Commemorating the Shloshim of
RABBI LORD
JONATHAN SACKS
A Light Unto the Nations

Shining the Light on
CHANUKAH
the Holiday of Education, Miracles and the Indomitable Jewish Spirit

Rabbi David Stav
reveals the best way to spread Torah’s relevance
PAGE 19

Rabbani Rachelle Fraenkel
tells the inspiring story of Rav Goren during the War of Independence
PAGE 23

Rabbanit Shani Taragin
with an overview of Chanukah’s pivotal role in the year
PAGE 9

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis
on the blessing of failure
PAGE 24

Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi
highlights the power of loneliness
PAGE 22

Rabbanit Rachelle Fraenkel and Yedidya Meir with eight thoughts for eight days
PAGE 14

Sivan Rahav Meir

DEDICATED BY THE LAY AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP AND STAFF OF WORLD MIZRACHI
IN MEMORY OF OUR TEACHER RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS
His spiritual and moral leadership will remain a guiding force for us and he is mourned and missed

לעילוי נשמת הרב יעקב ז”ל בן דוד אריה ודרי
DEDICATED BY THE LAY AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP AND STAFF OF WORLD MIZRACHI
IN MEMORY OF OUR TEACHER RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS
His spiritual and moral leadership will remain a guiding force for us and he is mourned and missed

IN MEMORY OF OUR TEACHER RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS
His spiritual and moral leadership will remain a guiding force for us and he is mourned and missed
HaMizrachi
Dedication
Opportunities

If you would like to dedicate an issue of HaMizrachi in memory of a loved one or in celebration of a simcha, please send an email to production@mizrachi.org

Cover photo courtesy of The Office of Rabbi Sacks
What did Avraham Avinu stand for?

What were the core principles he instituted that formed the authentic blueprint for Judaism and the spiritual mission of the Jewish people?

Let us examine this question from three different vantage points:

1. **Spiritual.** Avraham is the consummate ambassador of faith and man of G-d. We are first introduced to him as G-d commands him to leave his country, his land of birth and his father’s house, and we are privy to many more Divine commands and conversations throughout his life.

   We see a man deeply connected to G-d, commanded by G-d and absolutely obedient to Him. Nowhere is this obedience clearer than in the perplexing command to sacrifice his beloved son Yitzchak, an impossible task in itself, yet made even more challenging by G-d’s earlier promise that Yitzchak would be the forebear of a great nation. Nevertheless, Avraham does not deviate in his adherence to what he perceives as the will of Heaven. A man of incomparable religious fervor, dedication and commitment.

2. **National.** Avraham is also the epitome of nationalism. His entire life revolves around journeying to the specific land G-d showed him, the Land of Canaan, settling in different parts of that Land and being repeatedly promised that G-d will bless him with a גוי גָּדוֹל, a great people, with a particular task, in this very Land. Nowhere is this nationalist impulse clearer than in his desire to save his errant nephew Lot. As soon as he hears Lot has been taken captive, Avraham springs into action, takes up arms and is prepared to fight against regional powers to do whatever it takes to rescue him.

   Although not commanded by G-d, he is prepared to sacrifice everything – his life and the lives of his followers – to save one lost soul. All for one [member of the tribe] and one for all.

3. **Universal.** Avraham is also the humanist par excellence. His הַכְנָסַת אוֹרְחִים, his hospitality, is unmatched. In great pain after his circumcision, he runs to welcome pagan guests – later to be revealed as angels – into his home and treats them like noblemen. Although these people were the ideological antithesis of everything he stood for – he was teaching monotheism and belief in a purposeful and personal G-d and they were espousing paganism and idol worship and the belief in many impersonal gods – he had no hesitation in welcoming them into his home.

   He washed the dust of idolatry off their feet² and found a way to bridge the boundaries and sit together. Furthermore, when G-d informed him of His plan to destroy Sodom, Avraham did everything in his power to prevent it. Although their actions were abhorrent, he loved all of humanity and impassioned G-d not to destroy His creatures.

   The more Avraham searched for G-d, the more he found his fellow man.

   So Avraham Avinu is a blend of all three – the staunch advocate of faith, the proud nationalist, and the ardent humanist devoted to all people created in the image of G-d.

   In his own groundbreaking way, he was able to blend the religious, the national and the universal into one complete whole. The founder of the Jewish faith laid the foundations that make Judaism so wholesome, meaningful and life-enhancing.

   Unsurprisingly, it is precisely these three elements at the core of Jewish being that Rav Kook writes about when describing the ideological battles raging in the early 1900s in pre-State Palestine. He described the three ideological camps in the Jewish world – the religious, the nationalist and the universalist (perhaps religious parties, right-wing parties and left-wing parties in today’s parlance).

   Rav Kook explains how each one represents part of the whole truth of what Judaism is about and that a complete understanding of the Jewish mission must incorporate all three weaved into one seamless whole.

   *Continued on page 4*
Of course, Jewish life is rooted in our belief in G-d and His Torah. Without belief in G-d and acceptance of the moral and spiritual laws revealed at Sinai, we miss the mark of Jewish destiny. It defines who we are and what G-d wants from us. At the same time, the G-dliness revealed to Avraham very clearly and profoundly includes both a national and a universal ethos.

The principle of Am Yisrael, our collective responsibility and destiny, is critical to the Jewish story.

Yes, G-d revealed himself to one man, who became the founder of a singular people given a particular land and a distinct set of laws to fulfill their purpose in this world.

Yes, Jewish particularism and peoplehood is at the heart of Judaism. One cannot separate Judaism from the Jewish people.

Yet at the same time, G-d demanded that Avraham be a source of blessing to all people. Jews are part of the family of nations because G-d wants us to be a source of spiritual blessing and moral light to all. To love and respect all those created in the image of G-d and be a proactive force in a universal mission for the greater good of all of humanity.

Hence there is no comprehensive definition of Judaism without integrating all three elements into one harmonious whole.

Interestingly, these same three prisms shape the way exponents of different ideologies tend to relate to the story of Chanukah.

Religious people tend to interpret Chanukah exclusively as a fight for the primacy of Torah and Mesorah, our Jewish beliefs and traditions. People from a national-religious background tend to agree with this basic premise but laud the additional component of the political and military leadership role adopted by the Hasmoneans and the restoration of Jewish sovereignty.3

People from the nationalist camp view the Hasmoneans as the military-oriented Maccabees who stood up to defend their people and fight for independence, while liberals read the story as a fight for religious tolerance. The oppressive Hellenist regime was discriminating against the Jews and so they had the right to fight for their freedom.

Whose reading of history is correct? Undoubtedly, all have an element of truth. All capture a part of what the Chanukah legacy is and how the flames of the rekindled Menorah represent the contrasting yet complementary torches of our collective Jewish mission.

Is there anyone in our generation who has embodied these three Abrahamic values more than Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt”l?

Is there anyone else who has integrated so holistically a deep and unwavering commitment to Jewish faith and Torah while simultaneously being a great lover of the Jewish people (and a great believer in every individual Jew), and a defender of Israel while conveying Torah values in the broadest, most inspiring, universal and engaging way?

Rabbi Sacks had the Avraham-like ability to uplift the hearts and minds of all people, regardless of their religious beliefs and political affiliations. He was a giant of a man encapsulating – as only he could – the three-pronged essence of Judaism – spiritual, national and universal.

We are therefore humbled and honored to dedicate our HaMizrachi Chanukah Edition to the life, teachings and legacy of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt”l, who made a beautiful and vibrant Judaism so accessible and inspiring for us all.

1 See Rashi, Bereishit 18:4.
2 See Orot HaTechiya, 18.
3 Indeed, the Rambam (Laws of Chanukah, 1:1) mentions both these achievements of the Hasmoneans. Salvation from the Greek regime at the time reversed the oppressive decree against Torah observance and restored Jewish sovereignty for over 200 years until the destruction of the Second Temple.

Rabbi Doron Perez is Executive Chairman of the Mizrachi World Movement.
“As the years pass and my knowledge of each vineyard deepens, tending to the vines turns more personal and intimate. I am certain that this roots one of our secrets of success.”

Golan Flam, Winemaker
Growing in the Darkness

For many of us, Chanukah completes the cycle of “corona-chagim.” From when Purim started to be overshadowed by the pandemic back in March, we will have now experienced all of the chagim during the era of coronavirus. And perhaps Chanukah during these times is the most poignant of them all.

The story of Chanukah is one of the most positive and uplifting in our history. We were able to defeat the great military forces of the Seleucid Greeks, and maintain our identity and faith in the face of their cultural onslaught, against all odds. An unlikely victory that brought sparks of light to dark times. Rav Assaf Bednarsh, RIETS Rosh Yeshiva at YU’s Gruss Kollel, ties this idea to the central miracle of the oil, the pach haShemen that continued to burn for eight days. The Hellenizers and Greeks believed that their new culture was destined to take over the world. The Jews had managed to light the scene of history for just one night, but their flame would then be extinguished and replaced by the lights of Greek culture.

However, the light of Torah and the Jewish people were destined to glow much longer than the Greeks thought they would. Though at the time it may have seemed that our lights would be extinguished, they remained burning bright, glowing and growing.

This past year has brought much darkness to our people and to the world. We have experienced collective mourning and fear in a way we have not for many years. Yet Chanukah reminds us that even when we might not expect it, the light of the Torah and the Jewish people continues to burn.

Since March, Israel has had to close its borders to foreign citizens. Yet over this summer, it ensured that over 10,000 yeshiva and seminary students from Chutz LaAretz could enter Eretz Yisrael to learn Torah in our homeland. On a political level, in 2020, Israel has concluded more peace and normalization agreements with its Arab neighbors than in all the years since 1948.

We in the United States may have been unable to visit Israel in person in 2020, but the recent World Zionist Congress showed that Jews around the world remain as close as ever to our homeland, and that our Religious Zionist voice will continue to make a real impact on the future of the State of Israel. It may have been a dark year, but within it, the light of Jewish people and our Torah has continued to burn, Baruch Hashem.

Like the candles that increase in number every night of Chanukah, may we continue to be “mosif veholech,” to grow and to grow, and light up the darkness wherever it may lie.

Rabbi Ari Rockoff is Executive Vice-President of Religious Zionists of America–Mizrachi.
Mr. Kurt Rothschild, President of World Mizrachi, rises each day at 6 am, attends morning services, studies Daf Yomi and, until COVID-19, headed to his office at World Mizrachi headquarters in the center of Jerusalem. He would work until 4:30 pm, when he returned home to his wife Edith.

What is most extraordinary about this, is that Mr. Rothschild is about to celebrate his 100th birthday!

We wanted to learn more about this astonishing man and are honored to share with you a little of what we discovered:

You and your wife made aliyah in your 90s. Why?

It’s a mixture of wanting to be here, identifying with our people, our country, and ending our lives, at some point, here in Israel. I was born in Germany almost 100 years ago and then forced out, first to England, then Canada, and after 75 years in Canada, my wife and I are now here. We have children here, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and every single day we are so grateful we made this choice.

Israel is the center of the world. A small country, embattled from all sides and in world news almost every day. To walk the streets of Jerusalem is a special privilege, and really unbelievable how we – threatened by Iran, Syria, the other Arab countries, the Palestinians – managed to build up a country in such a remarkable, incredible way.

You live such a busy life. How do you do it all at your age?

Ribono Shel Olam gives me strength. It is a tremendous privilege to reach such an extreme age. The fact I am still around obliges me to give my life meaning. A person who lives his life with meaning, even if G-d forbid he dies at a young age, leaves the world with a sense of fullness and appreciation.

Do you have any other words of wisdom to share with our readers?

We live in an ongoing miracle, a miracle the generations before us could not even imagine. I walk the streets of Jerusalem today and see men, women and children simply walking the streets. These people do not know and do not understand what antisemitism is. We decide who can enter the country, who is worthy, who meets the criteria. Criteria can be debated, but the very fact the government and power are in the hands of Jews is a miracle.

When you get a second chance at life, you realize how important it is, so you try and endow it with meaning. You never know what will happen. We all get opportunities, every day, without even realizing it.

As long as G-d allows it, I will continue to act. Donating and doing are key to longevity. We all have the ability to give something: money, time or talent. My main motivation to do and give was the memory of the Holocaust. G-d ‘got the ball rolling’ so that I had the opportunity to live in Canada during the war. This is the kind of debt you must repay.

I came to the conclusion that there is no better way to repay this debt than to ensure the continuity of the Jewish people – whether in Israel or outside – through education and chesed towards those who need it.

Join us in wishing Mr. Kurt Rothschild a very happy birthday!
Global events often make us feel like we and our efforts are insignificant. Tens of millions of people have been sick and most of the world has been affected by Corona. What difference does our cautiousness make within the bigger picture? With 150 million people voting in a presidential election, how important is our one vote? In most of the states of the US, the outcome of the election was a foregone conclusion before the voting even began.

**Reuven Saving Yosef**

The Torah speaks of this in its description of Reuven’s actions on behalf of his brother Yosef. Though Reuven did not completely save Yosef and was devastated when he returned to the pit to find that Yosef had been sold into slavery,1 the Torah describes Reuven’s saving of Yosef from death as הַצָּלָה (salvation).2 Though he did not succeed fully, it is important to appreciate what he did accomplish.

**The Chanukah Connection**

The Midrash3 associates Reuven’s salvation with our lighting of Chanukah candles at the entrance to our homes. One fulfills the mitzvah of Chanukah candles through merely lighting them.4 We are not required to ensure that the candles remain lit and we cannot guarantee how widely they will be seen. We are required to do our part by lighting the candles. The rest is not in our hands.

The nature of the mitzvah accurately reflects the historical event it eternalizes. The Chashmonaim fought a seemingly hopeless battle. It was the few against the many, the weak against the mighty. That said, they knew their responsibility was to do what they could to protect their values and fight for Jewish independence.

**Helping One Starfish**

There was an old man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach every morning before he began his work. Early one morning, after a big storm, he was walking along the shore and found the vast beach littered with starfish as far as the eye could see.

Off in the distance, the old man noticed a small boy approaching. As the boy walked, he paused every so often and the man could see he was occasionally bending down to pick up an object and throw it into the sea. The boy came closer still and the man called out, “Good morning! May I ask what you are doing?”

The young boy paused, looked up, and replied, “Throwing starfish into the ocean. The tide has washed them up onto the beach and they can’t return to the sea by themselves. When the sun gets high, they will die, unless I throw them back into the water.”

The old man replied, “But there must be tens of thousands of starfish on this beach. You won’t really be able to make much of a difference.”

The boy bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it as far as he could into the ocean. Then he turned to the man and said, “It made a difference to that one!”

**Making Sure We Do All We Can**

The Midrash6 says that had Reuven known the Torah would record his actions, he would have immediately placed Yosef on his shoulders and taken him all the way back to Yaakov. Though effort that yields only partial success is also significant, we are responsible to apply ourselves fully, to invest all that we are truly able to.

Though we may not determine the pandemic’s course or who wins an election, we should make sure to value and maximize our efforts. In the merit of our doing so, may Hashem assist us in the same way that He assisted the Chashmonaim – בַּיָּמִים הָּהֵם בַּזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

---

1 Bereishit 37:29.
3 See Zechor L’Avraham who brings this Midrash. See also Rav Shlomo Kluger’s Kehilat Yaakov, which offers over 20 explanations for this Midrash.
4 See Shabbat 22b which concludes that the mitzvah is fulfilled through lighting and nothing further is required.
5 Adapted from ‘The Star Thrower,’ by Loren Eiseley.
6 Bereishit Rabbah 34:8.
The End of the Beginning...
and The Beginning of the End

The Jewish calendar is divided into two periods of six months – one beginning with Nissan as the “first of the months” (Shemot 12:1), and the other beginning with Tishrei as “Rosh Hashanah” – the beginning of the year. Each period is subsequently divided into two tekufot (seasons). Chanukah is celebrated in the very middle of the Tishrei–Tevet tekufa, the time of the winter solstice. In many ways, it is therefore the end of the beginning of the year and the beginning of the end of the six-month period.

As the end of the beginning of the year, we find numerous parallels between Chanukah and Sukkot:

- From Shavuot till Sukkot, Bikkurim are brought with the famous proclamation of “Arami Oved Avi.” From Sukkot till Chanukah they are brought without the proclamation (Mishnah Bikkurim 1:6). The Sfat Emet (Chanukah 5644) infers from this that the simcha of Sukkot continues through Chanukah!
- Beit Shammai’s position of lighting Chanukah candles in descending sequence from 8-1 is based on the descending order of sacrifices offered on Sukkot (Shabbat 21b).
- Juxtaposed to the laws of the holiday of Sukkot in Parashat Emor, the Torah teaches us to contribute pure olive oil to light the menorah in the Mikdash – a hint to Chanukah. Rav Eliezer of Worms says the holidays are connected by the number of days and by the full Hallel (Rokeach, Hilchot Chanukah 225).
- The Gemara invalidates Chanukah candles and a sukkah higher than 20 amot. There is a principle of “Hiddur – Mehadrin min HaMehadrin” that applies particularly to the Four Species on Sukkot and lighting candles on Chanukah (Shulchan Aruch OC 671:2).
- Torches of fire accompanied the spectacular dancing at the Simchat Beit HaShoeva (Masechet Sukkah 5:3). On Chanukah, we commemorate the miracle of finding oil by lighting candles for eight nights. The Gemara juxtaposes the laws of wicks and oils used for the Simchat Beit HaShoeva to the laws of wicks and oils used to light the Chanukah candles (Shabbat 21a).
- Upon inaugurating the Mikdash, Yehuda HaMaccabi commanded the Jews to celebrate eight days with their agricultural species, “like the days of Sukkot,” for they could not properly celebrate Sukkot that year (Book of Maccabees II, 10:6-7). Just as King Shlomo inaugurated the Mikdash on Sukkot (Melachim I, 8:65-6), it was purified and inaugurated on Chanukah (hence the name – “to dedicate”).
- Chaggai (2:18) delivered his prophecy concerning the reestablishment of the Mikdash and the success of the olive harvest on the 24th of Kislev as a continuation of his previous prophecy on the 21st of Tishrei (Sukkot).
- The Sfat Emet explains that the “light of Sukkot” mandated by the Torah is reflected through the rabbinic holiday of Chanukah. With its many parallels to the Tishrei holiday of Sukkot, Chanukah not only concludes the beginning of the season, but is also the beginning of the end of the first six months of the year, as it heralds “Tekufat Tevet.” Not in an apocalyptic sense of course; on the contrary, Chanukah reinvigorates and inspires us that we have reached a critical juncture – we must look back at the past few months and reflect upon lessons we have learned since Nissan, and especially from Tishrei-Sukkot, till now. Now is also the time to ponder what the upcoming months of Tevet-Shevat-Adar may bring.
- Sukkot and Chanukah teach us that the light of one season has effects on the subsequent ones as well. The light of Chanukah shines not just from natural sources. We also banish the darkness through our own “candle lighting” initiatives as we prepare for better and brighter beginnings!

