

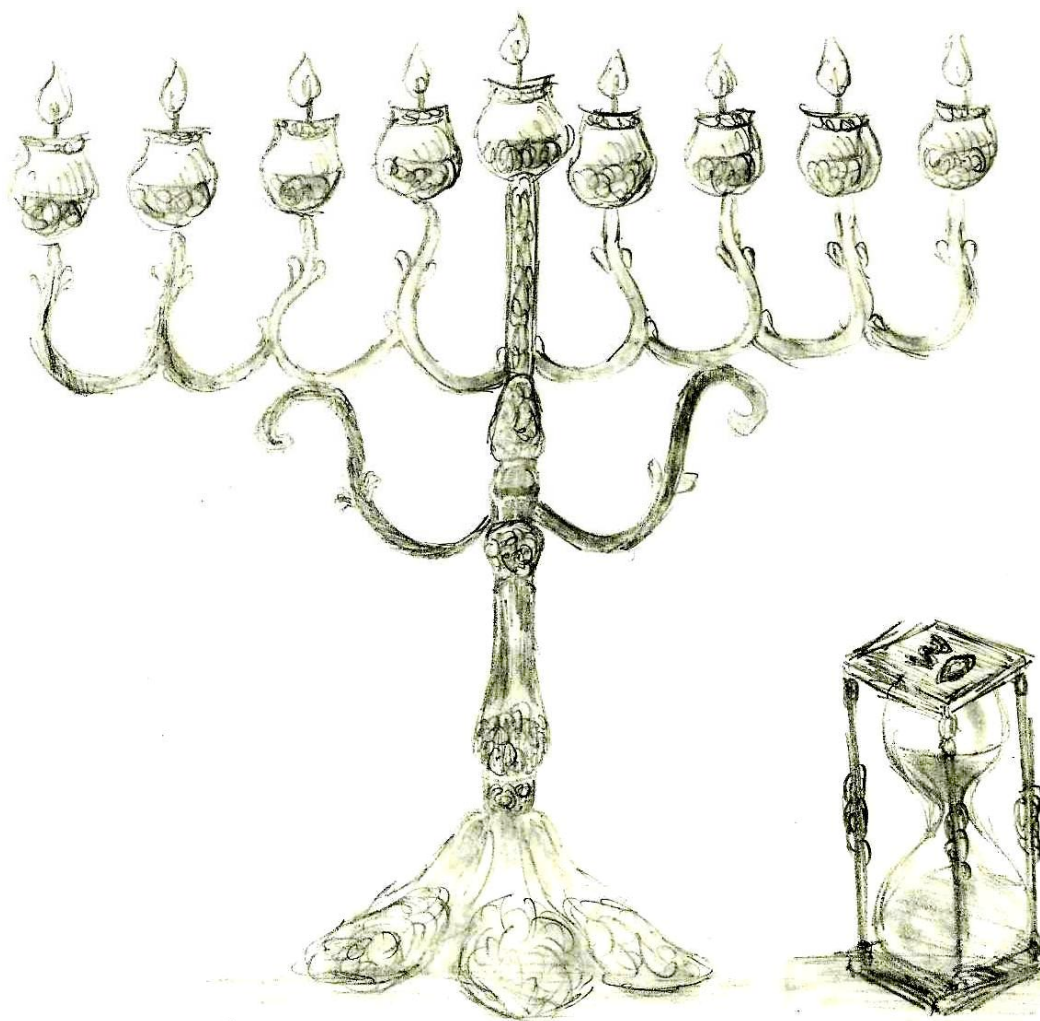
A TORAH PUBLICATION BY STUDENTS AND FACULTY

MO-ED MENORAH

OF THE WEINBAUM YESHIVA HIGH SCHOOL

CHANUKAH EDITION

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Sagiv Zehavi ('12)

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MORE THAN A TUNE

Danielle Sobol ('13)

"Maoz tzur y'shuati l'cha naeh l'shabeach. Tikon beit t'filati v'sham todah n'zabeach."

