

Celebration!

25 KISLEV - 3 TEVET 5782 / NOVEMBER 28 - DECEMBER 6, 2021



The Candles Speak p. 8

Stop the Dreidel p. 14

The Flame p. 20

LIGHT "AFTER SUNSET"



In connection with the forthcoming days of Chanukah, I extend to each of you prayerful wishes for a bright and inspiring Chanukah, coupled with the fulfillment of your hearts' desires for good in every respect.

Chanukah brings a meaningful message of encouragement - in keeping with all the festivals and commemorative days in our Jewish calendar, which are meant to be observed not just for the sake of remembrance, but also for the practical lessons they provide in our daily life.

One of the practical teachings of Chanukah is as follows: The special Mitzvah pertaining to Chanukah is, of course, the kindling of the Chanukah Lights, which must be lit after sunset - unlike the Shabbos candles which must be lit before sunset; and unlike also the lights of the Menorah that were kindled in the *Beis Hamikdash* (Holy Temple in Jerusalem) even earlier in the day.

The meaningful message, which the kindling of the Chanukah Lights after sunset conveys is: **When a person finds himself in a situation of "after sunset," when the light of day has given way to gloom and darkness - as was the case in those ancient days under the oppressive Greek rule - one must not despair, G-d forbid, but on the contrary, it is necessary to fortify oneself with complete trust in G-d**, the Essence of Goodness, and take heart in the firm belief that the darkness is only temporary, and it will soon be superseded by a bright light, which will be seen and felt all the more strongly through the supremacy of light over darkness, and by the intensity of the contrast.

And this is the meaning of lighting the Chanukah Lights, and in a manner that calls for lighting an additional candle each successive day of Chanukah - **to plainly see for oneself, and to demonstrate to others passing by in the street, that light dispels darkness; and that even a little light dispels a great deal of darkness, how much more so a light that steadily grows in intensity.**

And if physical light has such quality and power, how much more so eternal spiritual light. What has been said above, pertains to our Jewish people as a whole as well as to each individual Jew, man or woman, in particular.

The conclusion that follows from it is, that though the Jewish people are still in a state of Galus (Exile), and "darkness covers the earth" a time when "nations rage and peoples speak



vain things" etc., there is no reason to get overly excited by it; we have only to strengthen our trust in G-d, the "Guardian of His people Israel, who slumbers not, nor sleeps" and be confident that He will protect His people wherever they be, and will bless them with Hatzlocho (success) in all things, and in a growing measure; and that He will hasten the coming of our Righteous Moshiach to bring us the true and complete *Geulo* (Redemption) which is fast approaching.

Similarly in regard to each individual, those who find themselves in a state of personal *Galus* (Exile) - there is no cause for discouragement and despondency, G-d forbid; on the contrary, one must find increasing strength in complete trust in the Creator and Master of the Universe, that their personal deliverance from distress and confinement is on its speedy way.

All the more so when this trust is expressed in a growing commitment to the fulfillment of G-d's will in the daily life and conduct in accordance with His Torah and Mitzvos - of which the Mitzva of kindling the Chanukah Lights is particularly significant in that it symbolizes the illumination of the soul, the "Lamp of G-d," with the light of the Torah and Mitzvos, "for a Mitzvah is a lamp and the Torah is light" illuminating it in an increasing measure from day to day, to bring about the fulfillment of the prophecy: "The people wailing in darkness (of the *Galus*) will see a great light" - the light of the *Geulo* (Redemption).

Adapted from a letter by the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, OBM, dated 15 Kislev, 5738 (1977).

Celebration!

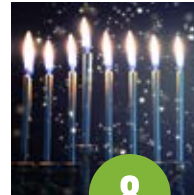
CHANUKAH 5782 / 2022

- 6 Chanukah at Chabad
- 10 How to Chanukah
- 26 Sukkot at Chabad – Photo Gallery



5

**The Lightness
of Being**



8

**Candle
Whispers**

**When Faith
Burned
Bright**



16

**Spark on a
Park Bench**



18

The Flame



20



21

**Steve's
Latkes**

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Rabbi Sholom Ber Tenenbaum, *Director* • Mrs. Feigel Tenenbaum, *Program Director*

If you have any questions, thoughts or comments concerning this publication, please contact us:

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17684 W. Gages Lake Road, Grayslake, IL 60030

*Dedicated to the Rebbe,
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, OBM,
whose boundless love and teachings are an
endless source of inspiration and guidance.*

A BRIEF HISTORY

of the Happenings of Chanukah



The Jewish Rebellion Under Greek Rule

The events that led to the miraculous victory of Chanukah span a period of a hundred and seventy years, beginning at about 300 BCE. The Greeks, under Alexander the Great, conquered much of the known world, including the Middle East.

