

# LampLighter

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Mikeitz-Chanukah

909

18 December  
5770/2009

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

What is the reason for the Jewish people being in exile? What purpose has been served by almost two thousand years of suffering and hardship?

The answer to this age-old question is alluded to in this week's Torah portion, Mikeitz, in Joseph's explanation of his choice of name for his son Ephraim.

"The name of the second he called Ephraim," the Torah states, "for G-d has caused me to be fruitful ("hifrani" — from the same root as Ephraim) in the land of my affliction."

In other words, it is precisely through exile "in the land of my affliction" that Joseph became stronger. Likewise, the entire purpose of exile is to uncover the Jewish people's hidden strengths, bringing them to a higher level of perfection.

On a personal level, Joseph had attained the highest rungs of spiritual service, standing head and shoulders above his eleven brothers; in a certain sense, he was even superior to his father Jacob. Nonetheless, in order to attain the very highest levels, Joseph had to undergo exile "in the land of my affliction."

The Torah alludes to Joseph's exalted spiritual status in its statement that the brothers "recognized him not." According to Chasidic philosophy, Joseph's involvement in worldly matters was perceived by them as an obstacle to spirituality.

The brothers couldn't understand how a person could be worldly and serve G-d at the same time. Thus they deliberately pursued a life of contemplation; as shepherds, they were cut off from civilization and the demands of society. Never in their wildest dreams could they fathom how Joseph, second-in-command over all of Egypt, could remain connected to G-d and indeed surpass their level of service. The concept itself was too radical for them to grasp.

Joseph's superiority to his father is also reflected in the fact that he was punished for putting his faith in Pharaoh's butler, whereas when Jacob addressed his brother Esau as "my master," it was not considered a sin.

Jacob, despite his great spiritual attainments, was still subject to the limitations of the physical world and thus permitted to work within the natural order; Joseph, however, was above such constraints and therefore held to a much higher standard of behaviour, according to which he should have placed his trust in G-d alone.

Nevertheless, we see that it was only through the experience of exile that Joseph was able to attain the very pinnacle of spirituality, paving the way and setting an example for his future descendants.

For just as the Jewish people merited to receive the Torah after the "crucible" of the Egyptian exile, so too will we merit the very highest revelations of G-dliness with the ultimate Redemption.

*(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)*

## The Heroines of Chanukah

Yehudis, beautiful Yehudit was the daughter of Yochanan the High Priest. Her self-sacrifice for her people knew no bounds. She could not stand by quietly as young Jewish girls were forced to spend the night before their wedding with the enemy governor. With stealth she penetrated the enemy camp, endangering her own life, and brought back a prize for those who were not as brave as she—the grisly head of the Syrian General, Holefernes.

Chana, brave Chana, mother of seven sons. She taught them to love G-d and the Torah—more than life itself. "Foolish woman, tell your sons to bow down to the idol so that they may live," the soldiers told Chana. But Chana knew that her definition of life was different from that of the pagan soldiers. Her sons would die in this world sanctifying G-d's name, but they would live forever in the World to Come. She whispered encouragement to each son. "Remember that the L-rd is one, there is no other." Not one son, from the oldest to the youngest, bowed to the idol. "Abraham, you were ready to sacrifice one son, but I, Chana, a simple, Jewish woman, sacrificed seven," cried out Chana as her youngest child was killed before her eyes.

Heroines now? Yes, Jewish women of today can be heroines. Heroines who, in their own way, are as brave as Yehudit and Chana. How? Like Yehudit, Jewish women can stand up to the prevalent morality that has become accepted though it is not at all acceptable. They can say, "This is immoral, not in keeping with true Jewish values. I will fight it and I won't succumb to it, even if others greater, stronger and braver don't have the courage to resist."

How else? Like Chana they can remind their children or others around them, "The way of the world is not our way. We are here to sanctify ourselves, to bring holiness into the mundane; to bear witness to the fact that G-d is one."

And, they can get in touch with their true selves, with what it means to be a Jewish woman, with what has characterized Jews in general and Jewish women in particular for millennia—we are compassionate, modest, kind, believing, giving, loving, and caring.

The word Chanukah means dedication. What better time than the holiday of Yehudit and Chana for Jewish women the world over to rededicate themselves to exploring the ancient definition of Jewish womanhood!



