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WINTER 2017 / CHANUKAH 5778

A LITTLE NOSH FOR THE SOUL



Grab your Miracle.

CELEBRATE CHANUKAH *Dec 12-20*





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4 **Need a kids book gift idea?** Try *A Touch of Chanukah*. Written by Sylvia Rouss and illustrated by Boruch Becker, this exciting book, allows children to TOUCH an ancient jug of oil and FEEL a wooden dreidel, all while reading about the miracle of Chanukah. [Get it at Kehot.com](http://Kehot.com)

4

Holiday Must Haves



1

Hungry? Here's the App you need

The **OK Kosher Food Guide** provides the most up to date database of products certified kosher by OK Kosher Certification. Search by company or by category this is the fastest and safest way to prepare your next big kosher meal. [Available on Google Play and the App store.](#)

3

New Technology for Shabbat

Wemo Insight lets you easily set automatic schedules for any device that's plugged in – from lamps to fans to space heaters. Using the free Wemo app, you can keep Shabbat and your home comfortable by scheduling a fan to turn on at noon, or synchronize a lamp with the sunset so you never turn on a light on Shabbat! [Visit Wemo.com to learn more.](http://Wemo.com)

3

The Jewish Subscription Box

Remember when your mom came over for a Chanukah party and you forgot to buy the candles? That's why we created **MyBoxMitzvah.com** and we'll make sure your box arrives before each Jewish holiday with enough supplies to celebrate. It's the perfect gift for you and your Jewish friends. [Read more at MyBoxMitzvah.com](http://MyBoxMitzvah.com)



Feeling Outnumbered?

READ THIS

A letter by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, of blessed memory.

The Chanukah Lights which are kindled in the darkness of night recall to our minds memories of the past: the war that the Hasmoneans waged against huge Syrian armies, their victory, the dedication of the Temple, the rekindling of the Menorah, the small quantity of oil that lasted for many days, and so on.

Let's picture ourselves members of the little band of Hasmoneans in those days. We are under the domination of a powerful Syrian king; many of our brethren have left us and accepted the idolatry and way of life of the enemy. But our leaders, the Hasmoneans, do not commence action by comparing numbers and weapons, and weighing our chances of victory. The Holy Temple has been invaded by a cruel enemy. The Torah and our faith are in grave danger. The enemy has trampled upon everything holy to us and is trying to force us to accept his way of life which is that of idol worship, injustice, and similar traits altogether foreign to us. There is but one thing for us to do-to adhere all the more closely to our religion and its precepts, and to fight against the enemy even if we have to die in this fight.

And wonder of wonder! The huge Syrian armies are beaten, the vast Syrian Empire is defeated, our victory is complete.

This chapter of our history has repeated itself frequently. We, as Jews, have always been outnumbered; many tyrants attempted to destroy us because of our faith. Sometimes they aimed their poisoned arrows at our bodies, sometimes at our souls, and, sad to say, many of our brethren have for one reason or another turned away from G-d and His Torah and tried to make life easier by accepting the rule of the conqueror.

In such times of distress we must always be like that faithful band of Hasmoneans, and remember that there is always a drop of 'pure olive oil' hidden deep in the heart of every Jew, which, if kindled, bursts into a big flame. This drop of 'pure olive oil' is the 'Perpetual Light' that must and will pierce the darkness of our present night, until everyone of us will behold the fulfillment of the prophet's promise for our ultimate redemption and triumph. And as in the days of the Hasmoneans 'the wicked will once again be conquered by the righteous, and the arrogant by those who follow G-d's laws, and our people Israel will have a great salvation.'

How the Jelly Doughnut Became a Religious Symbol

Jewish?



When you think of religious or spiritual symbols I'm sure candles and hand carved golden shapes come to mind. But, who would could've imagined that a sugar powdered jelly filled doughnut would be the sign of Divine intervention and G-dly miracles?

But this is how it happened: The big moment begins at the golden menorah in the temple right after the miraculous Chanukah era war that reclaimed the holy city. The Syrians had trashed the Jewish house of G-d and only a "pure jar of oil" remained untouched. The Jews return to the temple feeling victorious and excited that the lights of the menorah would shine again. Sadly, the "pure jar of oil" was only a one day supply and it would take eight days for new oil to be procured. Now, just imagine the wide eyed Jews saying "the one day supply of oil is lasting." A miracle was happening before their weary eyes.

It was a sign. It was a long awaited Divine motivation and reminder of how awesome the Jewish people are. Years of oppression, harsh realities, unbearable conditions, all went up in smoke as the miraculous oil burned a flame of hope, triumph, and Divine victory. In short, that's why we celebrate Chanukah and light the menorah and eat a jelly doughnut.

I'm sure the maccabees never tasted a jelly doughnut. So how did the classic sufganiyot become a Chanukah staple?

the first known recipe for a jelly doughnut, according to historian Gil Marks, can be found in a 1532 German cookbook. The treat was made by packing jam between two round slices of bread and deep-frying the whole thing in lard. (Ooops, not kosher, do not try this at home.)

Emelyn Rude writes about food for places like VICE and TIME and was named a National Geographic Young Explorer, so obviously she's going to know how the jelly doughnut became a religious symbol.

Rude says that "From its Germanic origins, the dessert quickly conquered most of Europe. It became krapfen to the Austrians, the famous Berliners to the Germans and paczki to the Polish. Substituting schmaltz or goose fat for the decidedly un-Kosher lard in their fryers, the Jewish peoples of these regions also enjoyed the dessert, particularly Polish Jews, who called them ponchiks and began eating them regularly on Chanukah.