You would have thought that the Jewish people and the ancient Greeks would get along. After all, they had so much in common. Both valued wisdom and beauty. The Greek philosophers acknowledged a single, great Mind behind all the cosmos, similar to Jewish monotheism.

Well, they did manage somewhat – at first. The Jews tolerated Greek rule from the time of Alexander of Macedonia. Many Jews studied Aristotle and Plato and King Ptolemy had the Jewish Torah translated into Greek. But, when King Antiochus attempted to force Hellenism down their throats, the Jews rebelled.



Laws Against Judaism

Antiochus forbade ritual circumcision. Mothers openly circumcised their infant boys in defiance. Antiochus forbade keeping Shabbat. Jews were forced to leave Jerusalem because that day was so precious to them. Antiochus forbade the study of Torah. Jews found ways to teach classes to children and adults in secret. When the Greeks raised up idols in the cities and towns and demanded the Jews worship them, all-out war ensued.

The Maccabees

It was the first time in history that a people fought not for their country or their lives, but for their integrity and the rights of their spirit. The problem was, the Syrian-Greek army was the most powerful in the world. Their soldiers marched in a compact formation of overlapping shields and long spears, almost invincible in those times. They had advanced weapons, were highly trained, and even brought elephants to the battlefield. The Jewish resistance, on the other hand, began with a handful of brothers of the priestly class, calling themselves the Maccabees.

The Miracle

There were many acts of courage, but the Maccabees' handful of warriors could never have beaten such a mighty army. In addition to the miraculous victory, they received a clear sign that their victory was all along a miracle from Above. When they took back Jerusalem and the Temple, they searched and found a single flask of undefiled olive oil – just what they needed to light the Temple Menorah. Although the flask held only enough oil for a single day, it miraculously burned for eight full days, providing just enough time to prepare new oil. To the Jewish People, this was a nod from Above that, yes, the One G-d of Israel was with us all along.

the LIGHTNESS of **BEING**

“The light at the end of the tunnel.”

“You light up my life.”

“He’s an enlightened person.”

If you recorded every word you said for 24 hours, you’d probably find hundreds of references to light. Light, brightness, radiance — these are the metaphors we use when we wish to speak about hope, wisdom, and goodness. The candle flame, the ray of light, the glowing coal — these are the images in which we recognize our yearning for a better world, for a wiser, more virtuous, more G-dly self.

We are encouraged by the fact that a luminous body like the sun, by simply being what it is, can have such a profound effect on entities and beings millions of miles away, enriching them with light, warmth, energy and life. We are encouraged by the fact that a tiny flame can banish a roomful of darkness. If so, all is not lost. If our own souls are “candles of G-d” (as King Solomon proclaims in the Book of Proverbs), then little me is not so little after all. The big bad world out there can yet be transformed. All we need to do is be what we truly are, to act out our innate goodness, and the darkness will melt away.

Once a year, we celebrate this truth. For eight days and nights, we celebrate the power of light: in ascending number — one little flame on the first evening, two flames on the second, three on the third — we kindle the Chanukah menorah, recalling that miraculous victory, 22 centuries ago, of quality over quantity, spirit over materialism, right over might. And pray for the day when such victories are no longer “miracles”, but the way things are in G-d’s world.

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By Yanki Tauber*



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*For eight days running, we kindle the menorah's flames,
adding a new light each evening.*

8

The lights of Chanukah reflect a miracle that happened with the menorah in our Holy Temple in Jerusalem. They are the continuation of those lights from the past and a promise for the future. They glow with the promise that G-d will not be absent from his Home forever and that those Temple lights will once again be kindled in a Third and Eternal Temple in a redeemed, happy and united World.

7

From the story of Chanukah we learn of the need to never allow the majority's apathy or opinions to sway us. The vast majority of Jews were resigned to Hellenism. Just one family—the Hasmoneans—refused to accept this, and by their seemingly futile gesture of rebellion ignited the latent sparks of G-dliness and inspired their fellow Jews.

6

We kindle the Chanukah lights only when it becomes dark in our spot of the globe. We must devote our efforts to the particular darkness we see in our own lives and communities.

5

Each flame on the Chanukah Menorah may use only one wick, not more. When we are engaged in a mitzvah or other holy task we must stay focused on the moment and the task at hand. Other moments and deeds will come; but true accomplishment is achieved only when our entirety is focused on the instant in which we are living.

Each day has a purpose, so each of the menorah's lights must have a distinct lesson.

4

We kindle the Chanukah lights by a door or a window—exits to our home. It is not enough to light up our own lives; we must share what we know to be good with others. Spiritual selfishness is the worst kind of all.

3

Each night of Chanukah we add a light. This teaches us that we must avoid self-satisfaction in spiritual matters. If we are given another day—it is to accomplish something positive we have not yet achieved.