## A Chanukah Miracle Poland, 1942

by Rosalie Greenberg

My mother, Molly Greenberg, was born on December 22, 1924 in an Eastern European Jewish *shtetl* called Skala Podolskaya, located in what was then part of Poland. Her life, by any reasonable scrutiny, contained a plethora of reasons for her to have been a bitter, lifeless, misanthropic human being. After all, she was an orphan at an early age, having lost both her parents to illness - her father when she was only three months, and her mother when she was two years old. Her five older siblings, three brothers and two sisters, raised her. Her childhood was punctuated by a myriad of deprivations; nights of going to bed hungry, a sparse supply of clothing, intense loneliness, and wishing to have the attentive, protective mothering that was impossible to expect from a sister only twelve years her elder. Yet, she was blessed with a love of learning and a wisdom and understanding of people and life that was far beyond her years. Her strong belief in G-d and His Torah was crucial to her ability to experience happiness within an uncertain world.

She lived in constant fear of discovery and extermination. Whatever stability existed in my mother's world was shattered on September 17, 1939, when the Soviet army entered and seized control of Skala. That day marked the beginning of the end of a flourishing Jewish community. By the end of July 1942, it was the German military that controlled the area. No Jew in Skala was safe.

Not until my mother was older and entered her sixties could she openly acknowledge (through the written word,

but still not verbally) her painful youth of living through the Holocaust. I am in the process of writing a book about her life, centring on her stories of her past. There is no question that the crimes of the past should never be forgotten. To me, her triumph over adversity, her ability to love and do more than just survive, and the powerful role G-d played in her life are examples from which we can all learn and gain strength.

My mother was able to survive the war by pretending she was Mary (not Molly), a non-Jew. Even in this disguise, she lived in constant fear of discovery and extermination.

When we think of Chanukah, we remember the Maccabees and the miracle of the oil that occurred years ago. To me, G-d's power and benevolence was again demonstrated by the miracle He performed on the first day of Chanukah in 1942.

Of note, in the year 2009, Chanukah begins on December 11. On that day, had she been alive, Molly Greenberg would be celebrating her 85<sup>th</sup> birthday.

What follows is a true story that my mother, Molly Greenberg, wrote explaining, in part, how she survived World War II.

Chanukah, the Holiday of Lights, is a time of joy, gratification, and festival celebrations. It is the time for latkes and jelly doughnuts. For me, Chanukah, latkes and jelly doughnuts have a special meaning. It was during World War II when Poland was occupied by the Nazis. It was in the year 1942, when the Gestapo started the process of making the cities and towns "Judenfrei," which means, "free of Jews." They would gather a large group of people and just kill them or load them into cattle trains and send them to concentration camps.

I knew I had nothing to lose after one such "pogrom," in which I lost some of my family; I felt that I must do something. I couldn't just wait there to be killed. I was a seventeen-year-old girl, blond with blue eyes and a very light complexion. I looked like a typical non-Jewish Polish girl. So I decided to go to a faraway city where nobody would know me, and no one would know that I was Jewish.

But it was easier said than done. Because I lived all my life in a small village,

which I had never left before, just going on a train for the first time was a big endeavour for me, aside from the great danger the trip represented. To make sure no one was Jewish the Germans were checking everyone's passport or some other document. For a big sum of money you could get an Aryan passport, but I was very poor and couldn't obtain one. So I decided to go anyway. I knew I had nothing to lose; I would die either way.

It was December 12<sup>th</sup>, the first day of Chanukah. My sister packed a bundle with some clothes and some food for me to take on the way. I took off my yellow Jewish star, which every Jew was forced to wear on his right arm, and I went to the train station. I bought a ticket, walked into the last car and sat in the far corner, frightened to death.

All of a sudden I heard some commotion at the door. I looked up and saw a Gestapo officer coming into the car. He was checking everybody's bundles and documents. I suddenly realized that the food that my sister had packed was a deadly weapon that could for sure kill me. She had packed Chanukah latkes and jelly doughnuts - traditional, symbolic Jewish foods. I knew then that even if by some miracle I could talk my way out of not having a Gentile document by lying - saying that I'd lost it or forgotten it at home - I could never explain the latkes and doughnuts in my bundle.