Now here is how they made it to your house: When these groups migrated to Israel in the early twentieth century, fleeing the harsh anti-Semitism of Europe, they brought their delicious jelly-filled doughnuts with them, where they mingled with the North African fried-dough tradition.

But it would take more than just the mingling of Jewish cultures to make the sufganiyot the powerful symbol of Israeli Chanukah it is today.

She says that credit must be given to the Israeli Histadrut. Founded in 1920 in what was then British-mandated Palestine, the national labor group's aim was to organize the economic activities of the Jewish workers in the region. Founded on Russian socialist principles, full employment was amongst its aims, as was the integration of the new Jewish immigrants making their ways to the country's shores.

the latke, the classic fried potato pancake that was already associated with Chanukah celebrations, is a dish that can easily be made at home. A perfectly filled and fried sufganiyot is much more difficult. Even some of the most talented at-home cooks will agree that the treat tastes better when left up to the professionals. Which is exactly what the Histadrut wanted: a treat that involved professionals. As many important Jewish holidays are concentrated in autumn, the end of that season often brought a lull in work in Jewish quarters. By pushing the sufganiyot as a symbol of the Festival of Lights, as opposed to the DIY-friendly latke, the Histadrut could encourage the creation of more jobs for Jewish workers.

By all accounts, the Histadrut's efforts to promote the jelly doughnut worked. In modern Israel, over 18 million sufganiyot are consumed in the weeks around the holiday, which averages out to over three doughnuts per citizen. More people enjoy the fried treat than fast on Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, and the Israeli Defense Forces purchase more than 50,000 of the doughnuts each day of the eight-day holiday to boost the morale of its troops.

Sufganiyot can now be found everywhere. After all, as people all over the world have been discovering for centuries, no one can say no to a truly delicious jelly doughnut.

People of the Book

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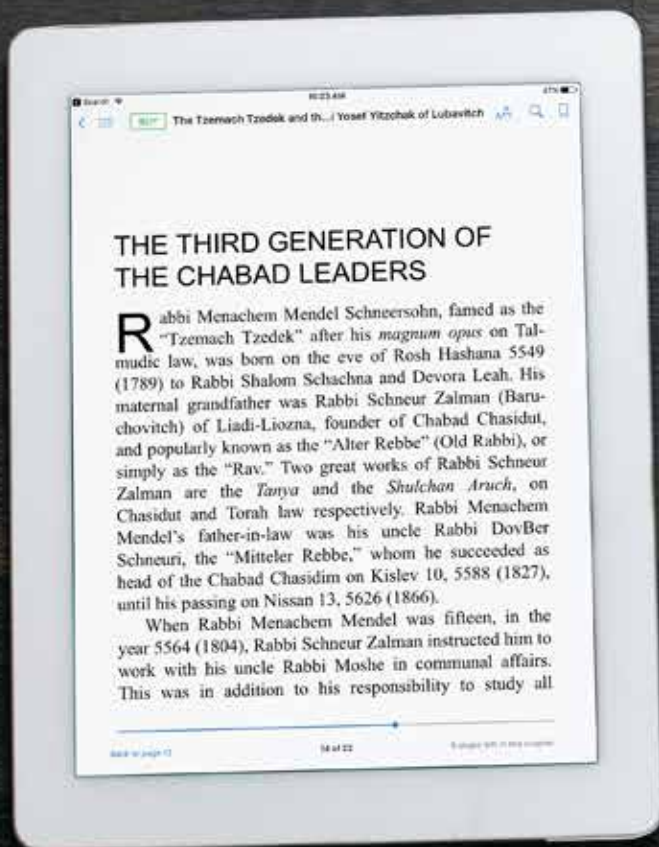
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THE HISTORY OF CHANUKAH

(in two minutes)

Put down your latke for two minutes as our history teacher brings you up to speed on the historical facts that led to Festival of lights.

THE BACKSTORY

Antiochus III, the King of Syria (222-186 B.C.E.) was victorious in battle and the Land of Israel was annexed to his empire. Things seemed to be going well, until he was beaten by the Romans and compelled to pay heavy taxes. That's when the pressure on the Jewish land started and when Antiochus died, his son Seleucus IV took over, it got much worse for the Jews. But it wasn't all about the money.

At that time, the biggest danger facing our people was actually from within. The influence of the Hellenists (people who accepted idol-worship and the Syrian way of life) was increasing and the threat of assimilation became very real.

Meanwhile, there was a spiritual warrior named Yochanan, who was the High Priest in Jerusalem. The Jewish Hellenists hated Yochanan for resisting their new found culture and they betrayed him by telling Seleucus that the Temple had plenty of money. Strapped for cash, Seleucus needed money in order to pay the Romans and sure enough his minister Helyodros soon arrived at the Temple gates. Ignoring Yochanan's pleas Helyodros entered the Temple, but suddenly became pale and he fainted. After Helyodros came to, he did not dare enter the Holy Temple again. The story is not over, so keep reading.

**ANTIOCHUS TRIED
TO ROOT OUT THE
INDIVIDUALISM OF
THE JEWS BY SUPPRESSING
ALL THE JEWISH LAWS.**

THE MADMAN: ANTIOCHUS

A short time later in 174 B.C.E, Seleucus was killed and his brother Antiochus IV took over. He was a tyrant who hated religion and he was really bad news for the Jews. He was called "Epiphanes," meaning "the gods' beloved." Several of the Syrian rulers received similar titles. But a historian of his time, Polebius, gave him the title Epimanes ("madman"), a name more suitable to the character of this harsh and cruel king.