2

The Miracle of Chanukah was performed with oil - the liquid which penetrates everything it touches, and no matter how much you mix it, it does not adapt. Likewise, we should have a positive affect on everyone we interact with, at the same time not to be negatively affected by our environment.

1

A room full of darkness is drastically changed by even a very small flame. A little light drives out a lot of darkness. Any effort we make for illuminating a dark situation goes a long way. We shouldn't allow the seeming smallness of our contribution prevent us from making it and appreciating it.



HOW TO CHANUKAH

THE MENORAH

Setting Up

All the lampholders of the menorah should be of even height and in an even line, except for the shamash (service candle), which should be at a distinctly different height than the rest.

Candles may be used. Because of its role in the Chanukah miracle, a menorah of oil is of special significance. The candles used must burn for at least half an hour.

A menorah which uses electric candles can be used as a Chanukah decoration, but does not achieve the mitzvah of lighting the menorah.

Where?

The optimum place for a menorah is in a doorway, opposite the mezuzah. You can also use a window that is visible from the street.

Who?

The Chanukah miracle is for everyone to share and all members of the family should be present at the kindling of the Chanukah

Menorah. It is best that each one has its own menorah. A married couple is considered one unit. Children, too, should be encouraged to light their own candles. Students and singles living in dormitories or their own apartments should kindle Menorahs in their own rooms.

How?

On the first night, light the candle furthest to the right. Each day, add another to the left of the original. Always light the newly added candle first.

Before lighting, say the appropriate blessing. After lighting the candles recite Hanairois Hallolu (see page 12).

When?

The right time to light is at nightfall (about 30 minutes after sunset). Your menorah should remain lit for at least a half hour past nightfall. You may light earlier, but make sure the candles are long enough to stay lit for the requisite half hour past nightfall.

Got home late? As long as someone's around to see the menorah, you can still light it with a blessing. After that, light the menorah without a blessing.



Shabbat

On Friday, we light the Chanukah candles before the Shabbat candles. (See schedule on following page.) The Chanukah flame should burn the required half an hour after nightfall. To achieve this, make sure to use extra long candles or more oil in the Menorah.

On Saturday, the Chanukah candles are not lit until the end of Shabbat (see schedule on following page), after the Havdalah prayer is recited.

Note: From the time the Shabbat candles are lit on Friday, until Shabbat ends (an hour after Friday's candle-lighting time) the Chanukah Menorah should not be re-lit, moved or prepared.

Sitting by the Lights

“Chanukah” means “dedication,” and as we sing “Haneiros Hallolu,” the Chanukah Lights are devoted to our spiritual celebration; thus, we are not to derive physical benefit from them, only from the shamash.

“Chanukah” also means “education” and it is customary to sit by the Menorah as the candles burn, telling stories and lessons related to the holiday.

Work should not be done in the proximity of the burning candles. Women, in particular, refrain from household work during the half hour that the Chanukah lights are burning, to honor the brave Jewish women who played a significant role in the Chanukah story.

CHANUKAH MONEY

Chanukah Gelt

Parents give their children Chanukah Gelt (money) on Chanukah. The fifth night is a special time for giving Chanukah gelt. The fifth night is significant, since on that night the majority of candles on the Menorah are lit. However, parents are encouraged to give gelt every night.



Additional Charity

The triumph of Chanukah is also celebrated by giving additional charity during each day of the festival. This shows that we are truly grateful to Hashem for all that He has done for us. Chanukah Gelt comes in handy when you want to give a little extra charity.

Note: On Friday be sure to give the Chanukah gelt and charity before Shabbat candle lighting. Double the amount to account for Shabbos, when money is not permitted to be handled.

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CHANUKAH PRAYERS AND SONGS

Haneiros Hallalu

After the Chanukah lights are kindled, it is customary to recite or sing the Haneiros Hallalu hymn:

We kindle these lights (to commemorate) the saving acts, miracles and wonders which You have performed for our forefathers, in those days at this time, through Your holy Kohanim. Throughout the eight days of Chanukah, these lights are sacred and we are not permitted to make use of them in order to offer thanks and praise to Your great Name for Your miracles, for Your wonders and for Your salvations.

Al HaNissim

During the eight days of the Chanukah prayer we recite Al HaNissim in the Amidah (daily silent prayer) and in the grace after meals.

The complete Hallel prayer (see your prayerbook) is also said in the morning services.

A portion of the Torah is read daily in the Synagogue during morning services.

THE BLESSINGS

5782/2021 Menorah Kindling Schedule



Shabbos Candle Lighting Schedule

For the Gurnee area

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3	Shabbos Candle Lighting Time	4:00
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4	Shabbos Ends	5:06



THE BLESSINGS

1 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוֵּנוּ: לְהַדְלִיק נֵר, תְּנוּכָת.