These familiar words are part of the traditional *piyut Maoz Tzur* that is recited every Chanukah after the lighting of the candles. Although most of us have probably been singing the tune of *Maoz Tzur* since we were in kindergarten, how many of us are truly aware of the significance of this *song*?

Rav Daniel Travis explains that this *piyut* commemorates the redemptions of the Jewish people that have transpired throughout the centuries. If one were to hold by this description, then another question can be formed: why is there a need to mention all of the redemptions if one of them specifically relates to Chanukah? Similarly, why do we thank Hashem for the Torah and the land of Israel in *Birkat Hamazon* – the blessing recited after a meal – as opposed to simply directing the focus of our prayers on food and sustenance?

The Rabbis instituted this idea of thanking G-d for both what He has provided is with in the "here and now" and also for other miracles that He has performed for us because when someone is inspired to sing gratitude to Hashem, he or she should never allow the opportunity pass. In reality, most of us do not internalize the inspiration we feel. We fall short of grasping opportunities to show gratitude to Hashem for all of the kindness he has done for us personally and for *Am Yisrael* as a whole. Our mission is to recognize the generosity of Hashem and genuinely appreciate everything that Hashem does for us on a daily basis. It is only when we train ourselves to see *yad Hashem* in all aspects of life that we will merit to grow closer to Him.

Hopefully, this Chanukah, when you sing *Maoz Tzur* you will not merely be reciting a tune that you knew since you were six-years-old; you will realize that this song is a powerful reminder of everything Hashem does for you. It signifies the incomparable role Hashem plays in your life.

CHANUKAH— LIGHT UP YOUR LIFE WITH GREATNESS

Bracha Brauser ('13)

Throughout our lives, we all strive to be great, to feel like our lives really add up to something of meaning. We want to feel rest assured that we have changed the world in some way. We all yearn to touch greatness, but the essential question is how? How is greatness even measured? Is it something reserved for the elite, or can we find it in our own lives?

Chanukah is not only a holiday of presents, doughnuts, and menorahs. It is a holiday that teaches us so much about who we are and who we can become. In the times of the Chanukah story, the Jews were oppressed and stripped of all Jewish traditions. They were becoming void of their identity. Under these harsh circumstances, it was very common for Jews to panic and abandon their religious values in an effort to stay alive.

There were a few Jews who were aware of the diminishing presence of Judaism and felt that it was their duty to protect it. In response, they (the Maccabees) created an army and managed to liberate the Jews, achieving one of the greatest military victories in Jewish history. When they returned to the Holy Temple and arrived at the Menorah, eager to publicly light it, they were dismayed, because there was no acceptable oil in sight with which to kindle the flame. When they finally found one miraculous drop of oil, they placed it in the Menorah and Hashem 'took over' from there.

We can learn so much from the courageous actions of these Jews who achieved greatness on their own terms. We think greatness is based on the outside world: what grades we get, what people think about us, how many Facebook notifications we receive, etc. Just like the Jews who succumbed to the pressures of their surroundings, we too are scared to do what is right in the face of what is wrong. In reality, we are wrong because greatness is measured by how we respond to the challenges that are presented to us. The Maccabees fought back in the face of evil because they felt passionate that what they were defending stood for truth and righteousness.

Continued on page 5

FESTIVAL FUN FACTS

Shalva Ginsparg ('11)

You come home from school to the sizzling of latkes and the cling-clang of menorahs being polished. A dreidel buzzes by, underfoot, and your baby brother scurries after it, a *sufganiyah* in one hand, a melted remnant of a chocolate coin in the other. But as the *brachot* are recited and the flames flicker merrily, your once chaotic household calmly basks in the bright light of Chanukah.

