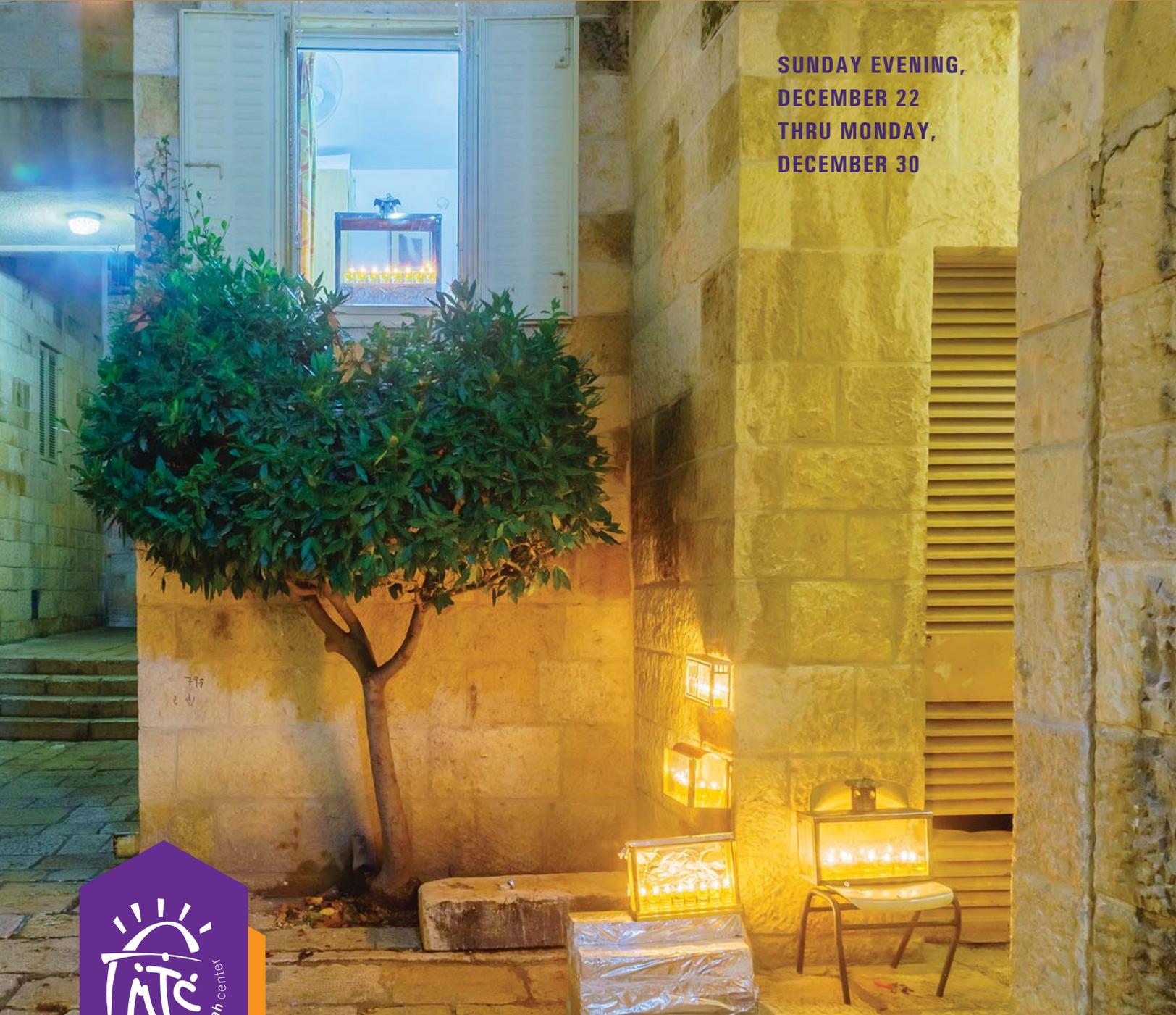


ATC

MOSAIC

A PUBLICATION OF THE MONTREAL TORAH CENTER
BAIS MENACHEM CHABAD LUBAVITCH

CHANUKAH GUIDE



SUNDAY EVENING,
DECEMBER 22
THRU MONDAY,
DECEMBER 30



HAPPY CHANUKAH!