Bo-ruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom A-sheer Ki-de-sho-nu Be-mitz-vo-sov Ve-tzi-vo-nu Le-had-lik Ner Cha-nu-kah.

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to kindle the Chanukah light.

2 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ, בְּיָמִים הָהֵם בְּזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

Bo-ruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom She-o-so Ni-sim La-avo-sei-nu Ba-yo-mim Ho-heim Bi-z'man Ha-zeh.

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time.

3 The following is said only on the first evening (or the first time one kindles the lights this Chanukah).

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהִחַיֵּנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִנֵּיגָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

Bo-ruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom She-heche-yo-nu Ve-higi-o-nu Liz-man Ha-zeh.

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.

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The Dreidel

The Dreidel is a four-sided spinning top. A Hebrew letter is written on each side: Nun, Gimmel, Hay and Shin, representing the phrase **Nes Gadol Haya Sham** – A Great Miracle Happened There.

The Dreidel dates back to the time of the Chanukah story. Since learning Torah was punishable by death, Jewish children would hide in caves in the hills to study with their teachers.

If found by Greek soldiers, they would pull out their Dreidels and pretend they were just playing an innocent game! Today, we remind ourselves of their courage by playing the game of Dreidel during the holiday of Chanukah.

How To Play:

1. Each player places some coins, candies or nuts into the pot.
2. Players take turns spinning the Dreidel.
3. If the Dreidel lands on:
 - נ "Nun," **Nothing** is won and nothing is lost. *Bang fist on table...*
 - ג "Gimmel" – the player **Gets all**. *Everybody cheers...*
 - ה "Hay" – the player wins **Half** the amount in the pot. *Everybody says, "Oooohhhh"...*
 - ש "Shin" – the player must **pitCH** in a penny, a candy or a nut from their individual pile into the pot. *Everybody says, "Aaaawwww"...*
4. If the pot empties out, everyone contributes equally once again.
5. You can always raise the ante, asking everyone to match the amount agreed upon.



What does the Dreidel have to say?

Wouldn't it be more fun if the Dreidel would have gimmel on all four sides? Couldn't the Dreidel do without a shin? Then whichever way you would spin, you would win....

The answer is obvious. If you can't lose, you can't win.

We often ask, why is there so much darkness, so many challenges? Wouldn't it be great if all of life was bliss? Why are we always faced with difficulties in the workplace, in business, in relationships, in achievements, etc? Why do we find so many difficulties and obstacles when it comes to anything Jewish?

Herein is the answer. The fun lies in the opportunity to overcome adversity. If evil did not exist, if our world did not contain darkness, we would be like trees baring terrific fruit, but there would be no appreciation for all the good. It is the challenge that creates the fun and makes the good stand out. Overcoming adversity is what makes our life so meaningful.

STOP THE DREIDEL!

What color is the bar of soap sitting on your bathroom counter? What is the pattern on your socks? Floral? Plaid? Solid?

To many people, these questions are irrelevant. They purchase their preferred brand of soap (or the cheapest one on the store's shelf) regardless of its color. And in the morning they don the first pair of socks they fish out of the drawer.

But to others, those with an

eye for design, the choice isn't so simple. Their lavatory has a motif, and every item displayed there has to match the unique décor. And socks aren't just to



keep feet warm or shoes sweat-free; they complete the thematic ensemble, complementing the wardrobe du jour. No part stands on its own; every component is just one piece of a large picture.

Every Jewish holiday is comprised of many components: How does the dreidel embody the Chanukah message? its history, laws, customs, traditional foods, etc. Each component was put in place by the Master Designer, or individuals whom He inspired, in accordance with the particular holiday's singular message. Some of the components are obvious expressions of the holiday's motif, while others require thought to uncover their profound relation to the holiday's unique message.

So, where does that leave the traditional dreidel game? How does the dreidel embody the Chanukah message?

(For those readers unfamiliar with this delightful Chanukah pastime, check out the short Dreidel Wizard on pg. 12.)

What's striking about the dreidel is that its "religious" aspect isn't always apparent. In other words, the four Hebrew letters that form the acronym for the phrase "A great miracle happened there" are not discernible while it's spinning. At that point it looks entirely letter-less, no different than any other spinning top available at your local dollar store.

Life is eerily reminiscent of a dreidel game. In the course of our dizzyingly hectic day-to-day existence we are often too preoccupied to notice the "letters," the small and big miracles that accompany us every day.

Every once in a while we have to give the spinning dreidel a break and reflect on its message: "A big miracle transpired there."

And that's precisely what Chanukah is all about. Some 2,100 years ago our nation's collective dreidel came to an abrupt halt, and the divine letters that animate and direct all of creation came into plain view. For eight days, the glow of the Temple's menorah

illuminated a reality that the Greeks had attempted to obscure: there is a hand that controls every event and occurrence.