1. See Eruvin 56a–b, Sanhedrin 13a and Avodah Zara 8a.
2. Shabbat 22a (see Tosfot “ner”).
4. Chanukah 5641.

Rabbanit Shani Taragin in Educational Director of Mizrachi and the Director of the Mizrachi Matan Lapidot Educators’ Program.
We are All Kohanim on Chanukah!

AFTER lighting Chanukah candles, we have the custom of reciting the passage הַנֵּרוֹת הַלָּלוּךְ. According to Masechet Sofrim,1 we recite it after the beracha of לָלוּךְ שֶׁהָעָפָה וְכִסָּהּ וְהָנִּיתָחָה וְהָעִבְרָה. However, it is only a custom, it certainly should not be said in between the blessing and performing the mitzvah, it is not an interruption between the blessing and performing the mitzvah.

However, according to the reading of the Tur, we say הַנֵּרוֹת הַלָּלוּךְ after lighting the candles, and thus rules the Shulchan Aruch: “After one lights, one should say: ‘These lights we kindle upon the salvations, the miracles, the wonders… (הַנֵּרוֹת הַלָּלוּךְ)”.

The Maharil3 explains that since reciting הַנֵּרוֹת הַלָּלוּךְ only after lighting the candles, it is not a fundamental level of obligation for lighting candles and the prohibitions of utilizing them is like the mikdash.

The Maharil explains that since reciting הַנֵּרוֹת הַלָּלוּךְ only after lighting the candles, it is not a fundamental level of obligation for lighting candles and the prohibitions of utilizing them is like the mikdash. It is possible that in his opinion, although one must not interrupt between the berachot and the beginning of the observance of the mitzvah, one may stop during the performance of the mitzvah for things related to the mitzvah.

Chanukah Candles and Mikdash Candles

It could be that the Maharil’s approach is connected to something deeper.

The Shulchan Aruch does not mention the basic level of obligation for lighting (one candle per household) and even the mehadrin ruling, but only the mehadrin min hamehadrin custom. It turns out that the fundamental tradition of the whole Jewish nation has been the mehadrin min hamehadrin standard, and therefore the Shulchan Aruch does not bring the alternative customs. Why does everyone keep the mehadrin min hamehadrin standard specifically for this mitzvah?

There is a comparison between the Menorah in the Mikdash and Chanukah candles. One such comparison is tied to the holiness of the Chanukah candles and the prohibition of utilizing their light. The Rishonim explain that despite the fact Chanukah candles are tashmishei mitzvah, objects used to fulfill a mitzvah (which may be used for purposes other than the mitzvah itself), our Sages instituted that the Chanukah candles are like the candles of the Menorah and therefore they have a certain holiness.

In light of this (excuse the pun), we could say that by instituting the comparison between Chanukah lights and Mikdash lights, our Sages were implying that a person’s home is like the Mikdash, and that the person lighting them is like the Kohan. As a result, the mitzvah of lighting candles is not like any other personal mitzvah a person does in his home. It is a shared mitzvah which belongs to all of Am Yisrael, and it is certainly worthy to glorify a shared mitzvah!

Now we can understand the Maharil. The reason for glorifying the mitzvah is the holiness of the lights and their similarity to the Mikdash, and therefore the most appropriate thing is to say הַנֵּרוֹת הַלָּלוּךְ immediately after the basic lighting and before the additional ‘glorified’ lighting, to explain why we are lighting the extra candles.

1 20:4.
2 Minchat Shlomo, Part 2:54.
3 Responsa 145.
4 Responsa 85.
5 The Pri Megadim asks this on the Maharil.

Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon is Rosh HaYeshiva at JCT–Machon Lev and Head of Mizrachi’s Educational Advisory Board.
“What is Chanukah?... When the Greeks entered the Sanctuary, they defiled all of the oils. When the Chashmonai dynasty arose and defeated them, they searched but only found one cruse of oil which retained the stamp of the Kohen Gadol, and which contained enough oil to light for no more than one day. A miracle occurred, and they lit from the oil for eight days. The next year, they instituted those days as a holiday of praise and thanks.” (Shabbat 21b)

Why did our Sages choose to emphasize the miracle of the oil more than the miracle of the military victory? The miracle of the victory is what saved the Jewish nation, an incredible marvel of the few against the many that changed the face of Jewish history. If so, isn’t it more appropriate to mention that as the essence of Chanukah?

This question is magnified in light of the text of על הַנִּסִּים, which specifically emphasizes the victory over the Greeks: “You delivered the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the impure into the hands of the pure, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, the wanton into the hands of the diligent students of your Torah. For Yourself, You made a great and holy Name in Your world, and for Your people Israel you worked a great victory and salvation as this very day. Thereafter, Your children came to the Holy of Holies of Your House, cleansed Your Temple, purified the site of Your Holiness and kindled lights in the courtyards of Your Sanctuary.”

The Maharal explains that although the victory over the Greeks is the main reason for celebrating the holiday, every military victory can be explained naturally. The importance of the miracle of the cruse of oil is that it teaches us G-d’s role in the miracle of the military victory.

This idea is significant not only for Chanukah but for our everyday life. The Ramban explains that the purpose of the revealed miracles of the Torah is so we understand that every single thing that happens, happens through G-d. So we can acknowledge the miracles and wonders that G-d does for us each day.

It seems we can delve even deeper in explaining this. Sometimes we expect a miracle to save us from a certain situation, or to prove G-d’s existence or love for us. This stems from the premise that a miracle is a high level of connection with G-d. Indeed, a miracle is an overt Divine intervention that changes the order of nature. G-d’s presence is very obvious in miracles.

However, when we focus on miracles that G-d has performed for Am Yisrael, we discover something fascinating. Miracles were performed during periods of hardship and suffering, not during the better times. So it was with the 10 Plagues and the splitting of Yam Suf, the various miracles in the desert, the miracles of Elyahu and Elisha, and also with Chanukah. When the Jews are in severe distress, physically or spiritually, there is a need for a miracle to save them from their suffering, or to prove G-d’s Providence and existence in the face of the heresy that rules the world.

Should we hope for revealed miracles? No. As we have mentioned, revealed miracles were performed during times of crisis. In good times, G-d reveals Himself to us through nature. In good times, we act on our own, and we feel G-d’s Hand on our shoulder.

We are privileged to celebrate Chanukah in an uplifting reality in which Am Yisrael have the opportunity to live in their homeland, Medinat Yisrael, with a strong Israel Defense Forces.

When we light Chanukah candles and contemplate their light, let us remember the cruse of oil and G-d’s great love for us. That is what protects us from generation to generation, every hour and every moment. Recognize the Hand of G-d that guided us in the war of the Chashmonaim, that guides us in the process of the redemption we are privileged to be part of, and that illuminates our path morning, noon and night.

Rabbanit Sharon Rimon teaches Tanach and is Content Editor for the HaTanakh website.
The Singular Light of Chanukah

Every night of Chanukah, we light numerous lights, ascending in number each day. Many families (following the predominant Ashkenazi custom) do not suffice with one set of lights, but light several sets, corresponding to the number of members of the household.

With so many lights being lit, why do we bless in the singular form, “To kindle the Chanukah light,” as opposed to the seemingly more appropriate blessing, “To kindle the Chanukah lights”?

On a straightforward level, one can answer that we make a blessing on the basic requirement of one light per household per night, regardless of which night of Chanukah it is. Seeing as any additional lights are a hiddur (beautification) and not part of the core commandment, they are not included in the blessing.

(This answer is less straightforward, however, when coming to explain why each member of Ashkenazi households makes a blessing. Unless we require every member of the household to actively or passively exclude themselves from being included in the blessings made by others, we may need to assume that one does in fact make a blessing on a hiddur and our original question remains.)

Rav Kook addressed this question in his commentary on Tefillah, Olat Re’iyah. For him, the blessing we make on Chanukah is not only about the technical act being performed at that moment. It represents the inner nature of light and the supreme purpose of life:

“Chanukah... depicts all the sources of light that need to radiate in the Nation: the light of Torah, the light of prophecy, the light of wisdom, the light of justice, the light of courage, the light of joy, the light of lovingkindness, the light of love, etc. However, prior to the realization of the supreme purpose of life, these many individual lights appear to us as if they are separate matters..."

However, the distinctions will not last forever, for as long as there are arguments, holiness cannot be established in the world. The essence of this blessing is the blessing for peace, and it will be fulfilled in the future when the realization is clear to all that all the individual lights are really one light. Therefore, the Chanukah blessing does not mention lights (in the plural), for it focuses its attention towards the more exalted distance, towards the more supreme future” (Olat Re’iyah Vol.1, page 435).

The world has many lofty values and priorities. Whilst each of these individual “lights” has an important role to play, they can also become a source of conflict as they compete for significance and superiority. In truth, however, “all the individual lights are really one light” – from a spiritual perspective, all these important values originate from a singular source and are destined to reunite in harmonious unity. The less we argue and the more we recognize “the supreme purpose of life,” the more holiness can be established in the world.

Thus on Chanukah, we light numerous separate lights, as indeed there are multiple ways to find light and share light in this world. While acknowledging the plurality of lights, the ultimate ideal is reflected in our blessing of peace and unity – “To kindle the (singular) Chanukah light.”

Rabbi Danny Mirvis is the Senior Rabbi of Mizrachi Melbourne.

Jewish unity is a cause that is not advanced by the advocacy of one point of view over another. It demands the difficult but not impossible exercise of thinking non-adjectivally as a Jew: not as a member of this or that group, but as a member of an indivisible people.
Nothing Compares
Imagine the highest living standard
Open your eyes and see the view
Breathe the air, feel the atmosphere

4, 5 & 6 Room apartments, Penthouses & Garden apartments being built in the new Neve Nof neighborhood in Neve Daniel

חברת לפיתוח גוש עציון
חפשו 'נווה נוף - הבית שלי בנווה דניאל'

*2944
Self-sacrifice. It sounds like an old, antiquated, irrelevant word. In previous generations, there was self-sacrifice; today everything is easy and comfortable. Nevertheless, the past year has taught us all a lesson in a new kind of self-sacrifice: Grandma must not be hugged. It is forbidden to pray together. Things that were considered mitzvot became offenses, and vice-versa. Our basic Jewish communal life... collapsed. Much of what we loved... diminished. We are at home more than ever, close to the nuclear family, far from everyone else. We need to wear weird and annoying masks, keep a distance, wash our hands.

But we are doing it together. The whole world, and the Jewish world within it, is going through a period of trial, of examination, as in previous generations. It is our self-sacrifice. After almost a year of small outside minyanim, of Zoom, of days in isolation, of Seder and Rosh Hashanah so different from what we are used to, of chessed and Torah and prayer that have undergone such creative changes – after all this, Chanukah has arrived! We light Chanukah candles and know that we too are heroes and pioneers. We too know something about self-sacrifice and how to come through the darkness stronger.

Every single minute, worldwide, humans are sending 18 million text messages, watching more than four million video clips, downloading 400,000 computer apps, and buying more than $1 million worth of online products. The human brain simply cannot contend with the flood of information – much of it unnecessary and undesirable – coming its way.

Rav Chagai Londin, of the hesder yeshiva in Sderot, writes that this is exactly what we need to learn from Chanukah – how to contend with the powerful forces of the surrounding culture. We become dizzy and confused, continually bombarded by alien forces and hedonistic messages, but must strive to keep our focus:

“Am Yisrael always tries to connect everything to one place: ‘Shema Yisrael, Hashem Elokeinu, Hashem Echad.’ G-d is One. We endeavor to focus and to concentrate and to unite the forces of the soul into our purpose for living. Greek culture was a culture of many idols, with many focal points targeted in every direction. The struggle of the Hasmoneans has not ended. Today too, we are likely to live absent-minded lives of perpetual distraction, of running from one new thing to the next, of always searching for something that doesn’t exist. To defend ourselves from overpowering forces that seem stronger than ourselves, each of us needs to be a Maccabee – not to be ashamed to take breaks, to set boundaries, and to take control of our digital devices instead of allowing them to take control of us. The Chanukah struggle is not over.”

Ori Kotler, a commander in the Rotem Unit of the Givati Brigade, shared the following idea with us:

There is a famous phrase that states that if you have a hammer in your hand, everything looks like a nail. So
how would the world look to us if we hold a candle in our hand? This is the purpose of Chanukah: to educate us to find the light in everything and in every person, to see reality on a deeper level, to discover the secret within.

Rabbi Ya’akov Moshe Charlap explains that we must take this principle from Chanukah into the rest of the year: “These days, the eight days of Chanukah, which were set as days of praise and thanks, days of marveling – marveling at the sublimity of every mitzvah, at the majesty of sanctity, these days are the origin of all the marveling which we will experience throughout the year. Every marvel which brings with it greatness – stems from Chanukah.” The ability to marvel and be excited about every point of light in the Torah, about every point of light during the year – is like a constant candle in our hand.

We have returned from our Mizrachi shlichut in America. When our shlichut began, we were just out of it, especially during the holidays. Over there, it was not our party, not our celebration. At the beginning of our stay, we saw a pumpkin next to the front door of almost every house and scary costumes. Halloween, nice to meet you. Next, turkeys and a multitude of invitations to “Thanksgiving Dinner” that reminded us of “Where will you be going for the Seder?” And then the clerk in our local Target store told us: “From Black Friday through January 1st, we can only play Christmas songs. It’s one of our rules.” We did count a few menorahs displayed in front windows but they were minimal compared to the numerous reindeers, sleighs and trees.

Steven Spielberg once said how as a child he wanted to decorate his house: “Our house seemed like a black hole in a neighborhood of light,” he confided. “I begged my father to let us be like everyone else. I felt like a Jewish alien and was ashamed of who I was. I wanted to be a non-Jew with the same burning desire I had to be a movie director.”

We painfully read these words, full of admiration for Jews throughout the generations who kept their identity with love, despite being a small minority within a flashy majority culture.

There is only one Land where the party and the celebration are all our own, only one Land that pulsates with a Jewish rhythm. Learn to appreciate it.

Israeli journalist, Oded Harush, published a text that goes against the macho perception in Israeli culture. It’s worth reading:

“Did you ever think about what Shmshon HaGibor or Yehuda HaMacca-bee looked like? Imagine them for a moment. Rambo? Hercules? There’s a reason we imagine our heroes in this way. When Chanukah was called the “Holiday of Heroism” over the years, it was referring to the culture of the spirit. To the war on Greek culture. But what is left of all this in Israeli culture? Greek culture, which sanctifies the macho man. Instead of fighting Greek culture, we inadvertently got sucked into it. Instead of expanding the concept of heroism, we reduced it solely to military courage. No wonder we sometimes experience frustration with our heroes in Israeli society and are so desperate to find new ones.

So what is heroism according to the Torah? Very simple. The word הגדרה (heroism) comes from the same root as the word כלתחבר – to overcome. What do you overcome? Your instincts. And that is relevant for each and every one of us, because the war on our instincts is not just on the battlefield. It’s in the “Black Friday” shopping craze, in line at the supermarket and even at home, between us and our children. And yes, it’s also about inappropriate sexual behavior. Stories of heroism from the battlefield are necessary for every nation in its infancy, but it seems to me the time has come to expand the canopy to other types of heroism in Israeli society.”

We sing, say brachot, eat, play and talk by the light of our Chanukah candles, but taking a moment to daven by the candles is considered a great thing. Time should be devoted to prayer as well. As the 19th-century Chassidic Rebbe, Israel Friedman of Ruzhyn, said of praying by the candles on the special day, the eighth day of Chanukah: “The same action that the greatest tzaddikim of the generation cannot perform in the Neilah prayer on Yom Kippur, any simple Jew can ask and enact in front of the candles on the eighth day of Chanukah.”

At the end of Chanukah, some people greet each other with gmar chatima tova! The eighth candle of Chanukah is considered the conclusion of the entire period that began on Rosh Chodesh Elul, through Selichot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah. Gmar chatima tova!

Sivan Rahav Meir and Yedioya Meir are popular Israeli media personalities and World Mizrachi’s Scholars-in-Residence.
A MIZRACHI Chanukah
IN MEMORY OF RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS
EIGHT NIGHTS. EIGHT LIGHTS. EIGHT INSIGHTS.

Concerts with Rav Shlomo Katz and the Maccabeats
Mini-Tours of Chanukah Sites
Torah Thoughts from Leading Educators
Modern-Day Maccabees
Candle-Lighting on Location Around the World
Food for Thought with Jamie Geller and Rabbanit Shani Taragin
Athletics in Judaism
Chanukah Discussion: Integration or Assimilation
In Sound and Spirit with Rabbi Dr. JJ Schacter and Shim Craimer

FROM DECEMBER 10, 2020
Premiering at mizrachi.tv
SOME PROGRAMS WILL BE AVAILABLE TO VIEW ON DEMAND AFTERWARDS | TIMES LISTED ARE ISRAEL TIME
Programs every day of Chanukah, each featuring a candle-lighting from around the world and a Chanukah thought from Rabbi Sacks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:30 PM Mini-Tour: Maccabee Hiding Caves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 PM Concert: The Maccabeats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:00 PM Mini-Tour: Hasmonean Battleground</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTZA’EI SHABBAT, DECEMBER 12, 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 PM Mini-Tour: Hellenistic Burial Caves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 PM Integration or Assimilation: Chief Rabbi Dr. Warren Goldstein, Dr. Tovah Lichtenstein, Rabbi Doron Perez, Rabbanit Shani Taragin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:30 PM Mini-Tour: Hasmonean Army Base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 PM Food for Thought: Jamie Geller and Rabbanit Shani Taragin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:30 PM Mini-Tour: Jaffa Gate and the Hasmonean Walls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 PM Concert: Rabbi Shlomo Katz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:30 PM Mini-Tour: Hasmonean Desert Fortress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 PM Athletics in Judaism: Rabbi Josh Halickman, Yael Arad, Beatie Deutsch, Yuval Freilich, Tamir Goodman, Elliott Steinmetz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:30 PM Mini-Tour: Shilo Olive Press &amp; Har HaZeitim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 PM In Sound and Spirit: Rabbi Dr. JJ Schacter and Shim Craimer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:30 PM Mini-Tour: The Golden Menorah in the Old City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 PM Shiur in Hebrew: Sivan Rahav Meir</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Real Choice Today

Chanukah is perhaps the most beloved holiday of the year. The vast majority of Jews (religious and not so religious) light candles and eat doughnuts and latkes. On the occasions I have married non-religious couples on Chanukah, they usually ask me to begin the ceremony by lighting the candles.

It is no coincidence that the Rambam writes that “The mitzvah of ner Chanukah is a much beloved mitzvah.” This is an unusual statement as our Sages are not accustomed to assign grades to different mitzvot, and certainly not in halachic works, in which people’s emotional connection to mitzvot does not really influence the halachic discourse.