Desiring to unify his kingdom through the medium of a common religion and culture, Antiochus tried to root out the individualism of the Jews by suppressing all the Jewish Laws. He removed Yochanan from the Temple and installed Joshua,

Yochanan's Hellenist brother, as the High Priest. Joshua, who loved to call himself by the Greek name of Jason, used his high office to spread Greek customs among the priesthood.

Joshua was later replaced by another man, Menelaus, who had promised the king that he would bring in more money than Jason did. When Yochanan, the former High Priest, protested against

the spread of the Hellenists' influence in the Holy Temple, the ruling High Priest hired murderers to assassinate him.

Antiochus was at that time engaged in a successful war against Egypt. But messengers from Rome arrived and commanded him to stop the war, and he had to yield. Meanwhile, in Jerusalem, a rumor spread that a serious accident had befallen Antiochus. Thinking that he was dead, the people rebelled against Menelaus. The treacherous High Priest fled together with his friends.

THE REVOLT

Here's the problem: Antiochus wasn't dead and he returned quite enraged by defeat. When he heard about the mini revolt against Menelaus he ordered his army to fall upon the Jews. Thousands of Jews were killed. Antiochus then enacted a series of harsh decrees against the Jews. Jewish worship was forbidden.



WHO'S WHO in the Chanukah story

Yochanan:

*High Priest Opposed
Hellenism*

Joshua or Jason:

*Hellenist High Priest
(Brother of Yochanan)*

Menelaus:

Hellenist High Priest

Matisyahu:

*Old retired High Priest and
father of Maccabees.*

His Sons:

*Elazar, Shimon, Yochanan,
Yonatan, and Yehuda*

men went from town to town and from village to village to force the inhabitants to worship pagan gods. Only one refuge area remained and that was the hills of Judea with their caves.

MATISYAHU

When the henchmen of Antiochus arrived in the village of Modin, where the retired priest Matisyahu lived, they were met with resistance. The Syrian officers were neutralized and the pagan altar was destroyed.

Anticipating retaliation Matisyahu left the village of Modin and fled together with his sons and friends to the hills of Judea. All loyal and courageous Jews joined them. They formed legions and from time to time they left their hiding places to fall upon enemy detachments and outposts, and to destroy the pagan altars that were built by order of Antiochus. You guessed it, these guys were called the Maccabees.

THE MACCABEES

This went on for a while and before his death, Matisyahu called his sons together and urged them to continue to fight in defense of G-d's Torah. He asked them to follow the counsel of their brother Shimon the Wise. In waging warfare, he said, their leader should be Judah the Strong. Judah was called "Maccabee," a word composed of the initial letters of the four Hebrew words *Mi Kamocha Ba'eilim*

The scrolls of the Law were confiscated and burned. Sabbath rest, circumcision and the dietary laws were prohibited under penalty of death.

Rabbi Eliezer, a man of 90, was ordered by the servants of Antiochus to eat pork so that others would do the same. When he refused they suggested to him that he pick up the meat to his lips to appear to be eating. But Rabbi Eliezer refused to do even that and he was put to death. This pattern became common. Antiochus's

Hashem, "Who is like You, O G-d."

Antiochus sent his General Apolonius to fight the Maccabees, but the Syrians were defeated by the Maccabees. Antiochus sent out another expedition which also was defeated. He realized that only by sending a powerful army could he hope to defeat Judah and his brave fighting men.

An army consisting of more than 40,000 men swept the land under the leadership of two commanders, Nicanor and Gorgiash. When Judah and his brothers heard of that, they exclaimed: "Let us fight unto death in defense of our souls and our Temple!" The people assembled in Mitzpah, where Samuel, the prophet of old, had offered prayers to G-d. There was no possible way that a small group of Maccabee fighters could win this war, but miraculously, after a series of battles the Maccabees won.

**"LET US FIGHT UNTO
DEATH IN DEFENSE
OF OUR SOULS
AND OUR TEMPLE!"**

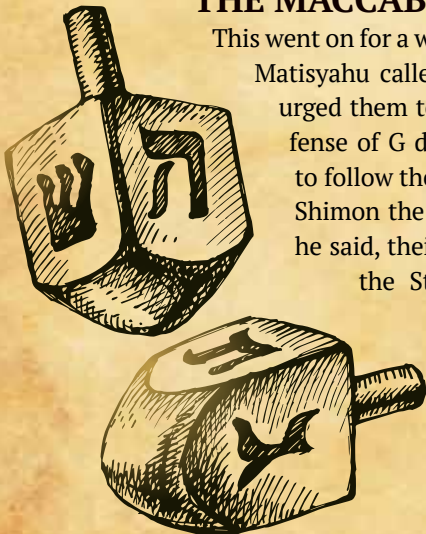
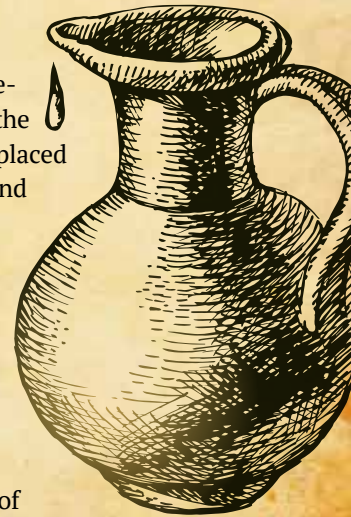
THE LIBERATION

Now the Maccabees returned to Jerusalem to liberate it. They entered the Temple and cleared it of the idols placed there by the Syrian vandals. Judah and his followers built a new altar, which he dedicated on the twenty-fifth of the month of Kislev, in the year 3622.