During *shacharit* on the second day of Chanukah, you notice that your shul places its Menorah on the south side of the sanctuary to symbolize the Menorah in the *Beit Hamikdash* which also was located on the southern side (*Tur*). Surprisingly, your Rabbi proceeds to light the candles even though it is only morning. Puzzled, with a furrowed brow, you approach your Rabbi and he excitedly relates that the *Kohanim* would place the wicks in the Menorah in the morning. Your Rabbi also explains that lighting the Menorah in the morning fulfills the obligation of publicizing the miracle more so than lighting at night because during the daytime it is apparent that we do not need the Menorah for light and are, thus, only lighting to commemorate the miracle.

On your way home you stop to give *tzedakah* to the poor, as is customary, because the Greeks tried to prevent Jews from learning Torah, serving Hashem, and performing acts of kindness. We therefore perform all of these acts Chanukah: lighting the Menorah (representing Torah; in *Mishlei* is states, "For a Mitzvah is like a candle and the Torah is light."), reciting *Hallel* (representing service of Hashem), and giving *tzedakah* (representing *g'milut chassadim*).

You tuck in to a caloric breakfast replete with both fried doughnuts and cheesecake. After you go for a quick jog to burn off all the confectioner's sugar, your father challenges you to a dreidel duel. As you spin the dreidel you notice the *gimmel*, *shin*, *nun*, and *heh* painted on each side and wonder about the origin of these four letters. Your father pauses the game to look it up in his trusty *sefer Rite and Reason*. You soon learn that Chanukah typically falls out over *Parshat Vayigash* which includes the *pasuk*, "And he (Yaakov) sent Yehudah before him... *Goshnah*." The word *Goshnah*, literally "to *Goshen*" is comprised of the letters *gimmel*, *shin*, *nun*, and *heh*. Your dad nearly falls off of his chair when he reads the next line in the *sefer*: *gimmel*, *shin*, *nun*, and *heh* also have the combined numerical value of *Mashiach*! He then gets up to meet with all the other *michanchim*, educators, in the community to discuss how best to teach Torah study to the youth. The matter of education is customarily addressed on Chanukah because the *shoresh* or root of Chanukah is education (e.g. *chinuch*).



Jordana Pachter ('12)

Your friend calls to invite you over. When you walk through the door you almost collide with her mom, who is reposing on the couch. Your friend explains that her mother has the custom not to work on Chanukah because of the heroism exhibited by *Yehudit* when she killed Holofernes. Also, the mountain of frying pans in the sink has effectively scared her away from the kitchen.

Eight days pass in a whirlwind of fun and activity. As you pack up your menorah and put away the candlesticks, your heart already pines for next Chanukah.

Source: Rite and Reason by Shmuel Pinchas Gelbard

SIMPLE FAITH

Kelley Tripp ('13)

"Rabim b'yad me'atim" – "The 'many' were given into the hands of the 'few'."

The story of Chanukah recounts the tale of Yehudah *HaMacabi* and his army's triumph over the Greeks. This portion of our Jewish history begs a poignant question: Why were there so few Maccabees? Didn't many Jews during this time stand by their religious convictions and not assimilate? Why didn't these proud Jews join forces with the Maccabees in fighting for freedom?

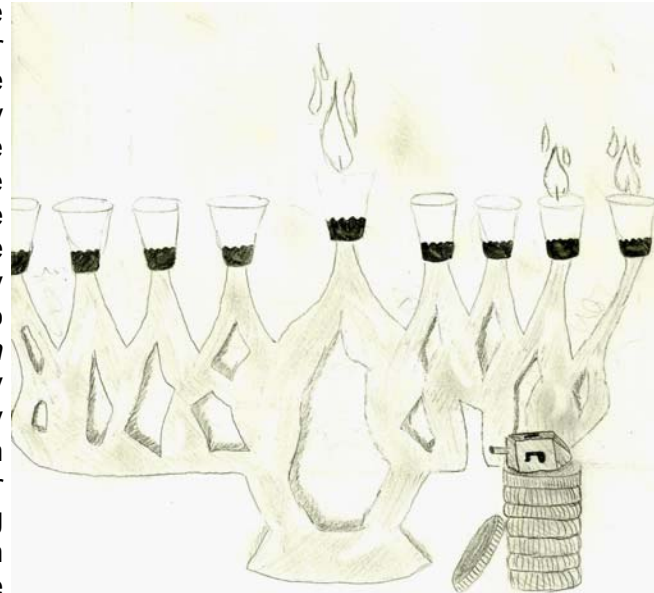
Yehudah's soldiers were originally skeptical that their inexperienced army had the potential to beat the mighty Greeks. Moreover, the revolt could have endangered the entire Jewish nation because the Maccabees were indirectly "inviting the Greek rulers to take revenge upon all of *Am Yisrael*." These seemingly brave soldiers were not only putting their own lives in danger, but, on a grander scale, they were also risking the existence of a Jewish nation. Yehudah the Maccabee was not the official ruler of the Jews at the time; he was a self-proclaimed leader. Therefore, the general population of the Jewish people was not inclined to initiate rebellion against the Greeks.