Therefore, this is evidently more than a social comment about the spread of the holiday among all sections of the people. The fondness we have for lighting Chanukah candles can teach us a significant principle we can use as a beacon for both our present and our future. The reason we are so connected to this holiday should serve us as a paradigm for our Jewish lives – and is perhaps something we are not always aware of in our crazy times.

The story of Chanukah does not start particularly well. It’s not all clear but it is agreed that the Greek Empire that ruled over Eretz Yisrael at the time forbade the Jews from keeping the mitzvot and worked to transform the Jewish population into another cultural Hellenist enclave. The Jews didn’t need too much persuasion as they were keen to discard the national yoke of Torat Moshe and become part of a “global village” soaked in a Greek culture that was very attractive and appealing.

Who wants to be an isolated minority in a hostile world boasting power, confidence and esthetics? Who would want to exchange the magnificent Greek temples, the packed stadiums, for some dilapidated Jewish study halls?

Of course there were a handful who did believe in the Jewish people. They were able to miraculously vanquish the enemy on the military battlefield but spiritually and culturally? No chance.

We can see a similar scenario in our times too. Entire cultures are collapsing in the face of western culture, without even one shot being fired or one missile being launched.

Entire cultures are collapsing in the face of western culture, without even one shot being fired or one missile being launched

So it wasn’t simple at all to decide to celebrate Chanukah. Especially when its main theme is the dedication of the Mikdash desecrated by the Greeks. The same Mikdash that no longer stands. Why celebrate a day that no longer has any significance? Would anyone still celebrate Yom HaAtzmaut if – G-d forbid – Iran would destroy Israel?

Therefore, it is seemingly not the military victory we are celebrating. We are marking the cultural courage of those Maccabim who decided they wanted to remain Jews even if the Mikdash was no longer, and the Jewish State destroyed. Their Jewish spirit was not broken.

On the contrary. It became stronger and gained traction. Our Sages compiled the Mishnah and the Gemara and eventually the entire gamut of Jewish literature that nourishes the Jewish people to this very day.

נה נֵר מִצְוָה וְתֹרָה אוֹר (A mitzvah is a candle and the Torah is light) (Mishlei 6:23).

Thanks to this holiday, we reveal the light we have in our lives, the great privilege we have of being Jewish and being part of the great story our nation has brought to the world.

Rabbi Sacks z”l used to say that in the past we were the chosen people. We were forced to be Jews. Our enemies generally didn’t allow us to assimilate (apart from Greece, who wanted to assimilate us along with all other nations.)

Now, we are the people that choose. We need to decide if we want to be Jews or not. In that sense, Chanukah is the quintessential contemporary holiday. Just like then, we need to choose. It’s not easy because we don’t have anyone physically forcing us like they did back then, and we have a powerful culture bombarding us from all angles. We need to decide.

The mitzvah of ner Chanukah teaches us the best way to spread the Torah’s messages.

To reveal the light within it.

To encourage the younger generation to continue to help the Jewish people grow and flourish, they must feel this thing is “beloved.” They must feel the Torah is relevant and meaningful for each and every one of them. That Jewish wisdom and tradition can make them better people, happier people, living lives of meaning, growth and purpose.

As indeed it can.

Rabbi David Stav is Chief Rabbi of Shoham.

For as long as Jews are Jews, they contribute something unique to the intellectual, spiritual and moral life of society. So that if Jews are no longer Jews there is a missing voice, an empty place, in the conversation of mankind.
In Al HaNissim, we say the Greeks sought to “violate the laws of Your will.” This expression shows that the Greeks did not actually fight mitzvah observance, but rather the root of that observance, the Will of G-d.

Hence they decreed a ban against Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh and circumcision: “And Antiochus answered and said unto his ministers... Let us rise upon them, and cut them off from the covenant which was made for them: Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh and Mila” (Antiochus 7:11). The Greeks waged war precisely against these three mitzvot because they are the root of the Torah.

The Maharal argues that the first appearance of anything is also the root and purpose of the same thing, and includes everything about that thing. This principle is clearly illustrated in the Torah. The first manifestation of the Torah is in these three mitzvot, given even before the Torah was given: the mitzvah of circumcision was given to our Avraham Avinu, the mitzvah to sanctify the New Moon was given to the Children of Israel in Egypt and the mitzvah of Shabbat was given at Marah. All three of these mitzvot are the root and purpose of the Torah, and so the Greeks sought to uproot them all.

The Greeks wanted to disconnect Israel from the Torah, for without these foundational mitzvot, it is impossible to access its depths. They did not want to destroy the Jews; they wanted to destroy Judaism, the uniqueness of Am Yisrael. As the Midrash says, “darkness” refers to the Greek exile, which darkened the eyes of Israel with their decrees and would say to them: ‘write on the horn of the bull that you have no part in the G-d of Israel’ and regarding the verse, “And behold a great terror of darkness fell upon him,” the Midrash explains that the Greeks fought against the Torah, determined to cause a rift between the Torah and the people of Israel.

Hence the Maccabean victory over the Greeks was a victory for Torah and Bnei Torah over the kingdom of Greece. Chanukah is therefore a holiday of Bnei Torah, which is implied in two places:

First, the victory of the Chashmonaim is hinted upon in the blessing of Moshe to the tribe of Levi: “Bless, O L-rd, his resources and favor his undertakings. Smite the loins of his foes and enemies so they rise no more.” Rashi comments: “Moshe saw that the Chashmonaim would fight the Greeks, and he prayed for them since they would be few – 12 Chashmonaim and Eleazar – against several tens of thousands.” It is well known that Moshe’s blessing to the tribe of Levi is guaranteed to all who set themselves apart from the affairs of the world for the purpose of studying the Torah.

Secondly, it is implied in the Gemara (Shabbat 23b), when it says, “One who is accustomed to kindle lights will be rewarded with children who are Torah scholars.” Rashi explains that lights refer to Shabbat and Chanukah candles.

According to the Rambam: “The precept of lighting the menorah is exceedingly precious, and one should carefully observe it to acclaim the miracle, ever praising and thanking G-d for the miracles He has performed for us. Even if one has nothing to eat except what he gets from charity, he should borrow, or sell his garment, to buy oil and lamps and light them.”

Why does the Rambam consider lighting Chanukah candles a precious mitzvah? The Maggid Mishne explains that his source is the above Gemara. In contrast to all the other mitzvot, for which we receive our reward in the World to Come, upon lighting the Chanukah candles we receive our reward immediately through our children becoming talmidei chachamim. A direct response to the Greeks’ intention to detach Am Yisrael from Torat Yisrael.

Adapted from “Shiurei HaRav Avraham Shapira on Ketubot and Kiddushin.”

1 See also Sfat Emet, Miketz 5662, and Chanukah, 5647 and 5648.
2 Netzach Yisrael, 3 and other places.
3 Netzach Yisrael, 3 and other places.
4 Bereishit 15:12.
5 Bereishit Rabbah, 44:17.
6 Devarim 33:11.
7 Devarim 33:11

The Three Foundational Mitzvot

Judaism is about relationships. The Greeks asked, What exists? Jews asked, What is the relationship between the things that exist?

RABBI SACKS
The Magen Avraham (263:15) cites a practice that women who were going to use the mikvah on Friday night would light candles in the adjoining shul. This practice is no longer followed (Mishnah Berurah 263:21) because the hadlaka must be in one’s home, a location that meets the halachic definition of ביתו. The Mishnah Berurah elaborates on this requirement based on the principles gleaned from the Gemara in Eruvin (72b-73a), which discusses the definition of ביתו in reference to the dinim of רועי הצאן and מ testim珩שעך. The location labeled as ביתו for the purposes of hadlakat neirot Shabbat would also be relevant for the proper location in which to light neirot Chanukah.

The Gemara discusses the location of one’sイルל(place of residence), citing a machloket between Rav and Shmuel as to whether it is determined by מיקום פינתא (the place of eating) or מיקום לינה (the place of sleeping). The Gemara explains that, in fact, either the מיקום פינתא or the מיקום לינה could at times be labeled as ביתו. If one of the locations is used beikvit (on a permanent basis), and the other only on a temporary basis, the former would constitute one’sイルל.

Similarly, if one has two homes, but one home is more comfortable than the other, the more comfortable home would be the one classified as ביתו. Therefore, the הר建筑物 of yeshiva students who would sleep in the yeshiva dormitory but would eat their meals in the homes of community members, where they felt relatively uncomfortable, would be the dormitory in which they slept.

The machloket between Rav and Shmuel refers to a case in which both homes are equally permanent and equally comfortable. In that case, we follow the opinion of Rav that the מיקום פינתא is the primary residence and would be the proper location in which to light.

A further criterion used to determine which residence should be labeled as ביתו would be which residence is more private. If one residence is clearly more private than the other, the private room would have the status ofイルל, even if it is the מיקום לינה, not the מיקום פינתא (Mishnah Berurah 263:29). Therefore, yeshiva students who share a dormitory room should light neirot Chanukah in that relatively private room, and not in the public dining room used by all the students (Igrot Moshe, Yoreh De’ah, chelek 3, 14:5).

If one finds himself in a different city than the other members of his family, he must perform hadlakat neirot himself, even if his wife lights candles in his family’s house (Orach Chaim 263:6). His wife’s hadlaka in a different city does not constitute a hadlaka in ייחוד, since he is not metzuraf (connected) to that house at this time.1

The primary purpose of hadlakat הָנְאָרָה for Shabbat is to illuminate the room in which the seuda will take place (Rama 263:10). However, if this is not possible, such as in the case of guests in a hotel who are unable to light in the dining room, we hold that the hadlaka is acceptable even if done in a different room than the one in which the seuda will be eaten (Magen Avraham 263:21).

In this case, the hadlaka should be done in the hotel room (using an incandescent bulb). It is not proper to light in a public room set aside for hadlakat neirot, since that room does not have the status of ביתו; it is not the מיקום לוהק or the מיקום פינתא. [This practice is very problematic for another reason as well. Since there are many candles being lit in such close proximity to each other, it is unclear if there is any illumination gained from such a hadlaka.]

If one lights in his home, but the candles will not continue to burn until the conclusion of the seuda he is partaking of at a different location, such that no benefit will be gained on Shabbat from the hadlaka, the mitzvah will not have been fulfilled (Shulchan Aruch 263:9). In such a case, one should light in his home using electric bulbs or long-lasting candles, which will remain lit until he returns to his home.

Adapted from Rav Schachter on the Moadim.

---

1  See B’Ikvei HaTzon, pp. 117-123.

Rabbi Hershel Schachter is Rosh Yeshiva and Rosh Kollel at Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University.
GLOBAL RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Receive HaMizrachi with The Jerusalem Post!

Sign up today! Email: itaib@jpost.com

Your monthly dose of Torah in English from leading rabbis and male and female educators

Special features to set the mood for the upcoming holidays

Parenting and marriage advice, Rav Kook’s teachings, Places in Israel and more!

For HaMizrachi dedication opportunities, email: production@mizrachi.org or call 050-480-0664
November 1947. The UN’s Partition Plan is announced and the War of Independence begins...

Mid-May 1948. The British Mandate ends and Ben-Gurion declares the new State of Israel, signaling the second and more intensive phase of the war. The bloody battles continue for over six months (more than 6,000 are killed, approximately 1% of all the Jews in Eretz Yisrael at the time!)

May 26, 1948. The IDF is established and a young man who took part in the battles himself is appointed its first Chief Rabbi.

From his very first day in office, Rabbi Shlomo Goren (then still Goronczik) saw himself not as a functionary providing religious services to the army, but as someone blazing the trail and defining the vision for a sovereign Jewish army, perhaps the first since the days of the Chashmonaim.

The very idea of a Jewish army drew much ideological fire – from non-religious thinkers who viewed the use of force as a contradiction to fundamental Jewish values, or those who hoped the settling of the Land could gradually transpire without any violent confrontation at all. On the other side were ultra-Orthodox circles who held that any military action against the local gentiles was irresponsible and completely forbidden, endangering the lives of the soldiers and breaching the oaths described in the Midrash not to rise up against the nations of the world.

Other voices began to emerge from within the army itself. The military success earned with blood and sweat, huge self-sacrifice and brilliant strategem, led to the belief that "my power and the strength of my hand gave me this wealth."

Indeed, one of the most famous Israeli Chanukah songs, written by Colonel Aharon Ze’ev, the IDF’s Chief Education Officer during Rav Goren’s tenure, is called “We Carry Torches” and is still played today at national Yom HaAtzmaut ceremonies. The chorus is:

A miracle did not happen for us
We did not find a cruse of oil.
We eroded rocks until we bled...
And there was light!

The song was written before the State was established, but became more relevant after the military victories. It stresses faith in the human spirit as opposed to reliance on Divine intervention.

December 1948. Chanukah. Against this backdrop, Rav Goren addresses the soldiers in Israel’s fledgling fighting force. The war is coming to an end, the soldiers are exhausted, traumatized, wounded, but also bathed in euphoric triumph.

The Rav attempts to connect them to the spirit of the Chashmonaim. His task is to strengthen their sense of being party to a huge achievement, of displaying irrepressible human spirit, yet also telling them they are part of an unprecedented and magnificent miracle.

All that separates nobility of spirit from hubris is keeping one’s values front and center: The clear knowledge of what we are fighting for and for whom we are fighting. The unbreakable link between the voice of Yehuda HaMaccabi and the sound of Sinai...

And this is what Rav Goren says to the entire army – almost all of which was non-religious – at the end of the war, on Chanukah, December 1948: “...The mystery of the miraculous victory of the few against the many is the most perfect expression of the strength of the spirit when faced with oppressive military might...

Thus and only thus were the many able to fall before the few, because the few knew what they were fighting for and for whom they were prepared to die: for the purity of faith in the Word of G-d, for the Torah of their G-d and the Land of their forefathers, for human freedom and spiritual release from a foreign culture, and for universal justice that had been in grave danger...

Before our very eyes, the great miracle of Israel’s redemption happened again... with the reawakened spirit of the Chashmonaim, we conquered our Holy Land...

Army of Israel! Holy soldiers of the War of Independence and Renewal, Chanukah is your holiday! In you, the spirit beats, and in your hearts is a holy, burning fire taken from the altar of G-d... Light the candles of freedom, carry torches, in the cities and the villages, in the bases and the outposts!

Carry with you the command [about going to war] to those standing at the foot of Mt. Sinai: ‘...You shall not fear them...

For the L-rd your G-d goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to save you.”

Rabbanit Rachelle Fraenkel teaches Torah at midrashot in Israel.
We've reached the culmination of the month of Kislev, whose entire nature is supernatural. Chanukah is above and beyond nature! Or better still, it is natural that miracles are performed at this time and the Ribono Shel Olam answers our prayers. He wants to make miracles for us, with our help.

On the eight days of Chanukah we have the ability to change decrees. Yes, Chanukah has the ability to actually overturn decrees. During normal times, a decree is a decree. Actions don’t help. We cannot change the outcome. But on Chanukah, for eight days, we have the opportunity to act and make the effort. G-d “moves over” (as it were) and through our intervention, desires to perform miracles.

There are even great secrets hidden in the words of the beracha on the candles. The Sephardim say: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה’ אֱלֹקֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוָּתוֹ וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר חֲנֻכָּה, while the Ashkenazim say: נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה. What's the difference? One word: של.

The mystic, Rabbi Ben-Tzion Mutzafi explains the Sephardi version: the beracha contains exactly 13 words. According to the Arizal, through uttering each one, we reveal one of the 13 middot haRachamim (G-d’s attributes of mercy): ה', ה', ק-ל, רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן, אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם, וֶאֱמֶת. נוֹצֵר חֶסֶד לָאֲלָפִים נוֹשֵׂא עָוְן וָפֶשַׁע וְחַטָּאָה וְנַקֵּה.

He also explains the deeper meaning of the other customs surrounding the Chanukah candles, like singing Maoz Tzur.

Although customs and segulot are not essential for the actual lighting, they do serve to make the mitzvah even more precious, as the Rambam uncharacteristically writes מַצָּה: תְבוּבָה אֲחַר דְּמָא - it is a much loved mitzvah.

The Power of Loneliness

Lighting the First Candle

The first candle also corresponds to Avraham, the epitome of kindness. Be kind. Light and pray for someone sitting in the dark, someone who is suffering. Prayer for others is the greatest kindness, and it saves the one who prays from loneliness as well.

I once received a letter from a mother who told me what she prayed for on the first night of Chanukah. In front of that one lonely candle she prayed that her only child would not grow up lonely. That she should have a brother or sister. And indeed, after much heartache and effort, she and her husband were blessed with another son.

On the first night, the lonely people say to the Ribono Shel Olam: “Look Hashem, I’ve been struggling alone in this darkness, yearning and asking: איכה? Where are you? I’m now lighting a candle for You in the dark and believe that my complete salvation is imminent.”

Even if the candle has already been extinguished, keep praying. Give loneliness a place in your prayer.

According to Rav Soloveitchik, the merits of our lonely people will bring the light of Mashiach. Why? Because one small, lone candle can eradicate great darkness.

The redemption will come, writes Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin, when you understand: עָרַכְתִּי נֵר לִמְשִׁיחִי, “I have lit a candle for my redeemer,” (Tehillim 135:17). עָרַכְתִּי - I have worth (בעל ערך) because even in my loneliness, I illuminate a dark world.
Arashat Vayeishev provides us with details of the height of Yosef's success. The Torah tells us, וַיְהִי ה' אֶת יוֹסֵף וַיְהִי אִישׁ מַצְלִיחַ, “G-d was with Yosef and he was a successful man.”

Why are both statements necessary? If G-d was with him, he must have been successful, and if he was successful, surely it was because G-d was with him?

Rav Simcha Bunim of Peshischa, one of the great Chassidic masters of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, explains as follows: we have a tendency to reach out to G-d primarily when things are going wrong, yet we should also naturally reach out to Him when we are happy and successful.

In this vein, the Chafetz Chaim commented on our Rosh Chodesh benching, which we recite on the Shabbat before Rosh Chodesh. We repeat one request – חַיִּים שֶׁל יִרְאַת שָׁמַיִם – Please, G-d, give us a life of the fear of Heaven. Why do we specifically repeat this request?

The Chafetz Chaim explained that after the first יִרְאַת שָׁמַיִם, we ask G-d for חַיִּים שֶׁל עשֶׁר וְכָבוֹד – give us a life of wealth and honour. However, once you achieve wealth and honour, you might forget about G-d. Therefore, we ask Him again for חַיִּים שֶׁל יִרְאַת שָׁמַיִם – guarantee that we will always be able to maintain our faith in You.

Yosef was someone who maintained his fear of Heaven under all circumstances – when he was in desperate trouble and also when he had achieved wealth and honour. That is why the Torah tells us G-d was with him and he was successful.

I would like to suggest a different explanation. It is possible for G-d to be with someone and for that person not to succeed. Because in the midst of our failure or disappointment, the door closed in front of us can open many other doors of opportunity. An initial setback may bring unexpected blessing.