What happened in the next few minutes I can only describe as some kind of miracle. As I sat there paralysed by fear, not being able to move or even think clearly, I saw the Gestapo officer coming towards me. At that moment, a little girl who was sitting with her mother next to me, eating an apple, suddenly stood up and ran across the car, spitting out the apple all over the floor. The Gestapo officer took one more step toward me, slipped on a piece of the apple and fell. I don't know what happened to him. I was too stunned, too flabbergasted to ask questions. I saw some people carry him out of the car and then the train pulled out of the station, taking me to my destination.

I realized then that someone up there wanted me to survive.

Published by The Chabad House of Caulfield in conjunction with the Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.

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ISSUE 909

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

Chanuka, being a holiday of eight days, is associated with the Redemption. For, whereas seven alludes to what is timebound, eight is always an allusion to eternity, to what is timeless. In addition, our Sages have said, "Even if all the other festivals will be annulled Chanuka and Purim will not be annulled. For Chanuka and Purim were given to Israel by the merit of their own deeds. (*Book of Our Heritage*)"

# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



## THE CHANUKA LIGHTS

Free Rendition

*In Days of Chanuka, 5735 [1975]*

The timing of this year's Annual Dinner — taking place on the eighth night of Chanuka, the highlight of the Festival of Lights — is particularly meaningful, and relevant to the occasion in more than one aspect.

Chanuka, meaning "dedication," recalls, first of all, the re-dedication of the Beit HaMikdash [Holy Temple], after an all-out struggle against the forces of darkness that had brought Jewish life almost to the brink of extinction.

In a deeper sense, that every Jew is a Beit HaMikdash and a Sanctuary of old, was already indicated in the Divine command regarding the establishment of the first Sanctuary, "and I will dwell within them" — within each and every Jew.

Chanuka, as the name implies, is also connected with chinuch, Torah- education, for in our Holy Tongue "education" is synonymous with "dedication."

Indeed, the ultimate purpose of a Torah education is not merely to impart knowledge of Torah and mitzvot, but to produce knowledgeable, dedicated Jews, whose personal commitment to a total Torah-and-mitzvot life goes hand-in-hand with dedication to all fellow-Jews to get them to share in this commitment, and make every Jew a Mikdash" for G-d's Presence.

It is with this objective in mind that the Founder of the first Lubavitcher Yeshiva characterized its students as "shining lights," whose purpose is to spread the light of Torah and mitzvot wherever they go and in whatever they do.

Of this, too, the Chanuka lights are meaningful symbols in many ways:

The Chanuka lights — to mention one detail — have to be seen also outside, so that a Jew who is as yet an "outsider" in terms of actual commitment to living Yiddishkeit, will look up and see the lights of Chanuka and be inspired by them.

To mention another point:

It is the custom of all Jews to be "especially meticulous" (mehadrin-min-hamehadrin) when it comes to the mitzva of Ner-Chanuka, beginning with lighting one candle the first night and adding one more candle each subsequent night of Chanuka. The same should be when it comes to chinuch — only the best and utmost is good enough.

Moreover, in all matters of Torah and mitzvot, however good the situation is today, it is not good enough for tomorrow, and the day after. This too is indicated by the Chanuka lights.

For, although the mitzva of Ner-Chanuka is fulfilled to perfection by lighting one candle on the first night of Chanuka, we are called upon to light two candles the following night, and to add one more candle on each and every night following, increasing the number of candles and the measure of light from day to day; and to do this with the same enthusiasm as before, and more.

This is the kind of spirit — of striving for ever greater achievement — that permeates the chinuch which the students receive in the Lubavitcher Yeshivot.

All of the aforesaid brings us back to the practical aspects for the Annual Dinner of the United Lubavitcher Yeshivot. The same spirit that animates these Torah institutions and their students, which is so closely identified with the spirit of Chanuka, should animate and inspire also the friends and supporters of the Lubavitcher Yeshivot — the spirit of dedication, of striving for ever greater achievement, the urge to do a little more today than yesterday, tomorrow — more than today, and still more the day after.

In the merit of this, G-d will surely increase the brightness in your home, to be filled with the eternal light of Torah and mitzvot, and with all G-d's blessings that go with it, materially and spiritually.