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THE STORY OF CHANUKAH

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Front cover: Chanukah in the
Old City of Jerusalem

PART 1

It was the time of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, over two thousand years ago, that the events took place which we commemorate each year at Chanukah time.

The Jewish people had returned to Israel from the Babylonian Exile, and had rebuilt the Holy Temple that had been destroyed.

But they remained subject first to the Persian Empire and then the conquering armies of Alexander the Great.

Upon the death of Alexander, his kingdom was divided among his generals. Israel found itself under the rule of the Seleucid Dynasty – Greek kings who ruled from Syria.

ANTIOCHUS THE MADMAN

Though apparently harmless at first, there soon arose a new king, Antiochus, who was to eventually wage a bloody war upon the Jews.

Over the years of Greek domination, many Jews had begun to embrace the Greek culture and its hedonistic, pagan way of life. These Jewish Hellenists became willing pawns in Antiochus' scheme to obliterate every trace of the Jewish religion.

The Holy Temple was invaded, desecrated and robbed of all its treasures. Vast numbers of innocent people were massacred, and the survivors were heavily taxed. Antiochus placed an idol of Zeus on the holy altar, and forced the Jews to bow before it under penalty of death. He forbade the Jewish people to observe their most sacred traditions, such as Sabbath and the rite of circumcision.

PART 2

THE TURNING POINT

In every city and town, altars were erected with statues of the Greek gods and goddesses. Soldiers rounded up the Jews and forcibly compelled them to make offerings and to engage in other immoral acts customary to the Greeks. As Antiochus' troops tightened their grip on the nation, the Jews seemed incapable of resistance.

In the small village of Modin, a few miles east of Jerusalem, a single act of heroism turned the tide of Israel's struggle and altered her destiny for all time.

Mattityahu, patriarch of the Hasmonean clan, stepped forward to challenge the Greek soldiers and those who acceded to their demands. Backed by his five sons, he attacked the troops, slew the idolaters, and destroyed the idol. With the cry 'All who are with G-d, follow me!' he and a courageous circle of partisans retreated to the hills, where they gathered forces to overthrow the oppression of Antiochus and his collaborators.

GUERRILLA WARFARE

The army of Mattityahu, now under the command of his son Yehuda Maccabee, grew daily in numbers and in strength. Only six thousand strong, they defeated a heavily armed battalion of forty seven thousand Syrians.

This enraged Antiochus and he sent an even larger army against them. In the miraculous, decisive battle at Bet Tzur, the Jewish forces emerged victorious. From there, they proceeded to Jerusalem, where they liberated the city and reclaimed the Sanctuary of the idols and rebuilt the altar.

PART 3

THE MENORAH

A central part of the daily service in the Temple was the kindling of the brilliant lights of the Menorah. Now, with the Temple about to be rededicated, only one small cruse of the pure, sacred olive oil was found. It was only one day's supply, and they knew it would take more than a week for the special process required to prepare more oil.

Undaunted, in joy and thanksgiving, the Maccabees lit the lamps of the Menorah with the small amount of oil, and dedicated the Holy Temple anew. Miraculously, as if in confirmation of the power of their faith, the oil did not burn out - and the flames shone brightly for eight days.

The following year, our Sages officially proclaimed the festival of Chanukah as a celebration lasting eight days, in perpetual commemoration of this victory over religious persecution.

THE 'GELT' AND 'DREIDEL'

WHY THE 'GELT'?

One of the meanings of the word *Chanukah* is "education." Appropriately, during Chanukah it is customary to give gelt (Chanukah money) to children to teach them to increase in charity and good deeds; and to add to the festive holiday spirit.

How did it begin?

In his record of the Chanukah events, Maimonides writes: "The Greeks laid their hands upon the possessions of Israel."

The Greeks invaded the possessions of Israel in the same spirit in which they defiled the oil in the Holy Temple. 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 – that they be used for impure ends, rather than holy pursuits.

Chanukah gelt celebrates the freedom and mandate to channel material wealth toward spiritual ends.

