thousands of years. The Chanukah lights beckon us to trust in the miraculous, beyond all expectation, and the G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and of the Maccabees, will lead us and all humanity to a radiant future....

Torah teachings are holy - please treat this page with care

SPONSORED BY DR REUVEN JOEL



SEDRA MIKETZ-CHANUKAH

SPREADING THE LIGHT

Danny was sick at home with the flu, so he decided to help his dad set up the menorah for Chanukah.

In their home they used an olive oil menorah. Danny had never done this job before, and found it rather difficult. The hardest part was getting the oil in the little glass holders and not spilling it.

“Oh, put the menorah in the window” dad had said. ‘Why?’ Danny thought. ‘Why should we put the menorah in the window? It would look much nicer on the table in the lounge, where the whole family could sit around it and eat latkes and play dreidel.’

Later, Danny asked his dad. “Dad, wouldn’t it be better to have the menorah in the middle of the room where we could all sit around it? We would have it on the table and eat latkes and play dreidel. It would be very comfortable and cosy.”

“Well,” said his father. “As far back as I can remember, we always put the menorah in the window. That is what we did as children, you know. Grandpa would light it, and it would stand in the window of the old house we lived in, in Acacia Street. And there are some people who put it in a doorway “.

“But why?” asked Danny. “Why not in the middle of the room?”

As he spoke, he saw his sister Mikki who had just come home. She took off her coat.

“Oh, come on,” she said. “Surely you know why we put it in the window or the doorway!”

“Well, if I knew I wouldn’t be asking,” said Danny.

“Everyone knows,” answered Mikki. “Chanuka is all about a miracle. We’re telling people about this fantastic miracle that happened, how G-d saved the Jewish people and how the oil burned for eight days instead of only one. So we put it in the window so that everyone can see! Or in the doorway. That is why there are some big Menorahs as well, like at Hyde Park Corner in London - telling people about the miracle!”

“There’s one near Golders Green Station as well!”, said Danny.

“Yes,” said Mikki. “There are lots of big menorahs, all round the world. In Israel, the USA, Canada, Australia, Russia, everywhere! In fact, the whole thing about the Menorah is about spreading awareness of G-d to everyone. The Menorah represents belief in One G-d, and that is important for every human being. So at home we put the menorah in the window, rather than just keeping the light to ourselves by having it on the table.”

“One thing I would say,” said Danny, “is that the light of this oil menorah is very beautiful. Clear, pure light...”

“Like in the Temple,” said his sister. “But in fact, every Menorah is beautiful... and it lights up the world!”

***Torah teachings are holy –
please treat this page with care***