Since the golden Menorah had been stolen by the Syrians, the Maccabees now made one of cheaper metal. When they wanted to light it, they found only a small cruse of pure olive oil bearing the seal of the High Priest Yochanan. It was sufficient to light only for one day. By a miracle of G-d, it continued to burn for eight days, till new oil was made available. In memory of this, our sages appointed these eight days for annual thanksgiving and for lighting candles. They called it Chanukah. Chanukah means dedication, as they re-dedicated the Temple in Jerusalem. It can also be read Chanu-Kah meaning they rested on the 25th of the month.

Now that you know the backstory to Chanukah, why not share it with a friend? That's what a Maccabee would do. 🔥

>Read more at
www.Chabad.org.





We threw around some names that would be a perfect fit for the Chanukah issue in-person interview section. It was unanimous that we reach out to now-retired Jewish general Judah Maccabee. Besides for his own line of protective shields, Judah is credited by many with inventing guerrilla warfare. Although he spends most of his time in his hometown Modin, we were able to reach him via Skype. Here's the interview:

CM For many, your bravery made you the hero of the Chanukah story. Do you see it like that?

JM Well, thank you. But no, I know G-d is the hero of the Chanukah story, I was just in the right place at the right time. I prefer peace than war. But we felt we were fighting G-d's battle.

CM Did you have any basic training in military tactics?

JM [Laughs] No. My late father Matisyahu was a priest and I watched him stand up for what's right even against a huge army. I would say my brothers and I got our courage from him. On his death bed our father made us promise to keep up the fight and I'm happy we did.

CM My kids have a Judah Maccabee costume with fake sword and shield. Did you really have the word Maccabee on your shield?

JM Yes. It's the acronym for the verse "Who is like You, O G-d." In a way, you can say the real victory of our battle is that

Jewish kids still talk about us. Honestly, we were worried as to whether or not Judaism could survive and it warms my heart to see how Judaism has continued and grown.

CM Is there anything our readers should know about the story of Chanukah?

JM I'm not sure if they know that the neighboring countries begrudged our dazzling victories and considered me a threat to their own lands. New attacks were planned on us and we got busy with fortifications. Under my supervision the Jewish people worked feverishly to refill their arsenals and turn the whole country into a stronghold.

CM So you had to keep working even after people were celebrating in Jerusalem. Did you have to do everything yourself?

JM No. I had some really great people that I worked with. My brother Shimon led an army north to aid the plagued Jews of Galilee. He defeated the enemy and cleared the Jewish land. At his

urging, a great many of the Jewish settlers who had fled to Jerusalem, returned to rebuild in safety what had been destroyed during the years of weakness. I also joined forces with my other brother Yonatan and we marched against our enemies, where we were met with tough resistance. By Shavuot, the campaign was successfully concluded.

CM Did you get a vacation at any point?

JM Eventually, Judea was again free, and all parts captured by the neighboring nation had been recovered. Many celebrations and festivity transformed Jerusalem and the Holy Temple, hardly half a year after the victories over the Syrian armies. I remember how we expressed our joy and gratitude to G-d in the form of psalms and offerings. We didn't have fireworks back then. We really celebrated a spiritual Jewish victory and I'll never forget that.

CM Thank you for your time.

JM You're welcome. 🔥

laws of LIGHT

WHERE TO PLACE THE MENORAH?

Many have the custom to place the menorah in a doorway opposite the mezuzah (such is the custom of Chabad-Lubavitch) so that the two mitzvot of mezuzah and Chanukah surround the person. Others place it on a windowsill facing a public thoroughfare.

HOW TO SET UP YOUR MENORAH?

It is preferable to use cotton wicks in olive oil, or paraffin candles, in amounts large enough to burn until half an hour after nightfall. If not, regular candles can be used as well. The candles of a menorah must be of equal height in a straight row. The shamash, the servant candle that kindles the other lights, should stand out from the rest (i.e. higher or lower). The Chanukah Lights must burn for at least half an hour each night. Before kindling the lights, make sure that there is enough oil (or if candles are used, that they are big enough) to last half an hour.

WHO LIGHTS THE MENORAH?

All members of the family should be present at the kindling of the Chanukah Menorah. Children should be encouraged to light their own Menorahs. Students and singles who live in dormitories or their own apartments should kindle menorahs in their own rooms.

HOW TO LIGHT THE MENORAH?

On the first night of Chanukah one light is kindled on the right side of the Menorah, on the following night add a second light to the left of the first and kindle the new light first proceeding from left to right, and so on each night.

BLESSINGS FOR LIGHTING THE MENORAH:

1. Ba-ruch A-tah Ado-nai E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech ha-olam a-she-ki-de-sha-nu be-mitz-vo-tav ve-tzi-va-nu le-had-lik ner Chanukah. *Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to kindle the Chanukah light.*

2. Ba-ruch A-tah Ado-nai E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech ha-olam she-a-sa ni-sim la-avo-te-nu ba-ya-mim ha-hem bi-z'man ha-zeh. *Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time.*

3. On the first night of Chanukah add the following blessing: Ba-ruch A-tah Ado-nai E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech ha-olam she-heche-ya-nu ve-ki-yi-ma-nu ve-higi-a-nu liz-man ha-zeh. *Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.* After kindling the lights, the Hanerot Halalu prayer is recited.