Two millennia later, the message of Chanukah remains the same. As we sit by the menorah, or even while we indulge in the game that is our national Chanukah pastime, it is time for us to find the miracle letters in our own lives.

One more point:

When the dreidel comes to a rest, When the letters come into focus, it is time to react: there's little time to sit with your mouth open there isn't too much time to ponder; the game has got to continue. You have to give or take, depending on the letter the dreidel is now displaying. Only if you are (un)lucky enough to have landed a nun do you get to meditate a bit longer. . . . When the letters come into focus, it is time to react: there's little time to sit with your mouth open.

Give: G-d gave you miracles; it's time now to contribute back to the cause. Now it's your turn to make a miracle in someone else's life

Take: Take upon yourself to introduce an added dose of spirituality in your life—a Torah class or an additional mitzvah.

Or, you can think a bit longer. But not too long. The Maccabees didn't accomplish their feat through prolonged meditation sessions . . .

From Chabad.org by Rabbi Nafiali Silberberg. Rabbi Silberberg is a writer, editor and director of the curriculum department at the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute. Rabbi Silberberg resides in Brooklyn, New York, with his wife, Chaya Mushka, and their three children.



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WHEN FAITH Burned Bright

By Harry Langsam

Dark clouds covered the European skies, threatening us all in the fall of 1939. The Nazis tightened their grip over Eastern Europe, and nature acted unfriendly toward the oppressed. A cold winter came upon us, the refugees, after the traumatic and dreadful fall, when the German occupation began.

Jewish refugees who barely escaped the Nazi savage were not met with open arms by the Soviet authorities. The Soviets had recently invaded the eastern part of Poland. They turned every public building into a temporary prison where refugees from the Nazis were incarcerated under the suspicion that there might be German spies among them.

My older brother, Simcha, and I were lucky to be imprisoned in a real prison, the infamous “Brigidkes,” in Levov (Lwow). This was where political prisoners were kept during the Polish fascist regime till the outbreak of WWII. Fifty-eight people were deposited in one cell that could hardly hold twenty-five. The majority of the prisoners were Jews detained while crossing the San River, which became the newly established border between the Soviets and Germany.

We suffered horribly, morally and physically. The Soviets

stripped us naked while searching our belongings and confiscated every valuable, including items that were close to our souls. They confiscated all our prayer books, prayer shawls and Tefillin. This added to our depressive mood when our thoughts were with our beloved ones. Our only happy moments were the times we spent wearing the Tefillin, which one man success-

fully smuggled into the cell. The pleasure lasted only a minute or two, because everyone was eager to partake in the mitzvah daily.

Most of the refugees were religious, and it was hard for us to digest the non-kosher food served. Only a few holdouts survived on bread and water only.

Among us was one unique personality. His name was Reb Shmuel Nachum Emmer, a pious Chassid, an angel from Heaven. He supported us spiritually, and consoled us.

His love for a fellow Jew was immeasurable. He never became angry with people who weren't observant. On the contrary, whenever he talked someone into reciting a blessing over food, or not to smoke on the Sabbath, it made him the happiest man in the cell.

But when Chanukah came, Reb Shmuel's face filled with sadness.



“How in the world are we going to light Chanukah candles?” he lamented.

We all felt his pain but could not help him. We found no words to cheer him up. Unless another miracle occurred, we had no chance to observe Chanukah in a Soviet prison.


Everyone was heartbroken the first night of Chanukah, Reb Shmuel more than anyone else. After the whistle that signaled that it was time to lie down on our bare beds, the lights in our cell were left burning, as was customary around the world that in prison the lights never go out.

But around midnight the light did go out. A power failure occurred in the prison compound. Soon after, the guard ran from cell to cell distributing candles so the prisoners

should not be in the dark. When the guard opened our cell door with a box of candles in his hands, someone sneaked behind his back and pulled the bottom flap of the box open and the candles spilled all over the floor.

Needless to say, the guard never collected all the spilled candles. As soon as the guard left, we quietly gathered in a corner, and Reb Shmuel, with a radiant face, lit the first Chanukah candle with great devotion. We quietly sang Chanukah songs, and the stronger believers were convinced that it was a Divine act, that a real miracle had occurred.

We managed to light a small candle each night during the eight days of the Festival of Lights. Believe it or not, in a certain way, we had a happy Chanukah.



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Spark ON A PARK BENCH

The car was magnificent. As we stood back to admire our handiwork amidst the gently swirling snowflakes, I had to admit that it was the finest Menorah Car that I had ever seen.

The '78 Bonneville, with the huge wooden menorah on its roof, would definitely make people sit up and take notice—and that was our goal.

We planned to visit shopping malls and old age homes—anywhere that we could spread the joy and message of the festival of Chanukah.