This too is a sentiment we express in our Rosh Chodesh benching. We conclude with the request, חַיִּים שֶׁיְּמַּלֵא ה מִשְׁאֲלוֹת לִבֵּנוּ לְטוֹבָה – Please G-d, give us a life in which the requests of our heart will be answered for the good.

Here we acknowledge that we do not really know what success is. While we might presume that something in our lives constitutes a great achievement, it might ultimately lead to our downfall. We therefore place everything in the hands of G-d and recognize that sometimes what is considered to be a failure might actually be the best thing for us.

Yosef understood this profound lesson. When he was failing, when he was a victim of attempted fratricide and when he was thrust into prison despite being innocent, G-d was with him. He felt the presence of the Almighty just as he did when he was riding on the wave of success. He never lost sight of the light at the end of the tunnel.

Or as Winston Churchill put it, “Success is going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.”

To thank G-d is to know that I do not have less because my neighbour has more. I am not less worthwhile because someone else is more successful...
After an extended term, during which we have experienced growth in daily minyanim, learning, activities and membership, Rabbi Danny Mirvis, our current Senior Rabbi, has decided to return to Israel with his family at the end of August 2021. Mizrachi Melbourne is seeking to appoint another exceptionally committed person to be its next Senior Rabbi, to build on these outstanding achievements.

Mizrachi Melbourne is centrally located in the heart of Australia’s largest Jewish Community and is the city’s preeminent Religious Zionist Organisation.

Mizrachi is dynamic and multifaceted. It embraces a range of active synagogues, daily minyanim, Leibler Yavneh College (Crèche – Year 12), the Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash and Midrasha, Kosher Australia, Emunah and a vibrant Bnei Akiva youth movement. It also has direct involvement in the Melbourne Eruv.

Mizrachi is now searching for an innovative, energetic and dedicated Senior Rabbi who, together with an active and engaged Rebbetzin, will build on our impressive communal track record and further strengthen Mizrachi’s commitment to Torah learning, religious life and the State of Israel.

The successful candidate for this critical leadership position will be:

- a role model of religious observance and practice consistent with the Mizrachi ethos;
- an accomplished Torah scholar with broad secular knowledge and proven experience in deciding halachic questions;
- an outstanding leader with strong interpersonal skills;
- an effective teacher capable of engaging the community at all levels;
- able to drive communal growth with vision and imagination; and
- a passionate advocate for the State of Israel with a willingness to actively engage in communal religious and Zionist activities.

Please send your detailed cover letter and resumé outlining your qualifications and relevant professional experience to the Mizrachi President, Dr Danny Lamm AM, at danny@lamm.com.au
The wall-to-wall unity agreement reached at the recent 38th World Zionist Congress is not something to be taken for granted. Neither is the role World Mizrachi played in this unique achievement.

A seismic shift took place in Israel’s National Institutions at this particular Congress. For the first time in Zionist history, the majority of the 525 delegates from Israel and around the world were identified with the political and religious right-wing of the Zionist Movement.

This could perhaps be likened to the 1977 revolution in Israeli politics when Menachem Begin rose to power after 30 years of Labor leadership.

For the first time, Israel had a right-wing Prime Minister and government. This gradually brought more religious and traditional elements of Israeli society into political leadership positions.

A similar phenomenon has begun in the National Institutions.

The shift in numbers was the result of multiple factors – the size of the Likud Party, the strength of Mizrachi’s Religious Zionist global representation and the joining of the new Haredi Eretz HaKodesh delegation from America, to name but three.

One tangible sign of this new reality is that the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the powerful Keren Kayemet LeYisrael (JNF Israel), and the Chairperson of the World Zionist Organization (WZO), are affiliated with the political and religious right.

However, the National Institutions are not only about influence and power politics. They are about preserving a singular and diverse balance. A very delicate one.

Let me explain. The WZO is akin to the parliament of the Jewish people. It is perhaps the only forum in which...
members of the political parties in Israel, as well as delegates from Zionist movements and Federations across the Jewish world, are all formally represented in one place.

From the progressive liberal Hatikvah slate to Eretz HaKodesh and everything in between – Reform, Conservative and Orthodox religious streams and the gamut of political ideologies – all finding a place around one large round table dedicated to the Zionist endeavor.

To preserve this fine balance, the Zionist Congress has traditionally upheld a gentlemen’s agreement, giving fair representation to all parties based on their relative strength. This is very different from the majority winner-takes-all system in democratic politics. As de Tocqueville had warned of the potential tyranny of the majority over the very significant minority.

This year, certain parties were pushing for this more polarizing and partisan approach.

Enter Mizrachi.

Over and above its impressive gains in attaining major leadership positions in the Keren Kayemet and the WZO, Mizrachi played a pivotal role in securing a wall-to-wall agreement, in which each party was awarded fair and reasonable leadership positions based on their relative size. Led by Mizrachi’s Avraham Duvdevani, the most experienced member of the WZO Executive, the Mizrachi delegation was instrumental in ensuring unity within diversity.

Indeed, this has been Mizrachi’s role since its very inception. Almost 120 years ago, it was founded as a movement of religious Jews committed both to Torah and the Zionist cause. At a time when many distanced themselves from this seemingly secular national movement, Mizrachi found a way to partner, to communicate, to bridge the gaps. To shoulder together the collective challenges at that time.

Remain ing loyal to its religious beliefs and Halacha while being an active and influential member of the Zionist Movement.

In fact, the very word Mizrachi is an acronym of Merkaz Ruchani, a spiritual center, integrating core spiritual values into the nucleus of the nascent Zionist Movement.

Mizrachi blazed a trail of unity, partnership and inclusion.

The message was clear and refreshing: there need be no contradiction between the sacred and the secular, the national and the religious, the universal and the particular. Between Judaism and Zionism.

So too today, Mizrachi continues to play this role of partnership, bridge-building and unity, in the Jewish world in general and in these important institutions in particular.

I cannot conclude without connecting these sentiments to the recent tragic passing of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, a great supporter of and partner in World Mizrachi’s activities. Like our forefather Avraham, who was both “a stranger and a resident” among the inhabitants of Canaan, so Rabbi Sacks was masterfully able to personify and ever so eloquently communicate that balance – on the one hand being proudly Jewish and loyal to his faith and the Torah, while on the other, being deeply immersed in global visions, broad universal ideas and expansive philosophical thought. The ability to synthesize, connect and bridge the divide. He was a ladder, “whose feet were firmly on the ground and whose head was in the heavens.” And just like Avraham, he profoundly connected to Divine wisdom and to the spark of the Divine in every human being. To connect all of life to its spiritual center.

At a time of deepening ideological rifts and polarization – in Israel and worldwide – the Mizrachi mission in general and the great life and legacy of Rabbi Sacks are perhaps more relevant than ever.

We hope you gain new insight and learn from the memories, Torah and wisdom of Rabbi Sacks that we are honored to present to you לְעִלּוּי נִשְׁמָתוֹ.
THE MANY FACES OF RABBI SACKS

Rabbi Sacks the Global Ambassador
HRH Prince Charles

His immense learning spanned the sacred and the secular, and his prophetic voice spoke to our greatest challenges with unfailing insight and boundless compassion. His wise counsel was sought and appreciated by those of all faiths and none, and he will be missed more than words can say.

Rabbi Sacks the Mentor
Tony Blair

Ever since, at University, I became interested in politics and religion at the same time and under the influence of two Australians, one an aspiring politician and the other a radical priest, I have always felt that religious leaders have a role to play in the small politics of a nation. Not so that they can support one party or another, but so that they can elucidate and educate the nation, to explain what it means to be a community of people with shared values, a shared spirit, a sense of a shared future.

But it requires a religious leader of exceptional talent and sensitivity to do it.

Jonathan Sacks was undoubtedly one of the cleverest people I ever met. There was never a wasted conversation and believe me, in political life, that is a high bar. Every time we met, as we did many times over the years, I came away with fresh insight and improved understanding.

Jonathan was one of my heroes. Someone I loved and admired. His physical presence has left us far too soon but his spiritual presence will remain with me until my own moment of passing comes.

Rabbi Sacks

The Role Model

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein

The Menorah of the Temple Sanctuary had seven branches – a middle branch and three branches coming out of either side of it, and their flames leaning towards the center.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch explains that the middle branch represents the light of Torah wisdom, while the other six branches represent the wisdoms of the world. The six outer branches emerge from the central branch and then their flames turn inward to face the central branch it came from.

Rabbi Lord Sacks was a menorah. He lit up the world with the Torah’s teachings by showing how all true wisdom in the world emanates from and turns toward the light of the Divine wisdom of the Torah.

Rabbi Sacks was not only a great scholar. He was kind, caring and giving, a true character role model for Jews of all ages all around the world.

Rabbi Sacks the Student

Sivan Rahav Meir

As a young college student, Rabbi Sacks paid a visit to the Lubavitcher Rebbe with questions he wanted to ask. The Rebbe asked Sacks questions in return. How many Jewish students were there on his college campus? What was he doing in order to involve them in Jewish life? The Rebbe explained to Sacks that the Jewish world was in crisis, that ignorance was our greatest enemy. Therefore, it was Sacks’ obligation to help, to utilize his talents in order to study and teach Torah. Sacks eventually became the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, a professor, and a member of the British House of Lords. “When we make Judaism our top priority – we lose nothing,” he used to say. Can all of us become professors, rabbis, and lords? No. But all of us can make full use of our talents. All of us can imagine standing opposite the Lubavitcher Rebbe and answering questions about our commitment to Judaism and what we are doing about it.

Even if we will not reach his level, we cannot allow ourselves to merely mourn Rabbi Sacks’ passing. All of us, each in our own way and with our own talents, must answer the call and help to fill the void created.
I first knew Rabbi Sacks as Jonathan, my Mishnah teacher. I was 14, it was the mid-1970’s, and my parents had arranged for him to teach me mishnayot at home once or twice a week.

We used to meet in my bedroom. On the wall over my desk, I had a large collection of headshots of Jewish heroes of mine, including Sharansky, Ben-Gurion, Einstein, and the Lubavitcher Rebbe. At our first meeting, Rabbi Sacks expressed his amazement to see a large picture of the Rebbe on my wall and asked me if I was also a follower of the Rebbe. I told him I wasn’t but that I thought he was a Jewish hero. He told me about what the Rebbe meant to him personally and of his meetings with him, how he had brought Torah to Jews around the world who had been marginalized and who had no knowledge of their heritage.

Over the next two years, I was brought blinking into Rabbi Sacks’ brilliant world of Mishnah study, where rabbinic sages, halacha, tefillah and Jewish history came alive and were thrown into glorious relief, and vibrant color. Later on, he became my community rabbi until my Aliyah. In recent years, I was able to reconnect with Jonathan’s brilliant teaching via his podcasts. I did not miss a week of “my personal tutor” since then, and this time around it gave me even greater pleasure to know that I am “sharing” him with a global Jewish, and increasingly, non-Jewish audience. Jonathan’s loss has had such a profound personal effect on so many people who never met him, because they travelled with him to work each morning, and saved a seat for him at their Shabbat table every week.

Not since his mentor and guide, the Lubavitcher Rebbe himself, has anyone done more to bring Jewish teaching to so many Jews around the world. His probing questions and breathtaking answers were filled with poetic imagery, the lyrical range of the prophets and the astonishing truths of the great Sages of Israel. His lessons will stay with me always.
Lighting the Chanukah Candles

WITH

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ז”ל

As your family gathers to light the Chanukah candles, let each night be inspired by the words of Rabbi Sacks.
As your family gathers to light the Chanukah candles,

**NIGHT 1  The Light of the Spirit Never Dies**

There’s an interesting question the commentators ask about Chanukah. For eight days we light lights, and each night we make the blessing over miracles: *sheasa nissim la’avotenu*. But what was the miracle of the first night? The light that should have lasted one day lasted eight. But that means there was something miraculous about days two to eight; but nothing miraculous about the first day.

Perhaps the miracle was this, that the Maccabees found one cruse of oil with its seal intact, undefiled. There was no reason to suppose that anything would have survived the systematic desecration the Greeks and their supporters did to the Temple. Yet the Maccabees searched and found that one jar. Why did they search? Because they had faith that from the worst tragedy something would survive. The miracle of the first night was that of faith itself, the faith that something would remain with which to begin again.

So it has always been in Jewish history. There were times when any other people would have given up in despair: after the destruction of the Temple, or the massacres of the crusades, or the Spanish Expulsion, or the pogroms, or the Shoah. But somehow Jews did not sit and weep. They gathered what remained, rebuilt our people, and lit a light like no other in history, a light that tells us and the world of the power of the human spirit to overcome every tragedy and refuse to accept defeat.

From the days of Moshe and the bush that burned and was not consumed to the days of the Maccabees and the single cruse of oil, Judaism has been humanity’s *ner tamid*, the everlasting light that no power on earth can extinguish.

**NIGHT 2  The Light of War and the Light of Peace**

There is a law about Chanukah I find moving and profound. Rambam writes that “the command of Chanukah lights is very precious. One who lacks the money to buy lights should sell something, or if necessary borrow, so as to be able to fulfill the mitzvah.”

The question then arises, what if, on Friday afternoon, you find yourself with only one candle? What do you light it as — a Shabbat candle or a Chanukah one? It can’t be both. Logic suggests that you should light it as a Chanukah candle. After all, there is no law that you have to sell or borrow to light lights for Shabbat. Yet if faced with such a choice, the law is you light it as a Shabbat light. Why?

Listen to Rambam: “The Shabbat light takes priority because it symbolizes *shalom bayit*, domestic peace. And great is peace because the entire Torah was given in order to make peace in the world.”

Consider: Chanukah commemorates one of the greatest military victories in Jewish history. Yet Jewish law rules that if we can only light one candle – the Shabbat light takes precedence because in Judaism the greatest military victory takes second place to peace in the home.

Why did Judaism, alone among the civilizations of the ancient world, survive? Because it valued the home more than the battlefield, marriage more than military grandeur, and children more than generals. Peace in the home mattered to our ancestors more than the greatest military victory.

So as we celebrate Chanukah, spare a thought for the real victory, which was not military but spiritual. Jews were the people who valued marriage, the home, and peace between husband and wife, above the highest glory on the battlefield. In Judaism, the light of peace takes precedence over the light of war.

**NIGHT 3  Inside/Outside**

There is more than one command in Judaism to light lights. There are three: Shabbat candles, the havdalah candles and the Chanukah candles.

The difference between them is that Shabbat candles represent *shalom bayit*, peace in the home. They are lit indoors. They are, if you like, Judaism’s inner light, the light of the sanctity of marriage and the holiness of home.

The Chanukah candles used to be lit outside – outside the front door. It was only fear of persecution that took the Chanukah candles back inside, and in recent times the Lubavitcher Rebbe introduced the custom of lighting giant menorahs in public places to bring back the original spirit of the day.

Chanukah candles are the light Judaism brings to the world when we are unafraid to announce our identity in public, live by our principles and fight, if necessary, for our freedom.

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

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

There always were two ways to live in a world that is often dark and full of tears. We can curse the darkness or we can light a light, and as the Chassidim say, a little light drives out much darkness. May we all help light up the world.

**NIGHT 4  Inspired by Faith, We Can Change the World**

Twenty-two centuries ago, when Israel was under the rule of the empire of Alexander the Great, one particular leader, Antiochus IV, decided to force the pace of Hellenisation, forbidding Jews to practice their religion and setting up in the Temple in Jerusalem a statue of Zeus Olympus.

This was too much to bear, and a group of Jews, the Maccabees, fought for their religious freedom, winning a stunning victory against the most powerful army of the ancient world. After three years they re-conquered Jerusalem, re-established the Temple and relit the menorah with the one cruse of undefiled oil they found among the wreckage. It was one of the most stunning military achievements of the ancient world. It was, as we say in our prayers, a victory of the few over the many, the weak over the strong. It’s summed up in a wonderful line from the prophet Zechariah: “not by might nor by strength, but by My spirit says the L-rd.” The Maccabees had neither might nor strength, neither weapons nor numbers. But they had a double portion of the Jewish spirit that longs for freedom and is prepared to fight for it.

Never believe that a handful of dedicated people can’t change the world. Inspired by faith, they can. The Maccabees did then. So can we today.
As your family gathers to light the Chanukah candles, let each night be inspired by the words of Rabbi Sacks.
Before lighting say the following two blessings:

ברוך אתה ה' אנקינון מלך הוהלו
אשר קדשת במצווה וצタイトル על נחלד נר של נקבה.

ברוך אתה ה' אנקינון מלך הוהלו
שעשעש נס לאמותינו.

Before lighting for the first time, add the following:

ברוך אתה ה' אנקינון מלך הוהלו
שחהתי וקנפתי והגינו לכל אדם.

הנרות ההלל את מלכינו
על כן נῦ על נמלכות
עד התעשות עלמלכות
שעשעש לאמותינו בכלーム רבים.

 וכל שמותו ומכחיו
 ועד עת תכינו מחתך
 הנרות ההלל כסה
 כי לני רוחות לשתמות חים
 אלה לארחות כלב.

בדי להנחותו ההלל לשרם ומצל
 על משין ועל נקבה.

ויהי עון צוור ישועתי לך לא שבחו
 ושכון ונדוה זבחו
 לעת היה רמות מצרו המבהב
 ואזא ראו ימים ים ניקוה.

-before lighting say the following two blessings:

ברוך אתה ה' אנקינון מלך הוהלו
אשר קדשת במצווה וצתום
על נחלד נר של נקבה.

ברוך אתה ה' אנקינון מלך הוהלו
שעשעש נס לאמותינו.

Before lighting for the first time, add the following:

ברוך אתה ה' אנקינון מלך הוהלו
שחהתי וקנפתי והגינו לכל אדם.

הנרות ההלל את מלכינו
על כן נῦ על נמלכות
עד התעשות עלמלכות
שעשעש לאמותינו בכלーム רבים.

 וכל שמותו ומכחיו
 ועד עת תכינו מחתך
 הנרות ההלל כסה
 כי לני רוחות לשתמות חים
 אלה לארחות כלב.

בדי להנחותו ההלל לשרם ומצל
 על משין ועל נקבה.

ויהי עון צוור ישועתי לך לא שבחו
 ושכון ונדוה זבחו
 לעת היה רמות מצרו המבהב
 ואזא ראו ימים ים ניקוה.

-before lighting say the following two blessings:

ברוך אתה ה' אנקינון מלך הוהלו
אשר קדשת במצווה וצתום
על נחלד נר של נקבה.

ברוך אתה ה' אנקינון מלך הוהלו
שעשעש נס לאמותינו.

Before lighting for the first time, add the following:

ברוך אתה ה' אנקינון מלך הוהלו
שחהתי וקנפתי והגינו לכל אדם.

הנרות ההלל את מלכינו
על כן נועי על נמלכות
עד התעשות עלמלכות
שעשעש לאמותינו בכלーム רבים.