SPECIAL SHABBAT REQUIREMENTS

On Friday eve the Chanukah Lights are kindled before the Shabbat Lights (which are lit 18 minutes before sundown). Additional oil or larger candles should be provided for the Chanukah Lights ensuring that they will last half an hour after nightfall. 🔥





the public menorah lighting near you



PERHAPS YOU'RE READING THIS ON a train in Paris, it's possible you know, people still use trains and people still read magazines. Or let's say you're on vacation in Thailand. Better yet, you stayed home in London or Los Angeles, either way, a menorah lighting won't be too far away. ¶ The history: Menorah lighting events were initiated by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, in 1974. You can say the idea of public displays of light spread like wildfire or like we say nowadays, it went viral. This year, Chabad has planned over 15,000 public menorah lighting events across the globe. The lightings are expected to reach an estimated 8,000,000 Jews — that's more than half of the world's Jewish population — through Chanukah distributions, events, public menorahs and advertising in more than 90 countries. Sure, it's great to watch a giant menorah lighting and sing along. But you should definitely be lighting your own menorah at home. That's why Chabad gives away 250,000 menorahs, 11,000,000 candles, 380,000 Chanukah guides and 200,000 chocolate "gelt" packets throughout the United States and Canada alone.

Here are some of our favorite menorah lighting events from around the world



San Francisco, California

is where the menorah lighting festivities were born. In Union Square, the "Bill Graham Menorah", a giant 25-foot, 3 ton Menorah, was built over 40 years ago with the funding of the late rock impresario. The first Sunday of every Chanukah is actually called "Bill Graham Menorah Day" as declared by former Mayor Frank Jordan in 1993.

Washington, D.C. The National Menorah in front of the White House has been a tradition since 1974.

New York City has the world's largest menorah, standing 36 feet high (the lights are 32 feet

high, the most permissible by Jewish law.

Vail, Colorado has large menorahs that you can see from many of the slopes.

Miami Beach, Florida

is expecting more than 10,000 people at Gulfstream Park's mass menorah lighting that will feature world famous 8th Day in concert.

Mexico in **Cancun, Los Cabos** have you covered whether or not you packed a menorah.

Aruba has many nice things to offer, but only recently did Aruba join the long list of places you join for a public menorah lighting.

Australia's known for doing things big and that's how they do Chanukah. Melbourne's 'Chanukah in the Park' hosts over 10,000 people at Caulfield Park. You can see menorahs from Brisbane to Tasmania and almost everywhere in between.

Israel is one place you sure can give away a whole lot of holiday cheer. Chabad will distribute 270,000 sets of menorahs and candles and 400,000 traditional doughnuts (sufganiyot). Almost 1400 giant menorahs will be placed in city and town centers across the country.

Russia. Yes it will be cold and there will be a public menorah lighting at the Kremlin's Revolution Square. Let me remind you that the Chabad Rebbe who fled the USSR now has his Chabad centers running 15 large menorahs in central locations throughout Moscow and dozens of menorah-topped cars will drive around Moscow creating awareness of the holiday. Babushka, we've come along way.

Central Africa. we are not kidding. In Central Africa you will find menorah lightings in Nairobi and Mombasa, Kenya; Abuja, Lagos and Port Harcourt, Nigeria; Luanda, Angola; and Kinshasa and Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the

Congo. You get the idea.

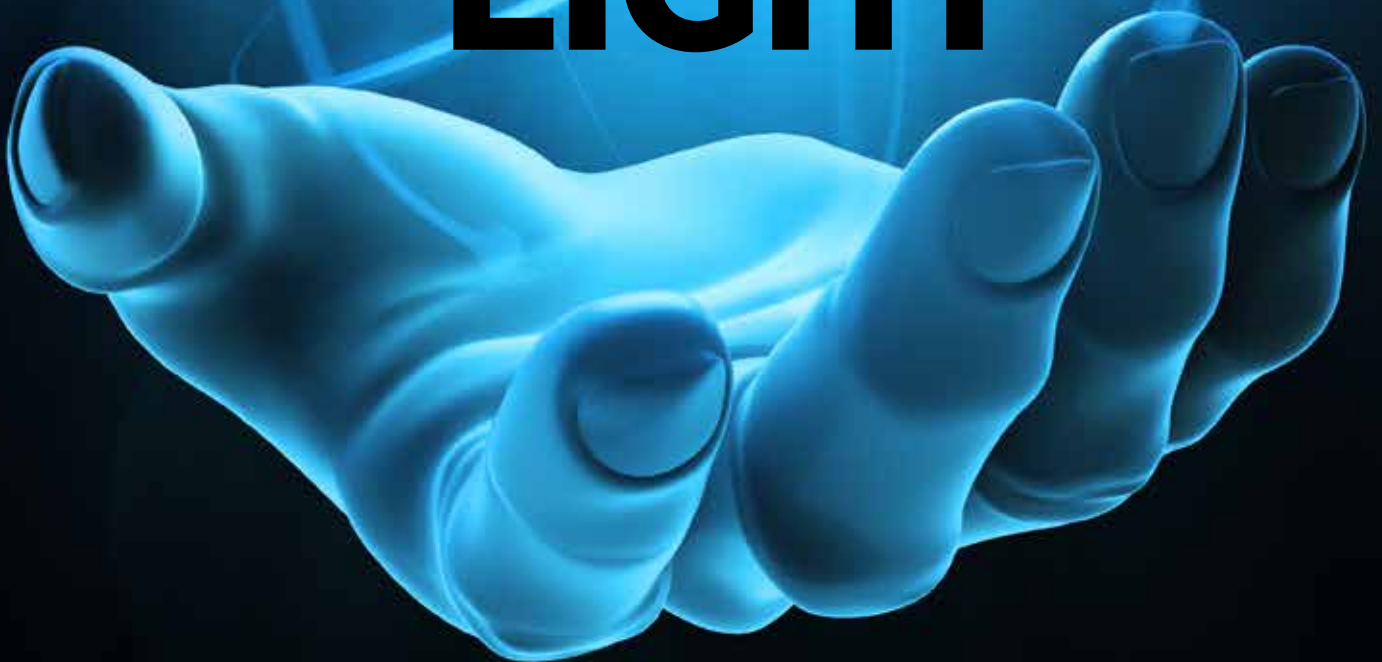
Argentina really has you covered with 110 giant menorahs. The mass menorah lighting and concert in the R.O. del Uruguay park is anticipating over 10,000 people and soccer has nothing to do with this event!