Seven or eight of us were crammed into the smallish vehicle; the trunk was filled with tin menorahs and colored candles which we hoped to distribute. As the more technologically advanced kids discussed the intricacies of the electronic apparatus that powered the flickering lights of our menorah (was it an alternator?), I tuned out and stared out at the blackness of the winter night outside.

We presently arrived at our targeted destination for the evening, a huge residential complex in Brooklyn, situated in close proximity to our yeshivah.

In the 1970s the Russian floodgates had opened, and Trump Village was the destination of choice for thousands of newly-arrived immigrants. Often elderly, these feisty Jews had survived decades of communist rule with their Jewish identity intact; yet they knew very little about the particulars of the Torah and mitzvot, and we were hoping to kindle a spark or two.

I saw him sitting there. An elderly man of about seventy or seventy-five years of age, seated on one of those park-like benches that New Yorkers know so well. The base was concrete and the seat was wood, painted green, facing a concrete chess table. He just sat there and watched the cars go by on that frigid night.

“Ah freilichen Chanukah! Would you like to light the

menorah?" I asked him, hoping that he would help me accomplish my personal goal of ten people that I had hoped to inspire that night.

"Please go away," he replied in Yiddish. "I am not interested," he said, perhaps a bit more softly.

I tried to change his mind. I cajoled, I explained the powerful story of Chanukah, perhaps I even pleaded a bit, yet he was pretty firm in his decision. "No, thank you. Now please have a good night."

Sensing an opportunity slipping away, yet not quite ready to throw in the towel completely, I took the little tin menorah, placed it on the concrete chess table, inserted four colorful candles into the little slots that always seem as they were designed for candles much slimmer than mine, lit them, and turned to the old man and said: "Here is the menorah. If you want, it is yours—if you don't want it, then it is not."

The man said nothing, and I walked away.

We continued our rounds of the massive complex, and thank G-d, we were extremely successful that night.

It was getting late and it was time to go home.

My mind kept on going back to the old Russian Jew sitting outside on that lonely park bench.

"Let's drive past the place where we saw the old man." I was curious. What had he done with the menorah? Did he throw it away, or perhaps had he just left it, a lonely menorah in a forlorn spot?

There are images that stick with you. Events that transpire that leave an indelible imprint on the psyche, that even thirty years later one can see them clearly.

This is one of them.

I see an old man sitting on a bench. His eyes filling up with tears, as one large tear courses down his left cheek.

The candles are burning low and he is staring at them. Staring and crying. Flame meets flame and a soul ignites.

I don't know where he is now, or even his name. However, I know that I was privy to something powerful that night.

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By Chaim Drizin*

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The Flame

We can sit and gaze at it for hours. It's luminous, it's warm, it's romantic; but most of all it's spiritual. (In what way spiritual? We can't really say, but it is spiritual.) A yellow droplet of light, laced with red, bright-white at the edges, and blue at the core as if dirtied by its contact with the material wick. But we didn't see all those colors until we counted them — the flame itself is a perfect, integral whole, emanating calm and tranquility.

How, indeed, can something as agitated as the flame radiate such peace? For the flame is a clash of forces pulling in opposite directions. Look closely: see how it strains upward, striving to tear away from the wick which tethers it to the candle or lamp and lose itself in the great expanses of energy that gird the heavens. But look again, and see how it clings to the length of braided cotton that spears its heart and supplies it with the fuel that sustains its luminance and life. Back and forth, up and down it strives, vacillating between being and naught, between presence and oblivion.



“The soul of man is a candle of G-d” (Proverbs 20:27). For the soul of man, too, is a clash of divergent forces and contrary strivings.

We yearn to tear free of our “wick” — of the body that anchors us to the physical reality and sullies us with physical needs and wants. We strive upwards, yearning to transcend the physical, the human and the particular, and fuse with the universal and the divine. At the same time, we cling to the body, to the bit of matter that sustains us as dynamic and productive participants in G-d's world.

It is this perpetual up-and-down, this incessant vacillation from selfhood to selflessness and back again, that we call life. **It is this eternal tension**

between our desire to escape the physical and our commitment to inhabit it, develop it and sanctify it that makes us spiritual beings.

We can sit and gaze at the flame for hours, because we are gazing at ourselves.

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By Yanki Tauber*



STEVE'S Latkes

Chanukah food traditions have their origins in the first years that the holiday was celebrated, and are meant to remind us of the miracles associated with the events of Chanukah itself. And of course, remembering the miracles and the freedom that we're all celebrating adds a special flavor to everything we serve. Thank you to Steve Boxer for sharing his delicious recipe.

INGREDIENTS

- 6 potatoes
- 1 large onion
- 3 eggs
- 3 heaping tablespoons flour
- salt to taste
- oil

INSTRUCTIONS

1. shred potatoes and onion.
2. add eggs, flour and salt.
3. mix
4. preheat frying pan, fry until fully cooked and golden brown on both sides.