 וכל שמותו ומכחיו
 ועד עת תכינו מחתך
 הנרות ההלל כסה
 כי לני רוחות לשתמות חים
 אלה לארחות כלב.

בדי להנחותו ההלל לשרם ומצל
 על משין ועל נקבה.

ויהי עון צוור ישועתי לך לא שבחו
 ושכון ונדוה זבחו
 לעת היה רמות מצרו המבהב
 ואזא ראו ימים ים ניקוה.
We used to joke that if you bumped into my dad in the kitchen, he'd probably want you to work out how to solve global antisemitism while the kettle boils. But he did, because why wouldn’t he? Problems are there to be solved... That’s what my dad taught us, in everything he taught, he wrote, but mainly in the things he chatted to us about while the kettle boiled. He loved us, so much, and never ever missed any opportunity in recent years to tell us that. To tell us how proud he was of everything each of us did, but mainly, of who we were. Of how proud he was of each grandchild, and every new bit of joy they brought into his world. And because he loved us, each of us in different ways because we are different people, he gave us the space to become us, not him...

I will remember many things, but those two in particular: he taught us that the world is there to be challenged and that there is no such thing as an unsolvable problem, and he loved us, which meant we could become the people we are, and no child could wish for more.

(Extracted from Gila’s hesped at her father’s funeral.)
Reflecting on the life of Rabbi Sacks, I would like to share one lesson for each night of Chanukah, adding one to his ‘Seven Principles of Jewish Leadership’ through which his light continues to shine:

1. Leadership is service

Moshe Rabbeinu’s achievements were vast and transformational and he received many titles throughout the ages, from the greatest prophet to the teacher par excellence. Yet Rabbi Sacks highlights only one label as his ‘highest accolade,’ namely: “a servant of the L-rd.” Here Rabbi Sacks reveals the value he sees as most important, “a leader does not stand above the people. He serves the people and serves G-d.”

I had the honor of accompanying Rabbi Sacks when he visited Australia and I was surprised when (in more than one shul) he sat among us rather than in the special area reserved for the Rabbi. Like Moshe, his humility was real. He truly saw himself as a mere messenger of a greater message. He quoted C.S. Lewis, who defined humility not as thinking less of yourself but as thinking of yourself less. Rabbi Sacks was so occupied with thinking about others that he thought of himself less. And through this, he was a true servant of the L-rd and a servant of the people.

2. Leadership begins by taking responsibility

Weaving this message throughout his teachings, and allowing it to animate the experience of learning Torah and the journey of prayer through his Koren commentaries, Rabbi Sacks seemed obsessed with taking responsibility: “When we see something wrong, we can complain or we can act. Complaining does not change the world. Acting does.”

His theology was one of practice and he did not shy away from dealing with issues of the day, openly defending Israel’s right to defend herself and calling out antisemitism for what it is, fighting those that hated any group, broadening his defense of the defenseless, and indeed calling on all of humanity to make space for one another. He publicly debated some of his greatest philosophical detractors, like Richard Dawkins, and took on those that presented a real danger, like British Prime Ministerial candidate Jeremy Corbyn.

In short, Rabbis Sacks’ responsibility lay in his ability to respond – something he did with distinction.

3. Leadership is vision-driven

Influencers usually have a platform such as heading a large institution, holding a significant office, leading a company or representing an organization. The greater the platform, the louder the voice. Yet, in the last years of Rabbi Sacks’ life – by far his most influential – he had none of that. I know of no Jewish leader today that achieved close to what he did regarding broad authority. Part of what enlivened all he did was his tremendous vision, his capacity to invite others to share that vision and of course, to deliver: “Leaders are led by their vision of the future, and it is this that inspires others.”

From our birth as a nation to our rebirth in our nation-state, our historic perspective always beckons us one step further because “History does not give rise to hope; hope gives rise to history.” Rabbi Sacks was
an agent of hope and the vision he sketched will take lifetimes to fulfill.

4. THE HIGHEST FORM OF LEADERSHIP IS TEACHING

Like most of the quotes I have shared, Rabbi Sacks could have been talking about himself when he said, “The great leaders are educators, teaching people to understand the meaning of their time.” Every encounter with Rabbi Sacks was a lesson, every phrase a teaching, every act a tutorial. He was the ultimate ‘text-person.’

My final meaningful encounter with Rabbi Sacks took place around a year ago for a few hours in his home. We began in his study, surrounded by books, and then moved to his living room, surrounded by more books. And I thought to myself that the true library was in his mind and his capacity to catalog, categorize and curate the different ideas was part of his genius. Now his own books adorn the digital and physical shelves of millions of libraries, homes and websites alike, continuing to teach us and provide educational companionship.

5. A LEADER MUST HAVE FAITH IN THE PEOPLE HE OR SHE LEADS

To paraphrase Rabbi Sacks, who would have thought that a group of slaves, escaping from the tyranny of Egypt in the barren desert over 2,000 years ago, could share a message that would transform the world’s moral landscape? More recently, who would have thought that a handful of survivors, after staring eyeball with the angel of death in Auschwitz, would build and rebuild our flourishing homeland? History thus teaches that while it may seem illogical to believe in the power of a people – we can and must believe in our people. As Rabbi Sacks put it, “Faith is the defeat of probability by possibility.”

With a deep appreciation of the history of the Jewish people, he believed in all of us more than we often believe in ourselves.

6. LEADERS NEED A SENSE OF TIMING AND PACE

When Moshe asked G-d to choose his successor, he stated that such a person should “go out before them and come in before them, lead them out and bring them in.” Rabbi Sacks highlighted the apparent repetition as bringing our attention to a fundamental truth about leadership. While one should lead from the front, one should not go so far ahead that when one turns around, the people are too far behind.

Again, he fulfilled his own words: “Leadership involves a delicate balance between impatience and patience. Go too fast and people resist. Go too slow and they become complacent. Transformation takes time, often more than a single generation.” Clearly, his influence has transformed the Jewish world profoundly, but we are yet to see the true transformation he achieved, something the generations to come can only look forward to.

7. WE ARE ALL SUMMONED TO THE TASK

It is this idea that Rabbi Sacks called “probably the deepest Jewish truth of all.” While exceedingly humble, he was acutely aware of the task to which he was summoned. He treated it with absolute sanctity and it was his guiding principle. His time was precious and he always stayed on task.

After seeing so many well-known and less known leaders emerge in sharing how he inspired them, it is clear he succeeded in elevating others to make this choice. He often said that “Good leaders create followers, great leaders create leaders.”

8. EVERY MOMENT IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR LEADERSHIP

Rabbi Sacks argued that “We are all called on to be leaders within our sphere of influence, be it the family, the community, at work, among colleagues, or in-play among teammates.” In this sense, he is inviting all of us to shoulder the responsibility of these leadership lessons in our own lives in everything we do.

May the blessings of one of contemporary Judaism’s greatest leaders stay strong in our memory and may his memory be a blessing.


HAMIZRACHI | 37
Chanukah and Chinuch

The Holiday of Jewish Education

Chanukah is so named because it commemorates the Ханука, the rededication of the Beit HaMikdash, and particularly of the מזבח, the altar centerpiece of the Temple which the Greeks had defiled (Maharsha to Shabbat 21b). All dedications are called חנוכה, such as חנכת המזבח or חנכת המושק or in contemporary times when we buy a new home and invite people for a חנכת הבית, a dedication ceremony.

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch explains the etymology of the name חנוכה as deriving from the same root as the word חנך, to educate. Indeed, Rav Hirsch says, it used to be customary to spend time on Chanukah discussing, strategizing and recommitting to the importance of chinuch.

What Is Chinuch?
The Piaseczno Rebbe, Rav Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, defines chinuch in the introduction to his incredible Chovas HaTalmidim. Based on a Rashi in Bereishit 14:14, he writes, Chinuch is the initiation of a person or object into the trade or art for which it is destined, as in the education of a youth, the dedication of the altar, or inauguration of a house.

The term chinuch is appropriate when referring to an innate talent that a person has for a certain art, or when describing the preparation of a house or object for use.

It is a special word with specific definition, and it is used to describe the realization of latent potential inherent in a person or object. If we fail to actualize that potential, it will remain concealed forever.

Our mission is to be mechanech, to educate the person so that he will become an accomplished craftsman; to prepare the house so that each room fulfills its intended purpose; or to prepare the instrument so that it performs the function for which it was designed.”

According to the Piaseczno, Jewish education and Chanukah share the exact same essence. Both are about dedication, bringing potential into reality, helping a person or a building fulfill the purpose for which it exists, and in both, we bring greater light into the world.

Each Child Is a Flame
Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch points out that the basic mitzvah of Chanukah is as the Gemara dictates, נר איש וביתו, the head of the household lights one candle and fulfills the mitzvah for his wife and children. However, says the Gemara, one does the mitzvah in a mehadrin, enhanced fashion, if נר לכל א樟ו איש, each person of the house lights their own.

Rav Hirsch suggests that yes, we can live life נר איש וביתו, if we light the fire in our own hearts, inspire ourselves and make sure we are warm. But the proper thing to do, the way to accomplish things in a mehadrin fashion, is to make sure each person in the home is a burning flame, to inspire children to burn brightly and illuminate the darkness as well.

Chinuch Never Ends
The Gemara continues: המהדרין מ נר איש וביתו. Chinuch is to light additional candles each night. In chinuch, like in Chanukah, you can't light one candle and think you are done. You can't teach one lesson, share one value,
take advantage of one moment and then become complacent. *Chinuch* requires, μεσιτός ὥρας ὑποδεικνύει, to always add on, teach more, share more inspiration, and to continue the conversation of life. Our children never truly graduate from the academy of our homes and they never complete the teachings of their parents.

We must be μεσιτός ὥρας, continue to influence, inspire and motivate them each and every day, never allowing ourselves to feel too tired to transmit a lesson or too exhausted to take advantage of a teachable moment.

### On the Way in and on the Way Out

The Gemara continues: רַגְמַע הַמַּצָּה הָעֵשָׁה בָּתי יְהוָה בֵּיהוֹרָם, the proper place for the menorah is just outside of the home. The simple understanding is that this placement will allow for the greatest publicizing of the miracle, which is our ultimate goal.

But there is something deeper. We are told the menorah goes on the left side so it is opposite the mezuzah and we are thus surrounded by mitzvot. It is strange, however, that we would violate our usual rule of giving deference to the right side in order to be surrounded. Why not light the menorah right under the mezuzah and have both on the right? Because right and left aren’t absolute directions; they are relative to one’s perspective.

In truth, both the mezuzah and menorah are on the “right” side of the door. The mezuzah is on the right when one walks into the home. We take the values that the mezuzah represents and stands for and remind ourselves of the unity of Hashem’s existence, about loving Hashem and loving others, and about bringing holiness into our lives as we enter our home.

The menorah is on the right side as we exit our homes and head out into the street. There, we, and our children, will encounter foreign values, outside influences, pressures of assimilation and challenges to our faith. We see the light of the menorah as we head out and remind ourselves of our duty and responsibility to illuminate the world, dispel the darkness, and share the light of Torah.

### The Role of the Kitchen Table in Chinuch

The halacha continues that בִּזְמַן סַכָּנָה we are thus surrounded by mitzvot. It is strange, however, that we would violate our usual rule of giving deference to the right side in order to be surrounded. Why not light the menorah inside and put it on the table?

I believe that similarly in chinuch, when it is a time of danger in which we are losing children to unhealthy behaviors, lack of spirituality or observance and more, we need to bring them into the home and to our tables. Nothing can substitute for the impact of spending time with our children and doing so around the table together. Nothing can substitute for the sharing of stories and divrei Torah, and a healthy exchange of ideas.

Many studies have shown that drug use among teens is inversely proportional to the number of nights the family has dinner around the table together. So, let us, together, bring the menorah inside and to the table.

### Igniting the Flame

The Gemara debates whether הנורה עשויה להיות או הַדְלָקָה עוֹשָׂה מִצְוָה. Is the obligation to light the menorah, or rather to place a lit menorah in the proper location? For example, if I light a menorah in the bathroom but then put it outside my home or on my dining room table, do I fulfill the mitzvah? The Gemara concludes, וְהוֹלֵך מִצְוָה, the mitzvah is to light, kindle and ignite a flame. This is our duty with chinuch, to light the flame in those around us.

### Revealing What Was Inside

Lastly, the purpose of the candles is to illuminate the darkness. When we light the menorah, we reveal what was there all along and simply needed a light to shine on it.

In chinuch, says the Piascezno, we are just revealing what is latent inside the child all along. We illuminate the way for him or her and allow them to break through and become the people they are meant to be.

Michelangelo put it best when he described his process of sculpting: “In every block of marble, I see a statue as plain as though it stood before me, shaped and perfect in attitude and in every block of marble, I see a statue as plain as though it stood before me, shaped and perfect in attitude and in motion.” I have only to hew away the rough walls that imprison the lovely apparition to reveal it to the other eyes as mine see it.”

Rabbi Efrem Goldberg is the Rabbi of the Boca Raton Synagogue (BRS), Florida.
Ostensibly, the miracle we celebrate on Chanukah is that the Jews found one flask containing enough pure oil to last for one night, and yet it kept the Menorah lit for eight nights. If so, the miracle only lasted for seven nights. So why do we celebrate eight nights of Chanukah? Here are eight reasons:

1. The first night was a miracle too

The Greeks ransacked the Beit HaMikdash for many days in search of oil to defile. Despite their strength and numbers, they overlooked one flask, which the few weak, battle-weary Jews found immediately. That was the miracle of the first day [and then the oil lasted for another seven]. (HaMeiri in LeHodot UleHallel; Sefer HaEshkol, Chanukah 6:13)

The golden Menorah was ritually impure. So were all the Jewish soldiers, having come in contact with death on the battlefield. Therefore, they were forced to make a temporary earthenware Menorah, because earthenware is more resistant to impurity. But earthenware is porous, and when it is new, it absorbs a small but significant part of any oil put in it. Therefore, one night’s oil for a gold Menorah was not sufficient for an earthenware Menorah because some of the oil is lost to absorption. Hence even the first night’s light was a miracle. (Bava Metzia 40a, Maharsha Chullin 55)

In one account, the text reads “and there wasn’t enough (oil) it to burn even one day...” (Sheiltot DeRav Achai Gaon, Parashat Vayishlach, found in a footnote to Megillat Antiochus in Siddur Otzar HaTefilot)

Seven days of Chanukah commemorate the miracle of the oil, and one day commemorates the miracle that a few weak Jewish soldiers defeated the mighty Greek legions. (Bach; Kedushat Levi)

Chanukah occurred in the year 3622 (139 BCE). Calendar calculations and other historical sources indicate that the 25th of Kislev, the first day of Chanukah, fell on Shabbat that year. Therefore, they needed to light the Menorah before sunset Friday night, and consequently needed a little more...
8 Reasons for 8 Days

than a night’s worth of oil for the first night. (Atzei Zayit)

The miracle was a full eight days

The Kohanim divided one night’s oil into eight portions and miraculously, each portion lasted a full night. (Beit Yosef, Orach Chaim 670)

Wanting the oil to last, the Kohanim made the wicks of the Menorah one-eighth of the normal thickness. Nevertheless, the flames burned just as brightly as if the wicks had been the normal thickness. (Chidushei HaRim)

The commandment to light the Menorah with pure oil is written in the Torah (Vayikra 23-24), immediately after the commandment to observe Sukkot for eight days (seven days of Sukkot followed by Shemini Atzeret). The Sages saw this as a Divine hint that Chanukah should also be for eight days. (Bnei Yissaschar in the name of the Rokeach)

---

1 Research based on Sefer Ner LeMeah, Rabbi Yerachmiel Zeltzer.
Yosef's brothers regarded him as the usurper of their roles in the Jewish nation. So when Ya'akov sent Yosef to report on their welfare, they saw it as an opportunity to defend themselves against this threat. They feared he would defame them to Ya'akov, and that they would be banished, just as Avraham banished Yishmael and Yitzchak banished Esav.

In their view, Yosef was a rodef, a pursuer who threatened both their physical existence and eternal roles as the founders of the Jewish people. The brothers were so convinced they were justified, they sat down to eat bread without any pangs of guilt after selling Yosef. Their common meal was in effect a celebration of their unity and harmony now unhindered by Yosef's evil designs. Even years later, when they searched their pasts for any sins that could explain a series of apparently tragic events, they could not come up with anything other than their failure to be more merciful.

Though the brothers felt fully justified, the Torah reveals to us that their misperception concerning Yosef was not simply an innocent mistake. Coloring their judgment was a slight trace of jealousy. The Sages tell us that jealousy removes a person from the world. This means, in part, it removes one from the world of reality and causes one to view people and incidents in a distorted fashion. Since the brothers' deed was tainted by jealousy, both they and future generations had to suffer the consequences. Rabbeinu Yona finds an echo of the hatred of Yosef's brothers in the causeless hatred for which the Second Temple was destroyed.

With this understanding of how one imperfection in character can have such long-range effects, we can understand a difficult statement of the Sages. When Rebbe Yochanan ben Zakkai's students went to visit him on his deathbed, he began to cry. His students asked him why he was weeping. He answered that if he were brought before a mortal king who could be appeased or bribed, and whose decrees extended only as far as the grave, he would wail. How much more so now he was soon to face the judgment of G-d, Who cannot be appeased or bribed and Whose punishment is eternal.

When Rebbe Yochanan ben Zakkai went out to meet the Roman general Vespasian during the siege of Jerusalem, he was allowed to make certain requests. He asked that: (1) the Sanhedrin be permitted to continue in Yavne, (2) Rabban Gamliel be spared (and hence the line of the Nesim be preserved), and (3) a doctor be provided to heal Rabbi Tzaddok, who had fasted 40 years to avert the destruction of the Temple.

Before his death, Rebbe Yochanan ben Zakkai was beset with doubts as to whether he had acted properly. In his rigorous self-scrutiny, another explanation of why he erred came to him. He had opposed the zealots, who led the rebellion against Rome. But the zealots had ignored his opinion and forced the issue by burning all of Jerusalem's food supplies. The destruction of the Temple and exile of the Jewish people was an apparent vindication of Rebbe Yochanan ben Zakkai's stance since the zealots could hardly claim a Divine sanction for a policy that failed so miserably.

On his deathbed, Rebbe Yochanan ben Zakkai worried that perhaps subconsciously he had not asked for the Temple to be spared out of a fear there would then be no clear proof he had been right. And he suspected that his own honor — offended by the zealots' refusal to heed his decision — might have influenced his request. If that were true, and as a consequence, the Temple was destroyed, would he not have merited eternal death?

The Talmud tells us that Rebbe Yochanan ben Zakkai's suspicions were unfounded. He was innocent; the Temple was destroyed by a Heavenly decree. Yet we can learn from Rebbe Yochanan's concern as to the power of subtle traces of honor, desire and jealousy in distorting one's decisions.