In reality, Yehudah recognized the disadvantages that the Maccabees had when facing the Greeks. What enabled Yehudah to overcome these challenges was his ability to reflect on the past successes of the Jewish people. It is unrealistic the *Bnei Yisrael* would have been able to win all of their past battles without the help of Hashem. Yehudah acknowledged Hashem's integral role in

ensuring the security of the Jewish people; thus, he prayed for Hashem to deliver the Greeks into the hands of the Jews – sending the *rabim* (many) into the hands of the *me'atim* (few). Uniquely, the Maccabees only needed faith in Hashem to secure their *emunah*, as opposed to previous generations that required the guidance of a prophet.

Although never guaranteeing a sure victory, Yehudah the Maccabee argued that the Jews were better off fighting to keep their Holy Temple – leaving room for a potential win – as opposed to forfeiting it to the Greeks. He infused hope into his soldiers. He stimulated them by exclaiming that their efforts were not worthless because they have a good chance of winning. By the principle of simple faith, Yehudah and his army were motivated to fight, believing in the Jewish tradition of the "few conquering the many." It seemed as if this battle was part of the destiny of the Jewish people.

Yehudah Maccabee teaches us that our connection to Hashem is not strictly philosophical- it is logical and must be incorporated into our everyday lives. Yehudah was the first figure in Jewish history after the end of the period of the Prophets to proclaim that our faith in Hashem is not only in our minds but also is relevant in our every action – it has applicable implications. Yehudah's faith was emphasized in his political planning that he believed it was his faith that gave him the strength to go to war. Ultimately, the victory of the Maccabees highlights that having faith in Hashem doesn't need to be a distant and metaphysical idea: it can be found anywhere – we just need to look for it.



Nina Landa ('13)

WHY EIGHT DAYS?

Sara Tepper ('11)

1. The world was created in seven days. There are seven notes on the musical scale; there are seven days in a week. Therefore, the number seven represents the physical world that we can touch, smell, and feel.

The number eight, on the other hand, transcends the natural world. That is why there are eight days to recount the miraculous times of Chanukah. Though the number eight seems to emanate from beyond our senses, our souls can, nevertheless, reach out and are touched by its force.

2. The Greeks particularly disliked the Jewish practice of performing a circumcision of a baby boy on the eighth day after his birth. In fact, they outlawed the practice of *Brit Milah*. Why did the Greeks oppose this tradition so strongly?

First of all, circumcision conflicted with the Greek notion that the human body was created in a state of perfection. Public nudity was accepted in Greek society because everybody was considered a piece of art. According to Greek mentality, circumcision was the mutilation of a masterpiece. To the Jews, a *Brit Milah* is one of the most essential portrayals of a Jewish identity. Only when forming a relationship with G-d is a person truly beautiful. The perfectly sculpted human recognizes and embraces the reality that his or her true magnificence comes from growing closer to G-d. Therefore, the number of days of Chanukah commemorates this idea of communing with Hashem in order to beautify ourselves.