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ALL'S WELL When it Ends

When did Chanukah become a holiday? When did the Sages declare the 25th of Kislev the beginning of an eight-day celebration?

The Talmud describes the events of Chanukah and concludes: “The following year they established these eight days as a festival.”

When does a war end? When the last shot is fired? When there is a signed armistice? Neither. Only in retrospect can victory be declared. On the year when the war ended, on the original 25th of Kislev, there was calm, yet uncertainty. Had the Greeks surrendered, or just gone to summon fresh troops and more war elephants? Only in the following year were they able to determine that the 25th had indeed marked the conclusion.

When do we know we have made the right choices in our daily battles? When do we know we have made the right choices in our daily battles? When can we be positive that we've done right? When is it time for a victory lap?

How do parents know they made the right decision to send their children to a Jewish day school? It's not evident after the first semester. It may be years later when the child marries Jewish that every tuition penny seems worthwhile.

Today is tomorrow's history. It's the seeds for all of the “shoulda, coulda woulda” that can become weeds of regret. Yet at times it seems that the flowers that blossom

from our choices take too much time to blossom.

The Greeks argued, “What you can feel is all that's real”; revel in the immediate. If it can't be debated or seen under the microscope I'm not interested. Infinite and ethereal are interesting but don't tell me to put down my popcorn and leave the theater.

The Maccabees declared that there is no power like G-d; no Greek sensory stimulus competes with the Infinite. Trust in G-d and avoid the enticement of the merely tangible.

By focusing on the Eternal, the Jew is vulnerable to scorn. The truly valuable can't be appreciated in the right now; it must be nurtured and seen only in the comforting glow of retrospect. Celebrate after the accomplishment; the hard choices of life rarely are made with absolute conviction.

It's been too long since we've celebrated. Along the treacherous road of galut we have encountered plenty of Greeks, all selling their instant-cure snake oil. But we have held strong to the battle cry. We have avoided the scents and seductions of the “right now,” for our G-d is Eternal and so are our values. Now the world is ready to cash in its chips and celebrate the ‘end of the beginning’ with the coming of Moshiach!

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By Baruch Epstein*



Everything I DO IN AIPAC I LEARNED FROM **CHABAD**

I come from a reform background. As a fifteen-year-old I would travel by train to Manhattan. At the station stood a Chabad teen, someone my own age. As I was going out of the station, he asked me, “Pardon me, would you put on Tefillin?” I ignored him and continued further.

A few weeks later I again went to Manhattan and again, the boy was asking me – “Did you put on Tefillin today?” to which I didn’t respond and continued walking.

This scene repeated itself numerous times throughout the year. Finally, when that boy came over and asked me the same question, I responded, “You seem to be a total loser.”

In the blink of an eye the Chabad student replied, “Why?”

“Isn’t your mission to get me to put on Tefillin – and you failed?!”

“No, my friend, you are mistaken. My purpose is to

remind you that you are a Jew, and that we care about you; that you are one of ours and that we embrace you at any moment.”

“YOU SEEM
TO BE A TOTAL
LOSER.” IN THE
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THE CHABAD
STUDENT
REPLIED, “WHY?”

Right there and then, I decided to put on Tefillin – for the first time in my life.

Eventually, when I came to Washington, Rabbi Levi Shemtov, the Lubavitch Representative in Washington DC, was one of the first to welcome me. When my son reached the age of Bar Mitzvah, I asked Rabbi Shemtov to get me a pair of Tefillin, and he helped us both to put them on.

Herein lies the secret of Chabad’s success. No speeches, but one on one, to embrace one Jew and another and another, to elevate their lives even with a “small Mitzvah.”

*By Jay Kessler, Director of AIPAC Strategic Initiatives,
from a speech at an AIPAC meeting in Anchorage, AK.*

HERE'S my STORY

GOOD THING THE RABBI NEEDED LUMBER **MR. RUDY BOSCHWITZ**

Mr. Rudy Boschwitz is a former Independent-Republican United States Senator who represented Minnesota from 1978 to 1991. He has also served as a United States Ambassador to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. He was interviewed in May of 2012.

My relationship with Lubavitch started when Rabbi Moshe Feller, Chabad's longtime representative in Minnesota, came to my store, not long after I opened it, to buy some lumber for his sukkah.

I had grown up around New York, before coming out to Minnesota to begin a business. Rabbi Feller is himself a Minnesotan, and he had returned there in 1962 as a Chabad emissary just a few years before I got there.

I noticed him as he was leaving the store; beards were not unusual back then, but he wore tzitzit, so I recognized that he was an Orthodox Jew – and likely, a rabbi. I introduced myself, and that became the beginning of a very long and very satisfying relationship – not only for me, but also for my sons and my wife.