It is incumbent upon us to learn the devastating effect of jealousy and hatred from the sale of Yosef, even in its subtest forms and even in the greatest of people, so we can strive to conduct ourselves in a manner befitting the Jewish people, and may we merit seeing the ultimate reunion of Yosef and his brothers when Mashiach ben Yosef will be sent as a harbinger of Mashiach ben David.

The only adequate response to the fear and hatred of difference is to honour the dignity of difference. — RABBI SACKS
The Children’s Holiday

Now there is not much new or brilliant left to be said about the holiday of Chanukah, right? Many old and grizzled rabbis like yours truly would probably agree with that statement. Over 50 years of writing and speaking about Chanukah should pretty much exhaust the topic, shouldn’t it? But then again, that would be selling Chanukah short. There is always a different and new insight that illuminates all the holidays and Chanukah is certainly no exception. I was reminiscing with myself (something that old grizzled rabbis do often) about my own life and past. I was amazed to again realize that somehow a lawyer from Chicago ended up being a Rabbi in Jerusalem. How did this happen? And how did the Jewish State itself happen – not in terms of history, facts, personalities, dates, places and wars but in the amazing fact that such a country flourishes and progresses in spite of all odds, past and present, against its existence?

Our Sages have taught us that people to whom wondrous things occur do not really recognize those events as being wondrous. It is part of the weakness of human nature to have such limited understanding. There has to be a flash of insight, a commemorative act, a tradition of being able to look past the trees to the forest, a spirit of almost childlike wonder for the amazing to truly be believable in the eye and mind of the beholder. And I think this is how we have to look at Chanukah and the traditions and customs that so endear this eight-day festival to all of Israel.

Jewish tradition and the Rabbis of the Mishnah took an amazing event that many people would look at as being ordinary or natural and restored it to its truly wondrous state. The story of Chanukah is that of a small and apparently weak nation overcoming a mighty army of a world empire.

It records a triumph of monotheism and Jewish tradition over pagan culture and practices, of the small, pure lights in the Temple that overcame the flaming torches that were far from pure, and of the vitality and resilience of Israel over those who would wish to snuff it out of existence. It is all wondrous but only if one views it all as being wondrous.

In their holy perspective of Jewish life and events, our Sages elevated the mundane and seemingly ordinary to the realm of miraculous and eternal. That is the main lesson Chanukah teaches us – we are a special people who live a miraculous existence with constant wonder and yet it is all encrusted in seemingly natural and ordinary occurrences.

To de-legitimize the story of Chanukah and to treat it as just another ancient war of the Grecian period is the same tactic the world uses today to de-legitimize the State of Israel and our rights to our ancient homeland. If the wonder of it all is lost and forfeited then so is our struggle for existence and independence. Chanukah is a pure wonder and hence its importance and relevance to us in today’s world.

Perhaps more than other holidays of the Jewish year, Chanukah is a children’s holiday. Tradition allows even the youngest to light the Chanukah candles, to play dreidel, to taste latkes and sufganiyot, to have time off from school and to observe the holiday through the eyes and senses of a child.

Children still retain their sense of wonder and imagination. Their world is not usually bound by the practicalities, realism and sometimes pessimism of their elders. Everything in life is still new and unexpected, worthy of curiosity and examination. Theirs is yet a magical world, even a spiritual world, viewed from a different plane of perception and thought.

Therefore, Chanukah is the perfect holiday for children for it requires this perspective – to be made wondrous, miraculous and thereby meaningful and beneficial. Chanukah is not for the jaded and empty-spirited. Its candles flicker only for those that see the fire of Torah, tradition and morality lying beneath the waxy surface.

One who is privileged and able to see the wonder of the events that occurred to us “in those days” will also be able to discern the wonders that we encounter daily here in Israel “in our time.”

Rabbi Berel Wein is Senior Rabbi of Beit Knesset HaNassi in Jerusalem and Director of the Destiny Foundation.
A major component of the Chanukah story is Greek culture, which was the essence of the battle. The Greeks sought to force the Jews into living according to their culture and the Maccabim fought to preserve Jewish culture and way of life.

Conflicting sources exist regarding our tradition’s attitude towards Greece. On the one hand, our Sages equate Greece with “darkness.” On the other hand, numerous sources indicate a far more positive attitude towards Greek culture. The Mishnah (Megillah 8b) teaches that a Sefer Torah can be written in either Hebrew or Greek. The Gemara (Sotah 49b) relates that in Israel one should speak either Hebrew… or Greek. The Zohar (Shemot 237a) describes Greece as being a population “who are close to the path of emuna (true belief).” So which is it? Darkness or light?

Our tradition clearly sees real beauty in Greece and Greek culture and their mastery over various aspects of the physical world is significant. However, the Torah has defined parameters for that significance. In Parashat Noach (9:27), “G-d gives beauty to Yefet,” (Yefet is the progenitor of Greece) and He will dwell in the tents of Shem.” That beauty only takes on meaning and importance in the context of a G-d-centered world as connoted by the “tents of Shem.” Physical beauty and man’s mastery over the world tend to drag people into a man-centered society which champions the greatness of man. However, they were very close to true light. Their beauty and creativity could proclaim the glory of G-d in a G-d-centered world. Thus, their language has a place in Jewish ritual and life.

Greek society represented complete darkness. They accomplished a lot but did so within a man-centered culture which used these accomplishments to champion the greatness of man. However, they were very close to true light. Their beauty and creativity could proclaim the glory of G-d in a G-d-centered world. Thus, their language has a place in Jewish ritual and life.

That was the battle of Chanukah. Is the physical world an end to itself or a means to the ultimate goal of spirituality and a connection to G-d?

We remember this when we use a beautiful, physical Menorah, using the most beautiful, physical olive oil, to do a mitzvah of lighting the Chanukah candles, and by using the physical for the spiritual we shine away the darkness of a physical world devoid of G-d and spirituality.

The geographical location most suited to fulfilling this delicate balancing act of using the physical for the spiritual is the Land of Israel. The Or HaChaim (Vayikra 19:23) teaches that the act of planting, a mere physical act anywhere else in the world, becomes a mitzvah when done in the Land of Israel. The Chatam Sofer (Sukkah 36a) agrees and goes even further, teaching that any physical trade involving social welfare or building up the Land becomes a mitzvah in Israel.

But whether one lives in Israel or in the Diaspora, the message of Chanukah and our battle against the Greeks is clear. The way to properly balance the physical and spiritual in our lives is to make sure our own lives are G-d-centered and not man-centered. We must strive to make Torah study and mitzvah observance the focal point of our existence and not something which we simply do on the side. Let us make sure we involve ourselves in the physical world for the ultimate goal of spirituality and closeness to G-d.

(Major components of this article are based on Patterns in Time by Rabbi Matis Weinberg.)

1 See Bereishit Rabbah 2:4 and 44.
There's no place like HaRova!

With Jerusalem’s Old City as a backdrop, students at Midreshet HaRova enjoy an unparalleled setting in which to develop spiritually and intellectually. Realize your potential and reach your goals at Midreshet HaRova!
In his first halacha of Hilchot Chanukah (OC 670), the Shulchan Aruch codifies the custom to abstain from engaging in labor while the Chanukah candles are burning, despite the fact there is no prohibition enjoining labor on Chanukah. Let us suggest an explanation for this minhag.

The Rambam writes that the days of Chanukah were established as days of simcha. Since we don't know the Rambam's source (we only know of such an obligation on Purim), we need a definition of this mitzvah of simcha.

The Gemarah (Sukkah 41a) establishes an obligation incumbent upon Chazal to establish mitzvot DeRabbanan that will encourage us to remember the Mikdash. This is fulfilled on Sukkot when we take the lulav for the entire holiday or during the period of Sefira when we count the days of the Omer. One would doubt that the mitzvah of lighting Chanukah candles could be classified as זֵכֶר לַמִּקְדָּשׁ; rather, the essence of the mitzvah is זֵכֶר לְנֵס, to remember and thank Hashem for the great miracle of the lights of the Menorah.

Rabbeinu Zerachya HaLevy, in his opening comment on the second chapter of Masechet Shabbat, explains the prohibition of using the light of the candles for one's personal benefit. The halachic status of the Chanukah candles is identical with that of the ner of the Menorah in the Mikdash, and is therefore אָסוּר בַּהֲנָאָה.

This ruling would seem to indicate that the mitzvah of נֵר חֲנֻכָּה is not only a zecher for the miracle but also a zecher for the Mikdash.

The same conclusion would seem to underlie the statement of the Ramban (Commentary on the Torah, beginning of Parashat Beha'alotcha): Hashem told Aharon that his obligation to light the ner of the Menorah in the Mikdash was an eternal one. It would continue even after the destruction of the Mikdash in the mitzvah incumbent upon every Jew to light the Chanukah candles. Apparently, רְצִיעָב is a continuation of the mitzvah of בַּיָּת מִקְדָּשׁ.

The obligation is not simply to remember the Mikdash but rather to imagine oneself as if one were standing in the Mikdash and one's mitzvah act is defined as a replication of the mitzvah performed in the Mikdash.

Perhaps the custom of abstaining from labor while the Chanukah candles are burning is an extension of the ruling of Rabbeinu Zerachya HaLevy. Not only does the קִיּוּם זֵכֶר engender a legal status vis-à-vis the candle itself, but even the status of the house where the candles are lit is transformed. The בית takes on the complexion of the היכל in the Mikdash, where the Menorah was lit. Hence, the obligation of מְלָאכָה during ner Chanuka generates kedusha in מקום.

We can now understand the requirement of simcha on Chanukah. Once the home is transformed into a Mikdash and one is standing in the presence of Hashem, one must be in a state of joy.

ונתורנו למקומנו!

“Might and joy are in His place” (Chronicles 1 16:27).

1 The Maharil includes both men and women in this custom.
2 The Ra’avya assumes an obligation to eat a meal with bread on each day of Chanukah!
3 See Rambam, Hilchot Tefilla, 11:8.
4 See Shirurim LeZecher Abba Mori, Vol. 2, pages 193-4. Just as the minhag of יומ הַתּוֹב שְׁעֵנִי extends kedusha in זמן, so does the minhag of איסור מלאכה during ner Chanuka generate kedusha in מקום.
Light in the Darkness

Yosef was a prisoner of Zion. He fervently wished to leave the Soviet Union and come to the Land of Israel, a wish which for many others resulted in punishment and a prison term from the Soviet authorities.

There were hundreds of Prisoners of Zion; brave men and women courageous enough to stand up to a ruthless regime. Yosef was unusual in that he not only wished to live in the Land of Israel; he tried in the most dramatic way to carry out that desire.

The day that he attempted to escape to Israel he was arrested by the infamous KGB – the Soviet secret police – and sentenced to death. Due to pressure applied by free countries all over the world, his sentence was eventually commuted to a long and harsh prison term in the horrible Vladimir Prison in Siberia.

The Vladimir Prison is a chilling factory engaged in destroying man’s spirit. Inside the prison compound, there is no standard diet or menu. Prisoners’ rations are selected from 18 unnourishing varieties which vary in the number of calories from sub-average to starvation level. Likewise, the amount of exercise and fresh air allotted to a prisoner can range from two hours down to none.

Contact with the outside is limited to several letters a year, but this too can, and often is, curtailed. Technically a prisoner is allowed two meetings a year with his family, but years can pass without any visits at all.

The KGB has an elaborate and remarkably pragmatic way of controlling an inmate’s body and even his thoughts. After the initial shock of life at Vladimir has been experienced, a KGB representative will invite the inmate for a talk. The prisoner will be offered coffee, tea, meat or a visit to a restaurant in civilian clothing. An officer from the secret police might tempt the prisoner with a letter from his family, or by permitting a visit from a friend.

To earn these privileges a prisoner merely has to be willing to inform on a cellmate or confess to a crime he never committed.

Yosef would never inform on a cellmate or confess to a crime he hadn’t committed, so he never got any special privileges. Needless to say, he was denied all religious articles, as well as permission to perform mitzvot.

But the KGB, for all their terror, intimidation, and frequent punishments, couldn’t break Yosef’s iron will to keep G-d’s commandments.

Somehow he managed to observe, in the most primitive fashion imaginable, whatever mitzvot he could. He virtually Risked his life not to work on Shabbat. He refused to eat non-kosher food and avoided chametz on Pesach.

One frigid winter, a single thought managed to warm Yosef’s soul: the holiday of Chanukah was approaching.

Yosef dreamed of how he would be able to observe the mitzvah of lighting the candles, a seemingly impossible act under the circumstances. Certainly, the prison authorities would never permit it and would react harshly to the very proposal of such a notion. Regardless, Yosef put his mind to the mission and developed a clever, viable scheme.

Every day he saved a little bit from his meager rations, even though this meant subsisting on next to nothing. When no one was watching, he secretly slipped a part of a slice of bread or a small piece of potato into his pocket. Later on, he carefully placed these scraps on a small ledge in his cell and prayed that a guard would not notice his collection.

The day before Chanukah, Yosef could barely contain his excitement. So far his little gathering had gone unnoticed and there was only one final, critical detail to be arranged.

Trying to attract as little attention as possible, Yosef purchased a pack of cigarettes in the prison store, although he didn’t smoke. He knew that packets of cigarettes were accompanied by matches, and they were the crucial missing ingredient for his plan.

With trembling fingers, Yosef opened up the box of matches and discovered that there were 37 matches inside – exactly the number he needed, with one extra to serve as a shamash, for the lights.

Late on the first night of Chanukah, when everyone was sleeping and no guards were in sight, Yosef inserted the matches into his slivers of dry bread and slices of potato. These scraps were his secret Chanukah menorah!

The matches burned for only a few seconds, but they provided endless light and inspiration for Yosef Mendelevich in the depths of the Vladimir Prison in Siberia.

Heard from Yacov Mordechai.

Rabbi Hanoch Teller, internationally-acclaimed storyteller extraordinaire, is an award-winning author and producer.
The Chanukah story seems to be predicated on two miracles – the overt miracle of the oil that burnt for eight days instead of one and the less obvious miracle of the military victory by a small group of priestly irregulars defeating the professional army of the Seleucid Greeks. Which are we celebrating on Chanukah – the oil, the war, or both?

On the one hand, the liturgical texts instituted by Chazal mention only the military victory. Thus, in Al HaNissim it says, “You delivered the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, etc.” It concludes with “Your children came to the Holy of Holies of Your house, cleansed Your Temple... and kindled lights in the Courtyard...” It mentions lighting the Menorah and yet omits the miracle of the oil. On the other hand, the primary mitzvah established by Chazal is lighting a menorah, with certain aspects modeled on the lighting in the Mikdash. And when the Gemara (Shabbat 21b) famously asks מַאי חֲנוּכָּה, “What is Chanukah?” it answers about the miracle of the oil. So what are we celebrating?

The Maharal explained that a miracle that ‘merely’ enabled the fulfillment of a mitzvah does not warrant the establishment of a holiday. Only a miracle which provides salvation justifies or even necessitates annual praise and thanks to G-d. If that is the case, what was the purpose of the miracle of the oil? The Maharal suggests it was not obvious to all that the war was a miraculous victory. By causing the oil to burn for eight nights, G-d was providing a huge billboard that essentially said, “Take note – do you see this manifest miracle of the oil? Good. Now take notice of the huge miracle that I just did for you in winning the war.”

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Hilchet Shlomo 16:9) similarly says that the primary rabbinic enactment is to light candles to acknowledge the great miracles G-d performed for our ancestors in the military victory. He continues by explaining that the primary aspect of the mitzvah is that during the lighting, one should have in mind to praise and thank G-d for the military miracles.

In a surprising application of this, the Sha’ar HaTziyun (676:3) quotes the Meiri’s suggestion that a person who will not be able to light nor see another person’s lights should make the bracha of שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים and think about the miracles! Similarly, a person for whom his family lights on his behalf should still think about the miraculous military victory.

Thus, our lighting of the candles is a means of publicizing, to others and to ourselves, the miracle of the military victory. It is a נְכָשְּר מִצְוָה for the main mitzvah of thanking G-d, just as the original miracle of the oil was a means of drawing attention to the possibly overlooked Hand of G-d in the battles.

Common wisdom contrasts Purim with Chanukah in that the latter celebrates an open miracle and the former a hidden miracle. It seems that in reality, Chanukah is also about a miracle that was not obvious to all and G-d needed to direct our attention for all to see.

This point takes on added significance when one notes the oil miracle occurred on the 25th of Kislev, thereby confirming that a military victory had already taken place by that point, sufficient for the Jews to declare independence and establish an annual holiday. This is remarkable considering that the war was far from over and continued for several more years. That is similar to the US Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, with the war to rage on for several more years.

The miracle of the oil should be a beacon telling the Jewish people to be on the lookout for other such occurrences. Other wars whose victories only make sense if we see the Hand of G-d in them. And even if those wars have not concluded with an everlasting peace, and the state of war persists, the holiday of Chanukah established by our holy ancestors alerts us to the obligation to thank G-d for those victories even as we are still fighting on.

Rabbi Ari Z. Zivotofsky is a Professor of Neuroscience as well as a tour guide in Ir David.
The name of the holiday can be understood in a number of ways. The פְּשָׁט, the straightforward explanation, is that it comes from the idea of the inauguration. The Torah describes the offerings brought by the נesi'im at the onset of the use of the altar in the Mishkan as חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ (Bamidbar Chapter 7). This literal connection is most likely the reason the offerings of the נesi'im are the Torah reading for each day of Chanukah.

חֲנוּכָּה, in the sense of the dedication of a new structure, is also used in context of the beginning of the use of the Temple built by Shlomo; multiple sacrifices were brought for the inauguration of the House of G-d by the king and all of Israel (Kings 2, 8:63). A חֲנוּכָּה was also performed upon the dedication of the Second Temple (Ezra 6:17) and completion of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem at the time of return from Babylon (Nechemia 12:27). This meaning of the name is most connected to the spiritual reason for Chanukah, the rededication of the Menorah and Temple after it had been defiled by the Syrian-Greek oppressors. This reason for Chanukah is most closely associated with the second commandment of Chanukah, the reciting of prayers of thanks such as Hallel and additions of portions of thanks in the Amidah and Birkat HaMazon.

However, there is yet another word reflected in the name of Chanukah, that of חינוך, education. This is fitting too, as Chanukah celebrates the victory of the Jews in regaining the central part of Jewish education, the study of Torah. In the words of the Rambam, Hilchot Megillah VeChanukah Chapter 3: “At the time of the Second Temple, when the Greeks ruled, they decreed edicts to remove Jews from their religion and to prevent their involvement with Torah and commandments.” Therefore, the reason for the worldly battle in the first place was to reclaim the spiritual world G-d had given us through the Torah.

Candles are a wonderful metaphor for education. In lighting one candle from another, the fire takes hold of the second candle, but is not diminished in the first. So too in education. When a teacher passes on knowledge to his or her student, the student gains understanding and the teacher’s knowledge is not diminished.