Germany has got to be an amazing sight for a public menorah. In fact, there will be 20 large public menorahs erected around Berlin, as well as a nightly lighting at the Brandenburg Gate. Take that haters and forces of darkness.

England In London's Trafalgar Square the 30-foot menorah is not for the birds.

There are many more events so visit the menorah event directory at Hanukkah.org/Events. The directory features events in 490 cities around the world, and is constantly being updated. Chabad.org, offers guides, videos, songs, insights, recipes, holiday customs and international event listings.

THE
Amazing
THING
ABOUT
LIGHT





OF ALL THE SPECIAL DATES ON THE Jewish calendar, there's only one that celebrates light and of course, that's Chanukah. Not that we are short on themes for this holiday: There's the miraculous military victory compared to which the Six-Day-War was blasé.

There's the absolute commitment and epic heroism of the Maccabees that makes the raid at Entebbe look routine. There was even the archetypal culture clash between Athens and Jerusalem that has reverberated throughout Jewish history down to this very day.

But the main observance of Chanukah wasn't hooked on any of that. It's all about light.

The lights of Chanukah commemorate the miracle of oil, and the details are instructive too. The eight days reflect unity, infinity and the supernatural. Think seven and you will see why. The number seven characterizes nature. For instance, in space, we have six directions (left, right, back, front, up and down) around any central point. In time too, there are seven days of the weekly cycle. In music, the seven notes of the scale.

Eight indicates unity in music, for example, by completing the scale then returning to the same note but at a higher level. The same applies to time. After a seven day cycle we're back to the same day we started with.

Eight expresses infinity by showing we don't stop at one series but cycle over and over again. Eight starts the new cycle of weeks, of octaves, of oscillations. And by virtue of the simple fact that eight is more than seven (nature), it implies the miraculous, the supernatural.

We could have marked those eight days with eight jugs of oil, eight latkes or eight psalms for that matter. Why specifically lights? Of course it's because the oil was used for lighting the menorah, but still we can learn some lessons from light itself.

Our sages remark that although the Chanukah lights are only a rabbinic mitzva, its date, the 25th of Kislev, is alluded by the fact that the 25th word of the Torah is "Or" – light. The Hebrew word "Or" too has its inner meaning. It's numerical value is 207, which spells "Raz," or "secret." Not only does light reveal whatever is secreted away in the darkness, but light itself has its mysterious aspects, as any physicist will tell you.

For example, no one would doubt that light is physical, yet it is very elusive. Try holding it in your hands or weighing it on a scale. Of course we can't smell it, taste

it or hear it, but the funny thing is, it's hard to even see it. Light reveals what is there but doesn't reveal itself. When we enter a lit room are we looking at light or at a room lit up? Even if I trace it to its source, is it light that I see, or a light bulb, or the sun?

Light is like the divine energy that fills the world, it's apparent but not visible. Or like the light of the soul – "*ki ner Hashem nishmas adam*" – the soul of man is the candle of Hashem. I, for one, have never seen a soul. But like anyone else, I can tell the difference between a body that has one and one that doesn't.

And this brings us to another dimension of Chanukah – the battle against Hellenism was a battle for the soul, including the soul of man – the neshama; the soul of the universe – G-d; and the soul of our activities – mitzvah – "*ki ner mitzvah v'Torah or*" – a mitzvah is a candle and the Torah is light.

The Hellenists fought against the idea of mitzvah, bringing heaven down to earth, manifesting G-dliness in the physical world. The remedy was to go flat out the other way, to protect and defend exactly this, the holiness of the deed, of the mitzvah, and that's why we celebrate with a mitzvah candle. It's the victory of light over darkness.

“Every person has both a body and a soul. It is like a bird and its wings. Imagine if a bird were unaware that its wings enabled it to fly, they would only add an extra burden of weight. But once it flaps its wings, it lifts itself skyward. We all have wings—our soul—that can lift us as high as we need go. All we have to do is learn to use them.”

› **The Rebbe** (from *Towards a Meaningful Life* by Simon Jacobson)

Dr. Arnie Gotfryd, PhD, is a chassidic Jew and environmental scientist, having earned Canada's first doctorate in Applied Ecology.

By Chana Gittle Deray

My Odd Little Chanukah Song

It was a typical Tuesday in suburbia—not an election day, not a recycling day, and not any other Tuesday of great significance. ¶ Or so I thought.

I HAD DRIVEN OVER TO MIRIAM'S HOUSE, A WARM and wonderful place to go for a cup of tea and some lively conversation. We were doing what we often did on a weekday, standing in her hallway chatting, with our children hard at play nearby, when I walked her husband, wearing a kapoteh (chassidic frock coat) and a very lit-up smile. He continued up the steps, greeting us with a hearty, joy-filled, sing-song: "Gut Yom Tov, gut Yom Tov! (Good holiday!)" What could have gotten into this rabbi now?