# A WORD from the Director

*During these days of Chanuka we emphasize the miracles that G-d wrought for our ancestors, "In those days, in our times." The first miracle was the victory of the small Jewish army over the vastly superior and more numerous Greek army. The second miracle, and that which we symbolically celebrate each time we kindle the Chanuka menorah, is the miracle of the one small cruse of pure olive oil which burned for eight days rather than the one day for which it was intended.*

*That G-d was and is willing to perform miracles for His people shows His tremendous love for us. But, G-d's expression of love for us depends on our expression of love for each other. Thus, in addition to the love we should show a fellow Jew because he is our brother, we must show him additional love because G-d loves him. The importance of loving our fellow Jews is emphasized by the fact that this course of conduct will enable each person, his family, and the entire Jewish people, and ultimately the whole world, to leave the exile in the immediate future.*

*The Chanuka lights that we kindle in our home on each night of Chanuka are a symbol of G-d's love for the Jewish people. They have their source in G-d's light, in the light of the miracle of Chanuka, a miraculous light. As we kindle the Chanuka lights on the remaining nights of Chanuka, let us remember the miracles they represent, the Source of those miracles, and why G-d performed them for us. And let these thoughts spur us on toward greater love of our fellow Jew, especially including, of course, those closest to us.*

*May we merit not only the lights of Chanuka this year, but also the Great Light of the Final Redemption, through the revelation of Moshiach, NOW.*

J. I. Gutnick

### The Dreidel (spinning top)

The traditional Chanukah *dreidel* is a throwback to the times when the Greek armies of King Antiochus controlled the Holy Land, before the Maccabees defeated them and sent them packing. The powerful regime passed a series of laws outlawing the study of Torah and many of the mitzvot. The Jews were compelled to take their Torah learning "underground," for they knew that a Jew without Torah is like a fish out of water.

Jewish children resorted to learning Torah in outlying areas and forests. Even this plan was not foolproof, for the enemy had many patrols. The children therefore brought along small tops that they would quickly pull out and play with after secreting away their texts, so that they could pretend to be merely playing games.

Our Chanukah *dreidel* games are a salute to these Jewish heroes of yore.

The classic *dreidel* is a four sided spinning top made of wood, plastic, or the proverbial clay. On the four sides of the *dreidel* appear four letters from the Hebrew alphabet — *nun, gimmel, hey, and shin*. These four letters are an acronym for "*nes gadol hayah sham*"—"a great miracle happened there."

In Israel, the actual setting of the Chanukah miracle, the last letter, *shin*, is substituted with a *pey*, which stands for "*po*"—"here."

And the real endgame is the lesson this game has taught. We are joyful about the miracles and wonders G-d did for our ancestors. Throughout Chanukah this is constantly on our mind—even when we are involved with fun and games!

## CUSTOMS CORNER

# It Happened Once...



Thousands of people streamed to Rabbi Moshe Leib, the tzadik (righteous man) of Sassov to ask for blessings and advice on personal and business matters, and he never refused them his precious time.

Once, when Rabbi Moshe Leib was visiting the town of Brod, a wealthy woman came to ask him to pray for her daughter, who was seriously ill. When the woman introduced herself and mentioned her father's name, Rabbi Moshe Leib realized that he knew of her family, who were famous for their generosity to the needy.

As the conversation progressed the wealthy woman described her child's illness, and the tzadik promised to pray for her. As it was customary to give the tzadik a monetary donation to distribute among the poor or for a specific urgent cause, the woman removed an envelope from her purse and placed it on the table, but Rabbi Moshe Leib refused to accept it. "I don't want money from you!" he said.

"But Rabbi, what do you mean? What is it that you want from me? I will do anything in the world to help my daughter!"

"I know that you have a very beautiful Chanuka menorah. That is what I want!" Rabbi Moshe Leib said quietly.

"Rabbi, I do have the menorah you describe, but it is a family heirloom and my most precious possession. However, if you want it, I will gladly give it to you!"

The Rebbe listened, nodding his head. "If you agree to let me have the menorah, you must mean this sincerely; and give it to me with no reservations."

"I understand completely, and I agree wholeheartedly. The menorah is yours; I will bring it to you today," the woman said in a firm voice.

That evening, when she came and presented the menorah to Rabbi Moshe Leib, his students were buzzing with curiosity. How had the Rebbe known about the menorah's existence? Why had the Rebbe asked for a gift, something so far out of character, especially as it was a known fact that he only used the menorah he had received from his Rebbe, Reb Shmelke of Nicholsburg?