Prayers of thanks should also be an important part of education. This can be more challenging as there is a natural tendency to offer thanks if one is dealt the ‘ideal’ student. It is harder to feel thanks for students who are more challenging. But that too is a message of Chanukah. The victory over the Greeks was not perfect. The battle raged for years after the Temple dedication and the Hasmonean Dynasty lasted only 100 years. Yet every year we say Hallel for the victory we were given at that time. So too, we should be thankful for all of our students and help each of them shine their unique light on the world.

The last two letters – כ and ה – are the date in Kislev on which the holiday falls. The remaining letters spell חָנוּ, they rested. Thus the name can also be read “they rested on the 25th” (Machzor Vitry Seder Chanukah 259). This version of the name thus reflects the more worldly reason for the celebration of Chanukah, the miracle of winning the battle against the Syrian-Greeks and the ability to rest at the end of this battle. This reason for Chanukah is most closely associated with the second commandment of Chanukah, the reciting of prayers of thanks such as Hallel and additions of portions of thanks in the Amidah and Birkat HaMazon.

To defend a country, you need an army. But to defend humanity, you need education.

RABBI SACKS

Dr. Deena Zimmerman is a pediatrician and Director of yoatzot.org, a website for women’s health and halacha.
The Jews, The Greeks and Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Chanukah celebrates Jewish uniqueness. The Chashmonaim fought against the inroads that Greek religion, culture and wisdom had made amongst the Jewish people. In this sense, their victory, symbolized by the small but steady flame of the menorah, represents the fact that the eternal light of Torah will outlast all the opposing outside forces.

If taken to the extreme, this message can lead to an isolationist mindset. One can argue that we successfully fought against the Greeks and defeated them militarily and spiritually. The spoils of the war are that we can now lead our ideal Jewish lives as “a nation that dwells alone,” interacting as little as possible with the world around us. In this telling, the lesson of Chanukah is to disconnect and disengage from other nations in order to develop the pure spirit of Torah.

By contrast, Rav Kook developed a more nuanced approach to the issue of engagement with the outside world. Even as he forcefully highlighted the inroads that Greek religion, culture and wisdom had made amongst the Jewish people and their Torah, his writings on Chanukah find space for a positive engagement with the world around us.

This engagement is bidirectional. On one level, we need to import the best elements and modes of expression from the outside world into Jewish thought and life. This process can bring to the fore certain aspects of the Torah that were hitherto in the backdrop and can aid in expressing the timeless Torah values in a contemporary and compelling fashion.

For Rav Kook, this is what Chazal sought to do with the Greek culture of their time. Instead of a categorical rejection, they noted the beauty of Greek language and expression and sought to harness these elements to better understand and teach Torah.

On the flipside, Chanukah teaches us the value of exporting Torah ideas to the public square. The Talmud relates that ideally the menorah is to be placed outside of the house such that it can light up the street. It is only when the non-Jews in the thoroughfare become antagonistic to the Jewish people and it becomes dangerous to light outside that we are allowed to move our menorot indoors.

Rav Kook explained that the menorah represents the light of Torah. Whenever the non-Jewish world is receptive to listening, we have a responsibility to shine the light of Torah on the issues of the day. We must be confident that “[Torah] is your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the nations,” and continue to teach and lead until the Torah’s light impacts even the last straggler in the street.

It is only when the non-Jewish public becomes hostile to the Jewish people that we reluctantly bring the Torah indoors and it becomes a private light for our community alone.

It is no coincidence that in the Land of Israel the custom of many Jews is to light the menorah outdoors. According to Rav Kook, it is when we are back in our Land with our own sovereign state that we regain the self-confidence and opportunity to proudly espouse the light of Torah to the world. This is part of the messianic vision in which the nations of the world will look to the Jewish people as leaders of spirituality and morality, and as models for how to live meaningful lives.

In this regard, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, zt”l, embodied Rav Kook’s message of Chanukah. On the one hand, he had a firm conviction in the uniqueness of the Jewish people and of the Torah which he projected in his writings and talks. Simultaneously, though, he practiced these positive forms of engagement with the world outside in an optimal fashion. He was fluent in the “Greek” of our day and used his knowledge and eloquence to relay the Torah to Jews in a contemporary and relevant manner. And he proudly and self-confidently projected the Torah’s vision into the public square of ideas, reaching millions of people across the globe and inspiring them with the Torah’s vision. This Chanukah, may we too be inspired by the teachings and examples of Rav Kook and Rav Sacks.

1 Bamidbar 23:9.
2 Ein Aya Shabbat 2:12.
3 Ein Aya Shabbat 2:5, 2:13; Orot HaKodesh 2, page 403.
4 Ma’amarei HaRe’iyah, page 476-477.
5 Shabbat 21b.
6 Ma’amarei HaRe’iyah, page 150-151.
7 Devarim 4:6.
8 For similar themes, see Rav Kook’s address at the opening ceremonies of the Hebrew University (Ma’amarei HaRe’iyah, page 306-308).

Rabbi Dr. Yosef Bronstein is a faculty member of Michlelet Mevaseret Yerushalayim and Yeshiva University.

We need a new generation of Jews committed to the dialogue between sacred and secular if Judaism is to engage with the world and its challenges.

Rabbi Sacks
THE LAX FAMILY EDITION
TZURBA M’RABANAN

SPECIAL VOLUME:
Halachot of the COVID-19 Era

A systematic and concise learning method, from the Talmudic source through modern-day halachic application

AVAILABLE NOW AT WWW.TZURBAOOLAMI.COM
M any of the outgoing Trump administration’s novel Mideast policies should be adopted by the next administration, even if Democratic leaders shrink from crediting Trump for any breakthroughs.

There are three axes of Mideast policy that must not be abandoned.

The first is the unleashing of a rewarding regional dynamic whereby Arab states are moving to open partnership with Israel on a wide range of issues. Already this has led to three peace agreements (between Israel and the UAE, Bahrain and Sudan). Additional Arab countries should be encouraged to follow suit.

Sustaining this momentum requires active American diplomacy in support of Arab-Israel rapprochement, with signals coming from the highest levels in Washington and concrete offers of US aid on the table (yes, including weapons).

It also requires continuing stiff American resolve in opposing Iran’s hegemonic designs in the region and resisting the temptation to over-prioritize the Palestinian issue – as detailed below.

The second axis of intelligent Mideast policy over the past four years has been treating Palestinians as responsible adults.

This means expecting the Palestinian governments in Judea, Samaria and Gaza to end their payments to terrorists, disarm terrorist militias, ending attempts to brand Israel a war criminal in international courts, end the teaching of genocidal anti-Semitism in their schools and media, and respect human rights, religious freedoms, and a free press. These are all-American principles; they must not be soft-pedaled.

This might nudge Palestinians, inshal-lah, towards the replacement of their rejectionist leaders with men and women who seek peace and prosperity for their people in partnership with Israel. Younger Palestinians must know that the Palestinian national movement will be marginalized in the Arab world and in Western capitals unless they come to the table with new leadership willing to compromise.

For American diplomats to start once again scurrying about the region without pressing such inevitable truths on the Palestinians would be worse than mischievous; it would be disastrous. To be overly solicitous of the Palestinians, a long-time mistake of professional peace processors, would be unhelpful in the extreme.

Continuing to dial-down Palestinian expectations would be much more constructive. No administration should revert to stale and unworkable formulas based on maximalist Palestinian demands and minimalistic regard for Israeli security needs and national-historic claims. I am referring, of course, to discredited formulas involving the uprooting of settlements, Israeli withdrawals from most of Judea and Samaria, and a division of Jerusalem.

The third and perhaps most important plank of US policy is the attempt to truly halt Iran’s advance towards nuclear weapons and its aggressive troubleshooting across the region. There should be no more American charity for Iranian lies, including Iran’s vague commitments under the JCPOA agreement negotiated by President Obama and the P5+1; an agreement that took at face value Iranian denials of there being any nuclear weapons program to worry about.

Because Trump defiantly dumped Obama’s signature foreign policy “achievement,” incoming President Biden (who was Obama’s vice-president) surely will seek to entice Iran into a renewed accord, and he will do so by lifting some sanctions against Tehran. This is probably the wrong way to go, instead of increasing sanctions against Iran. Nevertheless, a new US administration surely will understand that Iran must be forced to relent on several key issues.

These are 1. A complete end to Iran’s nuclear military program, including all uranium enrichment and plutonium production, with no sunset. 2. A truly intrusive international inspections regime. 3. An end to Iran’s ballistic missile development program. 4. A retreat from the forward bases in Syria that Iran is building to challenge Israel. 5. Full cessation of Iranian financing of Hamas and Hezbollah military capabilities.

Short of this, a new deal with Iran will be perilous and unsustainable.

One also would hope that any administration will continue to back the “war between the wars” – Israel’s covert strikes on Iranian sites in Syria and on nuclear installations in Iran.

The principles described here are in America’s best interests as well as Israel’s, and therefore they ought to survive a presidential transition.

David M. Weinberg is vice president of the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security, jiss.org.il. His personal site is davidmweinberg.com.
Chanukah marks the conflict between different groups living in Eretz Yisrael in the Second Temple period. Let’s look at the words that describe them.

Yavan
At the time, the Land was controlled by the Greeks – the Yevanim, יוונים. Those Jews who identified with Greek culture and wished to assimilate into it were known as mityavinim, מיתייניים – “Hellenists.” The word Hellenist reflects how the Greeks themselves called their country – Hellas. The Jews, however, referred to Greece as Yavan, יוון. This name appears in Bereshit 10:2, as the fourth son of Yafet, and a grandson of Noah. The Talmud (Yoma 10a) identifies the other sons of Yafet with various nations in the region but simply says that Yavan is according to its plain meaning – i.e., Greece. The word Yavan is likely related to the name of the Eastern Greeks – the Ionians. The Ionians crossed the Aegean Sea and settled on the west coast of Asia Minor, in today’s Turkey. They were therefore the first Greek tribe many nations of the Middle East encountered, so in addition to Hebrew, other languages (like Akkadian and Sanskrit) also refer to Greeks as Ionians.

Makabim
The group that rebelled against the Greeks and their Jewish supporters were known as the Maccabees or Makabim in Hebrew. Makabim is either spelled מכבים or מכביס, each reflecting a different etymology. The more common spelling today is מכביס. It is often explained as an acronym, either from Shemot 15:11, ימך כבשא (“Who is like you among the mighty, G-d") or מט長いיהו חומ ויה זיוות – “Matityahu Kohen son of Yochanan,” after the kohen who led the call for rebellion against the Greeks. But both of these etymologies are assumed to be folk etymologies.

A more plausible explanation is that the name derives from the Hebrew word מקבת – “hammer” and is reflected in the spelling מתקוב. This theory claims that Matityahu’s son Yehuda was called the Makabi because he struck his enemies as with a hammer.

A third theory claims that Makabim is an inaccurate translation of the Hebrew word מַכָּבִים – “general, commander of an army.” Since we encounter the word first in Greek texts, not Hebrew ones, no Hebrew spelling can be considered authoritative, and so מַכָּבִים is certainly a reasonable possibility.

The English word “macabre,” meaning “gruesome,” actually derives from the Maccabees. In the art of the Middle Ages, a certain “dance of death,” was known as the “dance of Maccabees” because of the martyrdom of those Jews defying their Greek oppressors.

Chashmonaim
While Yehuda and his brothers were known as Makabim, the dynasty they founded was called the חשמונאים – the Hasmonaens. This term does not appear in the post-biblical Books of the Maccabees but is found in the Talmud and other rabbinic works. And like “makabim,” there are a number of theories as to the origin of chashmonaim.

One theory, as quoted by Josephus, says Asmoneus was the grandfather (or great-grandfather) of Matityahu and the family name derived from this ancestor.

Others say that Chashmonaim may come from a place name – either חשמון (mentioned in Bamidbar 33:2) or חשמון (mentioned in Yehoshua 15:27). According to these theories, the family lived in or near one of these places before moving to Modi’in (where they lived when the rebellion broke out).

Another theory connects Chashmonaim to the word חושם, одно בד – “ambassador” and other commentaries have “princes.” Therefore the name Chashmonaim referred to the status of the family, and the author of Maoz Tsur picked up on this – עם דבר השם.

From this interpretation, the word chashman developed into the meaning of “an important person,” and eventually became the translation for the Catholic “cardinal.”

Both terms are used in other contexts in Israel today. Chashmonaim is the name of a town in central Israel, and Maccabi is the name of a large sports organization, a health maintenance organization and a brand of beer.

David Curwin is a writer living in Efrat, and the author of the Balashon blog. balashon.com • balashon1@gmail.com.
Chanukah Gelt refers to money given as a gift during Chanukah. It is typically given to children and sometimes teachers, often in conjunction with the game of Dreidel. Gelt means “money” in Yiddish. In Hebrew it is called דְּמֵי חֲנֻכָּה (Chanukah money).

But why do we give gelt during Chanukah?

1. We read in the Talmud that the Chanukah lights are sacred and may not be used for any other purpose. The example given is that one may not count money by the candles’ light. Giving out Chanukah money – and not counting it near the menorah – is a reminder of the primacy of Torah, which is “more precious than gold and silver.”

2. When discussing what a poor person is to do if he does not have enough money to purchase both Chanukah candles and kiddush wine, the Talmud states that Chanukah lights take precedence, because they serve to publicize the miracle. The widespread custom of giving Chanukah gelt to the poor enabled them to get the money they needed for candles without feeling shame.

3. The Hebrew word חֲנֻכָּה shares the same root as חִינּוּךְ, education. The occupying Greek forces were determined to force Hellenism upon the Jewish population, at the expense of the ideals and commandments of the Torah. Unfortunately, they were quite successful in their endeavor. After the Greeks were defeated, it was necessary to re-educate the Jews and reintroduce a large part of the population to Torah values. Appropriately, during Chanukah, it is customary to give gelt to children as a reward for Torah study.

4. In his record of the Chanukah events, Rambam writes: “The Greeks laid their hands upon the possessions of Israel.” The Greeks treated the possessions of Israel in the same spirit in which they defiled the oil in the Beit HaMikdash. They did not destroy the oil; they defiled it. They did not rob the Jewish people; they attempted to infuse their possessions with Greek ideals for egotistical and ungodly purposes rather than for holy pursuits. Chanukah gelt celebrates the freedom and mandate to channel material wealth toward spiritual ends.

5. According to popular legend, it is linked to the miraculous victory of the Maccabees over the ancient Greeks. To celebrate their freedom, the Chashmonaim minted national coins. It may also have begun in 18th-century Eastern Europe as a token of gratitude toward religious teachers, similar to the custom of tipping service people on Christmas. In 1958, the Bank of Israel issued commemorative coins for use as Chanukah gelt. That year, the coin bore the image of the same menorah that appeared on Maccabean coins 2,000 years ago.

6. Like other oppressors of the Jewish people (such as the Nazis in more recent times), part of the Greek attack on the Jewish people was to take their money (See Rambam Chanukah 3:1). According to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, the giving of Chanukah gelt is to celebrate this part of G-d’s salvation.

1 Likutei Levi Yitzchak, Igrot, p. 358.
Did you know?

- One minhag favors the fifth night of Chanukah for giving Chanukah gelt. Unlike the other nights of Chanukah, the fifth does not ever fall on Shabbat, hence never conflicting with the halachic injunction against handling money on the Shabbat.

- American chocolatiers of the 20th century picked up on the gift/coin concept by creating chocolate gelt. In the 1920s, Loft’s, an American candy company, produced the first chocolate gelt, wrapped in gold or silver foil in mesh pouches resembling money bags.
In 1789, Yehuda Aryeh Leon Bibas was born in Gibraltar to a Sephardic family. One of his maternal ancestors was Chaim ibn Attar (1696–1743) one of the most prominent rabbis of the Moroccan Jewish community and author of the influential Or HaChaim.

Bibas’s father came from a line of Rabbis in Tétouan who emigrated to Gibraltar in 1859 after a pogrom. Bibas studied as a child in Gibraltar and after his father’s death, he moved in with his grandfather in Livorno, Italy, home to a prestigious and educated Jewish community. It was there Bibas received his Jewish education, became a doctor and gained fluency in English, Italian, Spanish and Hebrew. He then returned to Gibraltar where he established himself as head of a local yeshiva, attended by students from England, Italy and North Africa.

In 1810 he came to London, England, where he met with the famous Jewish activist and philanthropist Sir Moses Montefiore. The two later collaborated on many projects, Montefiore also being a staunch advocate of strengthening the Jewish population of the Land of Israel.

In 1831, Bibas was appointed Chief Rabbi of Corfu, Greece.

By 1839, Bibas was well on his path of activism on behalf of uniting World Jewry regarding the Land of Israel. It could be considered the beginning of the Zionist Movement, proto-Zionism. The Land of Israel at the time was ruled by the Ottoman Empire, based in Turkey, which was not always hospitable to the indigenous Jewish community. Inspired by a series of Serbian and Greek revolts against the Ottoman Turks, Rabbi Bibas advocated mass repatriation of Jews to Israel. In 1839, he embarked upon a tour of European Jewish communities to advocate aliyah.

By 1852, one year after his wife passed away, the 63-year-old Rabbi Bibas made the permanent move to the Land of Israel and was welcomed by his students in Jaffa.

He made his home in Chevron, where he built his extensive library and was appointed supervisor of the Magen Avot Fund, a local organization that helped purchase property and maintain community institutions.

After years of advocacy work on behalf of the Jewish homeland, Rabbi Bibas died only two months after arriving in Israel and was buried in the Old Jewish Cemetery in Chevron, near the graves of many other great Jewish sages.

His vast collection of rare books was donated to local yeshivot.

According to a brief article from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency dated October 23, 1952, the now world-renowned Dead Sea Scrolls were originally housed in Rabbi Bibas’s library:

“The charge that the Hebrew Scrolls discovered sometime ago at the Dead Sea came from looted synagogues and the library of Judah Bibas in the city of Chevron, which were sacked by the Arabs in the bloody riots of 1929, is made by Prof. Solomon Zeitlin in the current issue of the Jewish Quarterly Review, published by Dropsie College.”

“...Prof. Zeitlin, who from the beginning questioned the antiquity and authenticity of the Scrolls, claims that they were not in fact discovered in caves near the Dead Sea by Bedouins, but were stolen by Arabs in the Chevron massacres and then hidden for many years before being produced as new finds. He points out that for the last few years many of the Torah Scrolls which were stolen from Chevron were offered for sale by men connected with the Syrian Convent who also bought the Dead Sea Scrolls from an Arab.”

We will never know whether Rabbi Bibas knew he was in possession of one of the world’s most important ancient documents. However, the ransacking of his precious library and the selling of Jewish holy texts was not nearly as reprehensible as the razing of the cemetery and desecration of his final resting place by the Jordanians who controlled Chevron from 1948–1967.