At Rabbi Feller's suggestion, my wife and I went to see the Rebbe and we met with him several times throughout the years. I also had the opportunity to attend a farbrengen in 770 Eastern Parkway, which the Rebbe led with enormous spirit, and I was invited to speak at a convention for Chabad emissaries, where I addressed a crowd of some three thousand men.

The first time we met the Rebbe was in 1971. I was not yet a US senator. In fact, I was not yet in public life at all back then. I was just a 41-year-old businessman starting to make my way in life.

When we entered his study at 770, I was struck by its appearance. When one thinks of the leader of a global movement, one would expect an office that's at least somewhat grand. But the Rebbe's office wasn't grand at all. It was lined with books, and it was not very large.

The Rebbe spoke to my wife and I about education. He urged us to teach our children Torah and to raise them as Jews.

This was the recurring theme of all our meetings with the Rebbe. He would always remind us that the future of our people is with our children and that it is essential for the younger generation to receive a Jewish education. He also spoke about the importance of creating Jewish schools, and that is something I have helped with in Minnesota.

Actually, it was Jewish education that initially led me to become a real supporter of Lubavitch. I would go to many of the

small towns in Minnesota, where we had stores, and there would be three or four Jewish families living there – and sometimes even fewer than that. I found that Lubavitch had reached out to all of them, and sent them tapes so that they had their own little “Sunday schools” and their sons could be Bar Mitzvah-ed. Rabbi Feller's wife, Mindy, would also go out to many of these small towns, which impressed me because the rest of the organized Jewish community did not.



Later on, once I had become a member of the US Senate, the Rebbe continued to speak about the importance of education, not only in Jewish schools, but for all children. He believed that even in the public schools there should be an element of G-dliness. He frequently suggested that there be a moment of silence – a moment for non-denominational silent prayer or reflection – at the outset of each day.

The moment of silence was something I believed in, and I went on to advocate for it as a senator. In 1983, Senator Jacob Hecht from Nevada and myself introduced some remarks the Rebbe had made on the subject into the Senate Congressional Record.

As the Rebbe himself explained in those remarks, to maintain the “civilized rules of law and order” that our freedom and human rights depend on, children need to be raised with a moral sense.

If we want our children to grow up to become “law-abiding, ethically minded, productive citizens” they need to have a deeper sense of right and wrong. The moment of silence is meant to give them time to think about the Supreme Being who watches over how we act – “the Eye that sees and the Ear that hears,” was how he put it – or, with the guidance of their parents, to think about their purpose in life, or their plans for the day.

Unfortunately, the people who guide the education of the United States don't feel that any type of religious experience, or even the mere mention of religion, is appropriate in schools. That's too bad, because religion, of course, plays a most important role in society as a whole, as well as in the lives of individuals, so young children must understand its significance. As the Rebbe said, a moment of silence at the beginning of the day would go a long way in “restoring this great land to its ethical moral ideals, thereby enhancing the welfare and safety of all citizens.”

I had another interesting experience in the Senate under similar circumstances, but on a separate occasion. I had been asked to read into the congressional record a talk the Rebbe had given about the commandment to “be fruitful and multiply.” At the time, many people were concerned about the country's growing population, and were advocating for “zero population growth.” In response, the Rebbe spoke about the importance of having large families. He had Rabbi Feller ask me to read his speech into the record, which I was very pleased to do.

This then caused the wife of one of the chief executive officers of General Mills, a large national corporation located here in Minnesota, to criticize me. In a very harsh letter, she called the Rebbe “an archaic religious leader,” and said that he knew nothing about the subject.

They were supporters of mine, and it was a difficult letter. But, I responded rather directly, and said that the Rebbe had a great sense of modern life and was not, by any means, archaic.

“The rabbi who saw in his lifetime the murder of a third of his people,” I wrote to her, “has every right to speak about multiplying and increasing the number of the Jewish nation.” (Though I should note, the Rebbe was speaking about all people and not only Jews.)

The Rebbe's message was an important one and – as someone who knew a good deal about the subject – the Rebbe was fully justified in expressing those views. Population growth was not the threat that this lady thought it was.

Personally, the Rebbe's teaching about raising Jewish families was one we took to heart: We had four boys, one of whom is now quite observant. That may be small by Lubavitch standards, but nevertheless they have caused us to become proud grandparents many times over. And we have followed the Rebbe's advice to provide them a Jewish education – we've raised them all to be very conscious of our Jewishness, of Chabad, and of the Land of Israel and what it means to our people.

MY ENCOUNTER with the REBBE *An oral history project dedicated to documenting the life of the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory. The story is one of thousands recorded in the 900 videotaped interviews conducted to date. Please share your comments and suggestions. mystory@jemedia.org*

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