This was the rabbi whose overly inspired voice I heard each evening as I picked up the phone during what my friend Nechami calls "happy hour"—when children are busy with all the creative and wondrous things they do before tiring out themselves and everything around them for the evening. He would ask with such joy-filled enthusiasm, "Can your husband make the minyan (quorum of ten men for prayer)?" You would have thought he was inviting my husband to a party for a king.

As far as it being a Yom Tov? I may not have been aware of all the details of living as a religious Jew back then, but I was pretty sure that if it were Yom Tov, I would have known about it. Miriam and I paused our conversation, returned the rabbi's curious greeting—Miriam looking a little apologetic—and watched in silence as the lit-up rabbi disappeared down the hallway. I couldn't help but think, Man . . . he is so over the top! Of course it's Yom Tov on his planet today. In fact, I bet it's always Yom Tov on his planet. This rabbi should not be let out of the house unless under proper supervision.

And this was not the only rabbi we had met from the over-the-top rabbi department.

There was another wonderful, although slightly distracted, rabbi that we became close with at the time. With that same look of joy and selfless love in his eyes, this rabbi would build this fantastically oversized menorah at a gas station that looked out onto a major intersection where three towns met. It was truly awe-inspiring.

We would bring our children after dark on Chanukah to the Shell gas station to watch. Up and down the ladder went the determined rabbi, with a blowtorch in hand, lighting large oil lanterns, in spite of rain, wind, or anything else G-d would send his way. We stood nearby—his wife and their children, us and our children, our necks craned, mouths open, noses running—the perfect rent-a-crowd. Up and down the ladder to the enormous menorah he went, hoping to reach out to any Jew who happened to drive by. What a sight. After finally getting the torches to stay lit, he would recite the prayers in a calm and splendidly beautiful voice. Then, while still on the ladder and holding his torch, he would prepare to sing. We stood by with great anticipation as he opened his mouth to sing the first line of "Maot Tzur" ("Rock of Ages"), when he belted out in a hardy voice, "Haneirot Halalu."

Now, any rabbi worth his weight in chocolate coins knows that everyone sings "Rock of Ages" after lighting the menorah! And if you are not going to sing "Rock of Ages," how about "Hatikvah," or a little "Havah Nagilah"? We looked up at him, singing with such heartfelt sincerity after all his hard work up and down the ladder, using his remaining strength on this odd, little tune, and thought, Where in the world did the rabbi get this song from? If he wants to start drawing a crowd out here, he's going to have to learn the traditional tunes.

After years of watching these and other animated, enthusiastic rabbis, with their interesting and industrious

ways of approaching holidays—and every day, for that matter—I have learned that sometimes it's me who is missing a tune.

As it turns out, the odd little song the rabbi insisted on singing after lighting his majestic menorah, "Haneirot Halalu," is a beautifully powerful and traditional song that tells us why we light the candles, their meaning, and all about the miracle of the lights. I have learned to sing "Haneirot Halalu" as heartily as any rabbi on a ladder, hitting its low, low notes and all, but even more wonderful is that my family now sings it with great, joyful chaos by the light of their own menorahs and lit-up smiles.

I have also learned that Miriam's husband actually was inviting my husband to a party for a king each night—our King, G-d, who rejoices in hearing from us three times a day.

And about that random Tuesday . . . it turns out that it was not so random after all. It was the chasidic New Year.

But now I've got it. Turns out it was not so random after all. In fact, I've got it so bad that I also walk around wishing heartfelt "Good Yom Tov"s on the chasidic New Year talking to complete strangers about doing mitzvahs and bringing light into the world.

I am grateful to Miriam's husband, the Shell gas station rabbi, and the many over-the-top rabbis who wear kapotehs on random Tuesdays and sing odd little songs while standing on ladders with torches while it rains—rabbis who welcome every Jew with warmth and an open heart, no matter how little we yet know or do, and despite how awfully know-it-all we can be.

A little knowledge can be a dangerous thing, but being a little "lit-up" can dispel a lot of darkness.

Chana Gittle Deray is an inspirational speaker and author best known for her warm humor with a strong purpose. Her first book, *Kugel Chaos and Unconditional Love*, is a humorous collection of stories on family life, marriage, growth, female empowerment, gratitude and faith.



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By Rabbi Dov Greenberg

We're Giving Money Away Right Here!

an in-depth look into a nation that gives

ONE OF THE MOST STRIKING CHARACTERISTICS of the Jewish people was that, whenever they were asked, they gave. In the wilderness, when asked to contribute to the Golden Calf, they gave without delay. When asked to make a donation to the building of the Sanctuary they did likewise. The Golden Calf was a pagan idol. The Sanctuary was a home for the Divine presence. There was nothing in common between them except that they both came into being through voluntary donations.

The Jerusalem Talmud expresses amazement: "One cannot understand the nature of this people: if appealed to for the Calf they give; if appealed to for the Sanctuary they give." Go, figure! It seems Jews are obsessed with giving. Now it is incumbent upon us to make sure our giving is directed to a good cause.

The late Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, an outstanding rabbinic thinker of the twentieth century, recounts an occasion when his grandfather, the great Jewish scholar Rabbi Chaim of Brisk, was asked what the function of a rabbi is. He replied, "To redress the grievances of those who are abandoned and alone, to protect the dignity of the poor, and to save the oppressed from the hands of his oppressor."

Rabbi Chaim's father was once sitting with his students when a man approached him with a strange question: "Is it permitted for me to drink milk instead of wine at the Passover Seder?"