Today, Rabbi Bibas’s legacy is in the philosophy of the Jewish right to self-determination and a return to the ancestral homeland based on religious precepts and national aspirations. These concepts were revolutionary at the time but went on to influence the creation of a thriving Jewish State that today is at the forefront of high-tech, environmental and medical fields, and a haven for seekers of spirituality.
To Ignite the Candle Within

Chanukah is a holiday of opposites and contradictions – the few against the many, the impure versus the pure, light and dark. The mitzvot of the chag are also delicately balanced in “no-man’s land” – not placing the chanukiah too high or too low, lighting at the interface of day and night, between the house and the street.

Throughout the discussions in the Gemara, we come across the debate about whether it’s “the lighting that makes the mitzvah” or “the placing that makes the mitzvah.”

In other words, if a person first lights the chanukiah in a place where he does not fulfil the mitzvah, and only afterwards places it in his window or at the door, is he considered to have fulfilled the mitzvah or not? If we say the lighting is the determining factor, then no, but if we say the placement is what counts, then as soon as he places the lit chanukiah in the right place, he has fulfilled the mitzvah.

In a similar vein, if the candles burn out before their full time, do we need to relight them or not? If it’s the lighting that counts, then we’ve already fulfilled the mitzvah and there is no need to light again. But if it’s the placement that counts, we haven’t fulfilled the mitzvah until the lights burn in the right place for their full allotted time, hence we would have to light the candles again.

Excitement Versus Rote

Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev addresses these debates in the Gemara and explains that the root of the differences in opinion is manifested in two ‘movements’ of the soul: lighting and placing. ‘Lighting’ symbolizes the soul’s full engagement – enthused, alive, ebullient. ‘Placing’ symbolizes the soul opting for rest, settling, routine.

And so Rav Levi Yitzchak explains the debate. Those who say that lighting makes the mitzvah mean that ideally a person should fulfil the mitzvah with burning enthusiasm, and those who hold that ‘placing makes the mitzvah’ acknowledge those moments in our lives that we just cannot enlist our soul to be aroused by the ‘lighting,’ yet even then we should not forego the mitzvah and observe it if only by rote.

There is a value to drab persistence, to habit, to fulfilling mitzvot in a routine way.

Rav Levi Yitzchak is describing one of the fundamentals of Chassidut: observing mitzvot through enthusiasm and a love of G-d. This was the great message of Chassidism, created to breathe new life into what had become a dormant, routine-style Judaism. To emphasize passion for mitzvot and love of G-d over mechanical ritual.

The Dangers of Enthusiasm

Nevertheless, there is danger in the ecstatic spiritual experience. Rav Levi Yitzchak notes the tension between the lighting and the placing, between breaking out of one’s comfort zone and remaining in routine. He cites three particular dangers: i) the escape from routine is fast and knows no limits, and hence can spill over into meaningless matters. ii) since it is momentary, it passes quickly and cannot be maintained over time. And iii) “sparks are not real,” i.e. raw enthusiasm has no existence in and of itself. It always needs something to ignite it.

The response to these dangers is the mitzvah. The mitzvah separates the wheat from the chaff and the meaningful from the meaningless, ensuring that our passions and yearnings are channeled into the scared. Likewise, the world of mitzvot gives substance to that enthusiasm, holding it, preserving it and able to ignite it again and again. It is the mitzvot that connect enthusiasm to the world of eternity.

Connecting Opposites

Thus, Chanukah also represents the tension between static and dynamic.

This tension is enmeshed in all aspects of our lives – in prayer, in our relationships, in parenting and in our professional lives. We cannot keep things burning bright for too long and it is also impossible to remain too long in a debilitating routine without the occasional burst of enthusiasm.

Chanukah teaches us the middle path.

The family stands together at a juncture in time that is neither night nor day, in a place that is not really inside the house yet not really outside, and lights a small light that illuminates a world of darkness.

The Chanukah lights are beacons by which we can walk safely in a world full of opposites and contradictions. Lights that ignite the flames of desire and enthusiasm within eternity.

(Based on an article by Rav Itamar Elad.)

Gael Grunewald is Deputy Chairman of the WZO and Head of its Education Department. He is one of World Mizrachi’s representatives in the National Institutions.

Jewish faith is about courage, endurance and the capacity to hold fast to ideals even when they are ignored by others.

RABBI SACKS
What Would Washington Think Today?

In December 1777, General George Washington and his soldiers fearfully fled from the British Army to Valley Forge. On Christmas Eve, Washington walked among his exhausted soldiers, who were hungry and shivering from cold. Next to one of the tents, he saw a soldier lighting a candle and whispering a few words, tears in his eyes. Washington asked, “Why are you crying?” The soldier replied, “I am not crying. I am a Jew, and I just lit Chanukah candles. I prayed that the G-d of Israel, who gave strength to the Maccabees to defeat their evil enemies, will give us strength too to defeat our enemies. We will triumph.” Washington returned to his tent with vigorous steps, a new light in his eyes.

This famous story ties the ancient nation of Israel, which has a very young country, with the nascent American nation, one of the oldest countries in the world. It is exciting and heartwarming to see how our own holiday touches the hearts of others as well. No one knows exactly what that soldier said, and how exactly Washington remembered it. When I read different versions of this story, it seems to me that, over changing times, it has become more and more watered down, diluted. For example, Barack Obama declared that Chanukah is the “holiday of religious freedom,” which teaches the right to liberty of religion, and the fable of Washington and the candle tends to be interpreted in that spirit today. Less “G-d of Israel,” more abstract rights.

In the Hebrew Wikipedia, the entry “Chanukah” displayed the following strange sentence: “The main message of Chanukah is the triumph of freedom of religious worship.” Really? Did Mattityahu ever hear of this? After all, this elderly Kohen from Modi’in called out, “Whoever is zealous for the Torah and keeps the covenant, follow me!” Or, in the popular version, “Whoever is for Hashem, follow me!” (מִי לַה’ אֵלָי). He did not say, “Whoever is for freedom of religion, follow me.”

I understand why gentiles looking for inspiration in the holiday of Chanukah would find more universal values in it. That’s legitimate, even desirable. There are truly messages like this in all of our holidays. But when we exaggerate in diluting the original Jewish values in the holiday, we get a homeopathic medicine which is 100 percent water. On Chanukah, we want olive oil, not refined water.

George Washington himself was a deeply religious man, and through his religious beliefs, he also valued religious freedom. But if we turn religion itself into an insignificant trifle, what importance can there be to freedom of religion?

I am largely in favor of freedom. Yet the importance of freedom depends on the question of what it comes to protect. Israel denies many citizens the choice of which school to send their children to. The latter outrages me a lot more than the former since education is a lot more important than snail mail. Educational freedom is important to me because education is important to me, and freedom of religion is important only because religion itself is important.

If we erase our G-d and our Avodat Hashem, our joy and our awe, the Temple and the Altar, from the values of Chanukah, what will remain from this beloved holiday? Freedom of religion will become about as important as freedom of mail. And ultimately, freedom of religion will also dissolve, because people tend not to fight for things that are unimportant to them.

For me, religion is a higher value, and therefore religious freedom is a higher necessity. I’m not a relativist, because I believe there is truth in the world. I’m not a pluralist, because I don’t believe in multiple truths. But I am tolerant because I believe there is no other way to live in our diverse and complex society today. If everyone tried to force their values on others, our lives would turn to Gehenom. We simply have no other choice.

Freedom of the individual is the only possible institution for shared existence in the 21st century. When it begins to falter, our shared existence is in danger. But all of that is not connected to Chanukah. Religious freedom is not a slogan but an essential, life-affirming need.

Rabbi Chaim Navon is a renowned author and educator.
THE PEOPLE AND THE LAND

Write it Down… Before it’s Too Late

If you don’t write down your parents’ stories, they’ll be forgotten in a generation or two.

▶ Don’t know where to start?
▶ No time?
▶ Can’t get around to it?

Let me do the work for you!

“I never knew so much work went into writing a book but now I know. Hours on hours of interviews but Danny knew exactly what to say and how long to speak to him... thank you so much!”

S.K.
Netanya

“These untold secrets have monumental significance to me and my family and have had a huge impact on our understanding of my mother’s difficult war experiences.”

Evelyn Nuszen
Jerusalem

“Working with Danny Verbov was a great source of joy and fun. His sensitivity and humor enhanced our working relationship and most importantly resulted in a book I am truly proud of.”

Sandy Collins
London

To honor, preserve and celebrate your parents’ lives through a beautiful family legacy book, contact Danny Verbov at dannyverbov@gmail.com or call +972-52-3115682

www.dannyverbov.com

Danny Verbov
Family Legacy Books
Our tradition has long directed us to the realization that raising children involves much more than providing for their physical needs. Preparing our children for their various roles as adults begins the moment we bring them into this world. Every human interaction affords these newborns the opportunity to learn numerous cues, responses and behaviors. As children move along developmentally, an initial and later ongoing source of these lessons focuses on the dynamic they perceive between their parents. As mothers and fathers, we are not always tuned in to the extent our marital interactions form a template for the expectations our children will have of themselves as future marital partners.

Since we doubtless would like to see them married, and happily so, which relational elements would we ideally prefer them to glean from growing up in our homes? While there is no one formula for a successful marital relationship, our focus here will be on modeling the skills of intimacy. We suggest that the following list provides a framework that may enhance our awareness of a crucial aspect of husband/wife modeling and parent/child interactions:

- **Trust and acceptance** – Comfort in familial relationships is to a large part dependent on feeling accepted by others just as you are, without expectation of fundamental change. This in turn enhances a sense of trust that openness and honesty, sharing uncertainties and vulnerabilities, will be treated with respect.

- **Caring and affection** – These are emotions which express connectedness and should be pervasive aspects of family relationships. People may communicate these feelings differently, some more verbally, some more action-oriented. No matter how you do it, the result is strengthened relational bonds.

- **Open communication** – Verbal communication should be clear and unambiguous, intended to convey messages that are as positive as possible. Assumptions about another’s thought or feeling must be confirmed verbally – no one reads minds. When disagreements arise, neither side should imply rejection or devaluing.

- **Curiosity** – Truly being interested in the lives of those around you, in their experiences, thoughts and feelings allows you to stay attuned to each other. Curiosity about your family members’ reactions and behaviors (rather than making assumptions) helps to avoid and resolve conflicts.

- **Expressing acknowledgment and gratitude** – For both the expected and unexpected, expressions of appreciation and thankfulness can minimize feelings of being taken for granted. Creating such a positive atmosphere contributes to the security of being seen and valued.

- **Acts of kindness** – Each family member should consider doing more than just fulfilling minimal expectations and to do so as a gesture of good will. The goal is to make the lives of others that much happier and each of these acts conveys a message of investing in emotional intimacy.

- **Mechanisms for healing and repair** – All families confront difficult moments, when expectations are not met or when communication fails. Developing mechanisms to positively cope with these situations avoids accumulating emotional scar tissue and allows for strengthening family ties.

- **Independent growth and development** – Each family member should be encouraged and supported to pursue personally important interests, career paths
and moments in which to invest time and energy. Personal satisfaction allows for giving others significant parallel opportunities.

- **Self-awareness** – Gradually knowing and understanding oneself cognitively and emotionally mark various stages of maturity into adulthood. Mastering this process further grants each family member greater insight into the lives of others, their hopes, expectations, fears and doubts.

Every family’s journey is different and each journey requires adaptation to life’s changes and challenges, with a primary goal being preparing our children for intimate relationships. Our focus above has been on the elements of emotional intimacy, but we should feel equally tasked with preparing our children for physical intimacy as well. These two facets of adult, marital intimacy – emotional and physical – clearly cannot exist as separate realms and thus both require our active guidance as parents.

As a general approach, we should note that the core values and behavioral expectations that guide our day-to-day interactions have equal application in the bedroom. Making space for others in our lives, respecting boundaries, sensitivity, supporting each other’s individuality and seeking to develop together are all qualities which enhance a future couple’s intimate life just as much as they enhance our communal and familial fabric.

An initial issue of course is parental comfort level. Well-meaning parents may hesitate to raise issues with their children regarding physical intimacy due to embarrassment, anxiety about the response of their children (who all are certain their parents know less than they do), feeling uncertain in a rapidly changing world or simply lacking communication tools.

In addition, some parents may have fallen into a sense of complacency, assuming they are exempt from this responsibility, naively and incorrectly assuming that this knowledge gap will be filled by school-based programs or premarital madrichim. When we abrogate this parental task, we risk children becoming confused and poorly educated.

As with emotional intimacy, we share here some guidelines to assist parents in discussing the physical side of marriage:

- **Our sense of sexuality is much more than biology or physiology.** It includes how we and the world around us see ourselves and each other, and how we determine and respond to gender roles.

- **Make sure you are both on the same page and are clear about your own values and expectations before talking with your kids.**

- **In this world of unrelenting confounding media inputs, parents must be proactive to counter misinformation and unhealthy messages. We are our children’s cultural interpreters, and if parents are silent, children will not develop the values they need to make responsible decisions.**

- **Stop talking in code or metaphors.** Children are naturally curious and need accurate definitions, facts and guidance. Be aware that your language conveys values and judgment.

- **Parents need to define and set adequate, reasonable limits.** Limits are essential to a child’s sense of security, and be prepared for adjustments as children mature.

- **Messages about marital intimacy must also include emphasis on the broader relationship context, a context which includes the religious, the social, the emotional and the physical.**

- **If your child refuses to talk with you, try this, “It’s my job and important to me that I share this information. We don’t have to discuss it now, but you need to listen.”**

- **One final point, if the first conversation you have with your children about physical intimacy is when you discover they have seen inappropriate Internet content, you have not fulfilled your parental responsibility.**

This is by no means an easy task, and to the detriment of our children and their development as healthy marital partners, few parents enter this unnecessarily feared realm with grace and confidence. Perhaps the following excerpt may somewhat ease these hesitations:

“There are young people who do not know how to observe the mitzvah of Onah (marital relations)... because, to our great sorrow and distress, in our time the inner bonds between father and son, and mother and daughter, have been sundered... matters of intimacy and knowledge of the private matters that transpire between husband and wife... in previous generations were transmitted from father to son and from mother to daughter with love... (Sefer Kedushah, as quoted in Marital Intimacy by A.P. Friedman)

_I am grateful to Talli Y. Rosenbaum for her editorial and content suggestions._

**Dr. David S Ribner,** a certified intimacy therapist, earned his Smicha and MSW degree from Yeshiva University and his doctorate from Columbia University. His latest book, co-authored with Talli Rosenbaum, is “I Am For My Beloved: a guide to enhanced intimacy for married couples.”
Many of us are familiar with the well-known prophecy that the Torah and the word of G-d will come from the holy city of Yerushalayim. This is of course a remarkable vision unique to the spiritual and physical capital of Judaism. In discussing the prophecy, Rav Kook asks us to pay attention not only to what it includes but also to what it lacks. Specifically, if we compare the prophecy to what we have come to expect from other religions, we see there is no call to action that requires us to defend Yerushalayim or to enforce its holiness upon others.

The dream we foresaw for Yerushalayim was that all peoples of faith would naturally recognize the city’s sanctity and respect it as such. There would always be a global thirst for the holiness and the messages to emerge from the city. For generations, this prophecy would hold true and the hope was that the city would remain a place of peace attracting and welcoming others into its gates. And indeed, over hundreds of years, Yerushalayim welcomed peoples of many faiths and backgrounds.

However, while the prophecy certainly intended a vision of peace and harmony among the peoples who visited Yerushalayim, we know that just the opposite ensued. Under the leadership of King Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian army arrived in the city with the goal of conquering it and removing it from Jewish control. They had little interest in learning the word of Torah or G-d but were intent only on destruction and murder.

This is one of the main tragedies we mark on the fast of the 10th of Tevet, because it was the point when this remarkable prophecy was proven false.

Why though? What did the Jewish people do to deserve their prophecy of peace becoming one of hatred and persecution?

As with so many times in Jewish history, the answer lies in what we as a people did with the gifts G-d bestowed upon us. A city slated to be one of justice, morality, charity and respect, had strayed so far from those ideals.

And once the city had abandoned its identity as a city of justice, it was no longer a place where the pain of the impoverished was prioritized. Crime and evil prevailed.

This painful transformation is the basis for the 10th of Tevet. The day it became clear the original prophecy had not come true and proof that the Jewish people had lost their way. The very essence of Jewish existence, predicated upon ethics and morality, was no longer what defined us.

It would take many more years for us to have the chance to regain our identity and rebuild.

So while we have been blessed to rebuild and in many ways restore this critical aspect of our national identity, history demands that we remind ourselves of how we strayed in the past. For while our history is defined by so many tragedies and destructions, the greatest loss we have ever been forced to endure is the loss of the correct spiritual path.

Rabbi Yuval Cherlow is a Rosh Yeshiva and a founding member of an organization devoted to bridging the religious-secular divide in Israel.
After you and your family light candles, take a few minutes to test your logical reasoning with these four light-themed logic puzzles:

1. Give me food, and I will live. Give me water, and I will die. What am I?

2. You have two candles. Each will burn for exactly one hour. How can you use these two candles to measure 45 minutes?

3. There are three light switches outside a room, labeled 1,2 and 3. The door to the room is closed and you can’t see in. All three switches are off. You need to figure out which switch belongs to which bulb. You can use the switches however you want to, but can only enter the room once. How do you do it?

4. I can only live where there is light, but I die if the light shines on me. What am I?

Answers

1. Fire. 2. Light one candle from both ends and the other one from one end. After 30 minutes the first candle will have burned out while the other one will be half burned. Now light up the other end of the half-burned candle. That will last for 15 minutes.

2. Light one candle from both ends and the other one from one end. After 30 minutes the first candle will have burned out while the other one will be half burned. Now light up the other end of the half-burned candle. That will last for 15 minutes.

3. Turn on the first switch and leave it on. Turn on the second switch for a few minutes, and then turn it off again. When you enter the room, one light bulb will be on. You'll know it goes with switch 1 because you turned it on. Another bulb will be hot. You'll know that goes with switch 2 because it was on for a little while. A few minutes, and then turn it off again. When you enter the room, one light bulb will be on. You'll know it goes with switch 2 because you turned it on. Another bulb will be hot. You'll know that goes with switch 2 because it was on for a little while. The bulb that's off and cold goes with switch 3 because you didn't touch it.

4. A shadow.
Distributed across the Anglo-Israel communities from the North to the South, HaMizrachi is the leading Torah magazine for the holidays.

Advertise in HaMizrachi

10 EDITIONS A YEAR

LONG SHELF LIFE

40,000+ READERS IN ISRAEL ALONE

Looking to expand abroad?
HaMizrachi is also distributed in the USA, Canada, the UK, Australia, South Africa, Germany, Holland, Sweden, Argentina, Uruguay, Mexico and Brazil, with over 350,000 readers.

Options available to advertise in each country at a separate rate.

Upcoming deadlines for the Israel edition:
- Ads for the Tu BiShvat edition due by January 17, 2021
- Ads for the Purim edition due by February 14, 2021
- Ads for the Pesach edition due by March 14, 2021

Reserve your page today!
Email: production@mizrachi.org for more information