3. When the Jews recaptured the *Beit Hamikdash* from the Greeks, the first thing they did was lighting the golden Menorah. They only had enough oil to last for one day, and new oil would take seven days to prepare. Fortunately, a miracle occurred. Instead of being lit for an expected one day, the Menorah stayed lit for eight days. Today, we light the menorah for eight days to recall this miracle and to derive inspiration from its message. On a deeper level,

yond and sense to that there is far more to our existence than the natural world seems to offer. The miracle of the oil lasted for eight days as a reminder that Jewish life is hewn from the rock of transcendence.

Bracha B. Continued

one cheered them on, they moved forward because they understood that their defense of Torah was deemed praiseworthy in the eyes of Hashem.

Until the rise of the State of Israel, Chanukah was the last holiday in Jewish history. The miracle of the oil burning was the final miracle. When a child leaves home for college, his or her parents might give him or her a gift as a symbol of love and as a way of demonstrating the child's potential. Similarly, on Chanukah, Hashem gave us the miracle of the oil as a sign of His love and as a glimpse of our potential. The Maccabees possessed the internal strength to achieve greatness, and through Chanukah, Hashem is showing us that we too possess this courage. We need to use whatever "oil" we have and start lighting up the world with greatness. Chanukah serves to teach us that after eight days of lighting the Menorah, the light should not be extinguished. It is necessary for us to continue to light up the world. No matter what anyone else thinks, greatness is solely up to the individual.





SEASONAL LIGHTS

Tamar Singer ('11)

One cannot help but be mesmerized during the winter holiday season. When strolling through the mall or driving down the street, one can't help but marvel at the holiday decorations. Unfortunately, living in outside of Israel, the Christmas lights seem to outshine the Chanukah Menorah.

Although it may seem that Chanukah exists in the shadow of the other holidays, the opposite stands true for us Jews. Christmas decorations shouldn't weaken our belief in Judaism and our religious practice; they should strengthen them.

Antiochus tried to ban Jewish practices. Because the Jews were greatly outnumbered, it seemed as though Judaism would become a distant memory. Despite this disadvantage, the Jews prevailed, and the Maccabees were able to defeat the Syrians and revive Judaism. Soon after, the Maccabees established their presence in the *Beit Hamikdash* and relit the Menorah. It seemed as though they were only going to have enough oil for one day, but Hashem performed a miracle and made the oil last for a surprising eight days.

Even amongst the ornate holiday decorations at the mall, you are always able to spot that one small 'piece' of Chanukah. Although it probably goes unnoticed by many, it stands out to you. This small Chanukah decoration and the subtlety of the Menorah, when compared to the holiday lights, shouldn't make you feel insignificant. It should make you feel unique and proud. It should remind you of how the small group of Maccabees triumphed and preserved the roots of Judaism even though they were the minority. Always remember that even though we are outnumbered in the world, the Jewish nation is still standing strong despite years of attempts at persecution.

CAN WE FIX IT? YES WE CAN!

Racheli Mizrahi ('11)

Since we were children, we have learned the Chanukah story each year. We instantaneously recall that the holiday of Chanukah serves to commemorate the two miracles that G-d performed for the Jewish people: the small flask of pure olive oil lasting for an entire eight days, and the victory of *Maccabim*, equipped with just few and weak soldiers, over the powerful *Yevanim* (Greeks). However, what do we really know about the incredible *Chasmonaim* or *Maccabim*?

The word *neis* is actually the *shoresh* of the Hebrew word, *lanus*. The word *lanus* means to run away or to free oneself from something. How does this translation relate to Chanukah? In our story, the *Chashmonaim* "run away" from their innate and usual conduct – they defy the societal norm of the time by rebelling against the authority. In addition, our heroes understand that in order for a miracle to occur, not only do they need Hashem's help, they must also be determined for the right and unselfish reasons. It was necessary for the *Chashmonaim* to view the battle against the Greeks as a fight that decided the fate of the entire nation of *Bnei Yisrael*. When preparing for battle, they left all personal agendas behind. Although one's natural instinct would have to been to refrain from going to war out of fear of risking his or her own life, the *Chashmonaim* "ran away" and overcame this humanistic characteristic. Through this *koach* that *Bnei Yisrael* displayed, Hashem performed a *neis*.