On the first night of Chanuka, as the Rebbe prepared to light the first wick, Reb Yechiel Tzoref the silversmith stood at his side. He had no idea why he had been chosen for this great honour, but he was beaming with happiness. After the light was kindled, the Rebbe beckoned to Reb Yechiel to enter his study. "I want to tell you a story about your grandfather, may he rest in peace.

"When the time came for your grandfather to arrange a match for his daughter, he was so poor, he couldn't find a suitor. No one would lend him money, since it was obvious he could never return the loan. He decided to approach a certain very wealthy man. When he asked him to lend him money, the wealthy man replied, I will make a deal with you. I know that you own a very beautiful menorah. If you will give it to me, I will give you 10,000 gulden, enough for the marriage and more!"

"Reb Yechiel was shocked! It was his most precious possession. He had made it from silver coins that his Rebbe, Reb Zushe of Anipoli, had distributed to his Chasidim each year as Chanuka 'gelt.' It was this menorah which the rich man wanted. No, thought Reb Yechiel, he couldn't even think of relinquishing it.

"Reb Yechiel went everywhere trying to borrow the money, but failed. He had to accept the rich man's terms and part with his beloved menorah. When the wealthy man passed away and stood before the Heavenly Court there was great confusion as to how to rule in his case. On the one hand, the rich man had certainly performed the mitzva (commandment) of giving money to help poor brides. But on the other hand, he had coveted the prized possession of a poor man and caused him great pain.

"Finally, the Court reached a decision. The wealthy man's reward would be withheld, since the mitzva was intertwined with the sin of coveting the possession of another.

"That is why I have arranged to return the menorah to you, his grandson. The sin has now been atoned for, and the wealthy benefactor of your grandfather will rest in peace, enjoying his eternal reward."

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

### And he asked them after their welfare (Gen. 43:27)

Some people only show an interest in their fellow man until they assume a position of power, whereupon it becomes beneath them to inquire about another. Joseph, on the other hand, despite being second in command over all of Egypt, approached his fellow man with the same humility as before his ascent to power.

The "shamash" candle, the one which is used to light all the others, is not part of the mitzva itself. Yet it is precisely this candle which is placed, by Jewish custom, above all the others in a position of honour. We learn from this that a person who lights the "candle" of another Jew; who shares his enthusiasm and love of Judaism with another until he, too, is touched and "ignited," elevates his own spirituality as well. (*Lubavitcher Rebbe*)

### And now, let Pharaoh seek out a man intelligent and wise (Gen. 41:33)

With this statement Joseph was alluding to Pharaoh that if famine came to the land his sovereignty over the Egyptian people was threatened. A populace with no food to eat naturally turns its anger against the government. Joseph therefore suggested that Pharaoh appoint an "intelligent and wise" assistant to fortify and ensure his continued rule. (*Tcheilet Mordechai*)

### And they cried before him "Avrech" (Bend the knee) (Gen. 41:43)

The Hebrew word "avrech" comes from the same root word as "bracha" (blessing), alluding to the drawing down of G-dly light from the supernal spheres into our physical world and frame of existence. Thus Joseph, the tzadik of the generation, was addressed as "Avrech," for his role was to draw G-d's beneficence down into our material world. (*Ohr HaTorah*)

### CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

#### PARSHAS MIKEITZ 2 TEVET • 19 DECEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:22 PM
	MINCHA:	8:30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS :	9:05 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	MINCHA:	8:20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:27 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS: SUN- FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	8:30 PM
	MAARIV:	9:20 PM

### CANDLE LIGHTING: 18 DECEMBER 2009



Begins		Ends
8:22	MELBOURNE	9:27
8:09	ADELAIDE	9:12
6:22	BRISBANE	7:20
6:51	DARWIN	7:44
6:22	GOLD COAST	7:20
7:02	PERTH	8:03
7:45	SYDNEY	8:48
7:58	CANBERRA	9:01
8:26	LAUNCESTON	9:37
8:20	AUCKLAND	9:25
8:33	WELLINGTON	9:43

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

### The Lubavitcher Rebbe

צוקללה"ה נב"מ ז"ע

May he succeed in imploring the Almighty to redeem His people speedily in our days.