Instead of answering the man's question, the Rabbi gave him twenty-five rubles. "Now you can have wine at your Seder," he said. After the man left, a student asked the Rabbi, "Why did you have to give him twenty-five rubles? Five would be more than enough to purchase the required amount of wine."

Rabbi Soloveichik answered, "If he intended to use milk at the Seder, that means he also doesn't have money for meat [Jewish law forbids having milk and meat at the same meal], and he probably also doesn't have money for the other items served at the Seder. I wanted to give him enough so that he could have a complete Seder."

Tzedaka, the Hebrew term meaning both charity and justice, is one of Judaism's most majestic and powerful pillars. The Talmud states: "Tzedaka is equal to all the other commandments combined." Rabbi Judah bar Ilai in the Talmud put it dramatically:

*Iron is strong, but fire melts it.
Fire is strong, but water extinguishes it.
Water is strong, but the clouds carry it.
The clouds are strong, but the wind drives them.
The wind is strong, but man withstands it.
Man is strong, but fear weakens him.
Fear is strong, but wine removes it.
Wine is strong, but sleep overcomes it.
Sleep is strong, but death stands over it.
What is stronger than death?
Acts of generosity, for it is written,
"Tzedaka delivers from death".*

The word tzedaka derives from the Hebrew word tzedek, "justice." From a Jewish perspective, to give to the needy is not only an act of kindness; it is an act of justice. Jewish tradition teaches that part of the wealth we own does not really belong to us; it is money that G-d entrusted to us that we are required to pass on to those in need. Thus, to withhold charity is considered a subtle form of theft.

Two forms of charity

t HERE ARE TWO COMPONENTS OF TZEDAKA. The first is offering financial assistance to someone in need. The second is ensuring that each person is granted the ability to enjoy a dignified existence.

This explains a rather strange law in Judaism. A community must provide a poor person not only with the means to live, but also with enough money to be able to give to others. Rationally this is difficult to comprehend. The money will be given to the poor anyway. Why give it to one poor man to give to another? Psychologically, however, it makes very good sense. Giving is an essential part of dignity. Judaism sees it as no less than a human need.

“The rabbinic insistence that the community provide the poor with enough money so that they themselves can give is a profound insight into the human condition: we each need to feel that we are needed.”

That is why even those who have to receive also have to be able to give. The rabbinic insistence that the community provide the poor with enough money so that they themselves can give is a profound insight into the human condition: we each need to feel that we are needed. It is a desire to satisfy a transcendent yearning, to be like G-d who is not only a "receiver," but also a "giver." It is a craving that emanates from the depths of our souls.

A sage once observed the two seas in Israel, the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. The Sea of Galilee is full of life, the Dead Sea has none. How could two seas, fed by a single source - the River Jordan - be so different?

His answer: the Sea of Galilee receives water at one end and gives out water at the other. The Dead Sea receives water but does not give, and if you only receive but do not give, you do not live. In Judaism, giving is part of life itself.

Let's get practical

t HE LUBAVITCHER REBBE SUGGESTED THAT people place charity boxes in their homes, offices and childrens' bedrooms. Into that box, people could drop coins or dollars on a daily basis. The Rebbe felt this would create a perpetual awareness of the need to give. A Charity box in a home or office redefines the space. It is no longer a home or an office. It is a sanctuary, a hub of kindness, a space in the world that reflects G-d and His will to give and grant life to all of us.

Our children will build a kinder world if they learn the importance of giving. Values are caught, not taught. They are communicated by what we do more than by what we say. Living charitably ourselves is the best way to ensure our children will be givers.

There is a beautiful Jewish custom that before Jewish mothers and girls kindle the Sabbath candles they place a few coins in the charity box. Giving habitually, rather than sporadically and impulsively, accustoms one to become more generous.

Try it.

Rabbi Greenberg is the Chabad Rabbi at Stanford University and he travels the world speaking and motivating Jews everywhere.

Chanukah Digits



7 branches were on the menorah in the temple

8 branches on the Chanukah menorah commemorate the oil lasting for 8 days

9 is the total amount of branches on a Chanukah menorah. The extra branch, the shamash candle, is placed a bit higher providing light for our use unlike the holy lights that are lit exclusively for the mitzvah

44 is the total amount of candles you'll need for the menorah including an extra shamash candle for each day

30 minutes is the minimum amount of time the Chanukah candles are required to burn by Jewish law

15,000 public menorah lighting events are held across the globe via **5000** Chabad centers

36 is the amount of Chanukah candles lit throughout Chanukah as we light 1 on the first night and add an additional candle each night



25

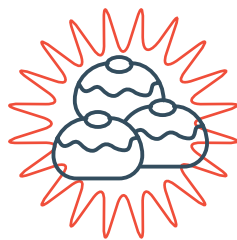
is the day of the month in kislev when the Jews defeated their enemy and restored the temple

12,000

is the estimated number of the untrained soldiers of the maccabees

40,000

is the estimated number of the highly trained Syrian soldiers who lost against



18 million doughnuts are sold in Israel during the Chanukah season

340 calories are in the average jelly doughnut

50,000 doughnuts giving out each day on Chanukah to members of the IDF



36 volumes in the Babylonian Talmud

207

is the numerical value of the Hebrew word **Sod** which means **secret** and **Ohr** which means **light**

25TH WORD

in the Torah is **Ohr** which means **light** (but you knew that)



1 DAY'S

supply of oil was untouched by the enemy

8 DAYS

is how long the 1 day supply of oil lasted

8 DAYS

is how long it took for the Jews to travel and produce olive oil during the Chanukah era

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