The righteousness of the *Chashmonaim* is continually embodied by one of their own leaders, *Yochanan* who merits the position of being the *Kohen Gadol*.

During the time of Chanukah we say the prayer of

CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES:

Continued on page 8

Candle Lighting Takes Place at Sunset	
<u>Wednesday and Thursday:</u> 5:28	<u>Saturday Night:</u> One should light immediately following Havdalah at 6:05
<u>Friday:</u> One must light the Menorah before lighting Shabbos candles (5:10)	<u>Sunday-Tuesday:</u> 5:28
	<u>Wednesday:</u> 5:29

CHANUKAH WORD SEARCH

Gabriella Sobol ('13)

P S F A A S K N K X G B X F Q
 N V E S N O W X Q S R Z E D M
 X M M L Y T J V P P E Q I L V
 S U F G A N I O T M E Y G H R
 M O L G P C L O A Q K C H A S
 A E E R X E I C C O S B T R G
 X T M M D H A R X H R A D O A
 G F U I A B T A I A U J A N J
 O W E N E A H H C M C S Y E T
 Y R N E L I O F O G U J S M N
 D A S X H A S I L E X I S R V
 H Q D S S D T K U E V E C U X
 Y E H U D I T K M V V H D Z L
 K H E W F R T E E M O F X I G
 V H V X N N H I C S I H I O W



- ANTIOCHUS
- DREIDEL
- EIGHTDAYS
- GREEKS
- HANNAH
- JUGOFOIL
- LATKES
- MACABEES
- MENORAH
- MIRICALE
- SUGFANIOT



(Over, Down, Direction)
 Solution:
 ANTIOCHUS(4, 1, SE)
 DREIDEL(1, 11, NE)
 EIGHTDAYS(13, 2, S)
 GREEKS(11, 1, S)
 HANNAH(6, 7, SW)
 JUGOFOIL(12, 10, W)
 LATKES(5, 10, SE)
 MACABEES(10, 4, SW)
 MENORAH(14, 10, N)
 MIRICALE(10, 9, NW)



Racheli M. Continued

begins with the phrase “*Be’yemei Matityahu ben Yochanan Kohen Gadol.*” Although *Matityahu* and his sons seem to be the heroes of Chanukah, *Matityahu’s* father, *Yochanan*, the previous *Kohen Gadol*, actually becomes a *rashah* (wicked person) towards the end of his life. The Baal Shem Tov asks a simple question: why is there the need to mention a *rashah* in *Al Hanisim*?

The *Ari* explains that *Matityahu* and his sons not only win a battle on behalf of the Jewish nation, but they take it upon themselves to correct the falling of their father/grandfather who had turned into a *rashah*. Having this in mind is a tremendous act of *kibud av*. Thus, because his sons rectify his past mistakes, *Yochanan’s* name should be mentioned in *Al Hanisim*.

The *tzidkut* of a person is measured by how one takes and uses his or her merits to help others. This Chanukah, may we not only have the ability to create miracles through acting on behalf of the greater good of *Bnei Yisrael*, but may we use our rewards to help those whom have fallen, just as *Matityahu* and his sons did for *Yochanan* the *Kohen Gadol*.

KOSHER OR NOT?



NOT: Although it may look good at first glance, if you look closely you will see there are only 6 candles (plus the shamash) just as in the *beit hamikdash* but this is not kosher today.

KOSHER: Everything is good– the candles are straight and the shamash is distinguishable.

NOT: The candles here are not straight and at the same level as they should be and it is unclear which is the shamash.

NOT: This may look cool but in fact because the candles are all at different heights, it is not kosher.

NOT: Despite the unique design, the Rabbis explain that the lights should stand in a straight line, which is clearly not the case here.



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