Some have the custom of gelt-giving each night of Chanukah (except for Shabbat), handing out a heftier sum on the fifth day. Why is five special? The fifth day calls for added celebration because of the brilliance of the fifth candle. Since the fifth day can never fall on Shabbat, this candle has the ability to illuminate the darkest of realms.

WHY THE 'DREIDEL'?

A favorite pastime of children and adults alike on the Festival of Chanukah is playing with a Dreidel (in English – top, in Hebrew – *sevivohn*). This delightful game has an ancient history. The *Dreidel* has four letters from the Hebrew alphabet, imprinted on each of its sides. In Israel the letters are *Nun*, *Gimel*, *Hay*, and *Pay*, which stands for *Nais Gadol Hayah Poh* – a great miracle happened here. Outside of Israel the letters are *Nun*, *Gimmel*, *Hay*, and *Shin*, which stands for *Nais Gadol Hayah Shahm* – a great miracle happened there.

The game is played by distributing to all participants either nuts, chocolates, or Chanukah *Gelt* (coins). Everyone places a coin in the middle and someone spins the *Dreidel*. If the *Dreidel* stops showing *Nun*, he neither wins nor loses. If *Gimmel*, he wins the entire pot. If *Hay*, he gets half the pot. If *Shin*, he must put one in the pot.

The game then continues with the next person taking his turn, and so on around the circle until someone has won everything.

Where did this wonderful game originate? Truth be told, it was a game of life or death. The Greek Syrians had become a progressively more oppressive occupying force. At first they felt they would convert the Jewish population to their pagan ways through being kind and gentle with the Jews. Much to their chagrin, many Jews remained steadfastly committed to their religion.

Frustrated by their lack of success the powerful regime passed a series of laws outlawing the study of Torah as a religious work. They additionally outlawed many types of ritual commandments like circumcision and Shabbat observance. The Jews were compelled to take their Torah learning "underground," for they knew, a Jew without Torah is like a fish out of water.

In order to disguise their activity the Children of Israel had to resort to learning Torah in outlying areas and forests. Even this plan was not foolproof, for the enemy had many patrols. The Jews 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.

This ruse did the trick, and the unbroken tradition of Torah scholarship thankfully remained intact!

THE NUMBERS GAME

If you add up the *Gimatria* (the Hebrew numerical value) of the letters of the dreidle, you get 358 (*Nun* (50) + *Gimmel* (3) + *Hei* (5) + *Shin* (300) = 358). This is the same value as *Moshiach* (*Mem* (40) + *Shin* (300) + *Yud* (10) + *Chet* (8) = 358), the Messiah. When the *Moshiach* comes, he will teach each individual how to see the Divine purpose in every facet of life. Then, even the dark and difficult times of our long and bitter exile will be illuminated and transformed into light and joy.



LIGHTING THE MENORAH

CHANUKAH OY! CHANUKAH COME LIGHT THE MENORAH...

Chanukah this year begins on Sunday evening, December 22 and ends on Monday, December 30. Like many Jewish holidays, Chanukah is a home celebration. Lighting the menorah, eating latkes, singing songs and playing a special game called dreidel are all part of Chanukah.



HOW TO LIGHT THE MENORAH

All members of the family should be present at the kindling of the Chanukah menorah. As well each child should light their own menorah.

The first light is kindled on the right side of the Menorah. On the second night add a second light to the left of the first and kindle the new light first proceeding from left to right, and so on each night. Use olive oil or candles, large enough to burn until half an hour after nightfall.

WHERE TO LIGHT THE MENORAH

It is customary to place the menorah either on a window sill facing the street, so that the lights of the candles will illuminate not only inside but the outside as well, or by a doorway, on the left side as you enter a room, opposite the mezuzah.

There should be enough light in the room so that one does not use the candles of the Menorah for lights, as the Chanukah lights should not be used for any purpose other than fulfillment of the mitzvah of publicizing the miracle.

 **SUNDAY DECEMBER 22**
after 4:50
Blessings 1, 2 & 3

 **MONDAY DECEMBER 23**
after 4:50
Blessings 1 & 2

 **TUESDAY DECEMBER 24**
after 4:50
Blessings 1 & 2

 **WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 25**
after 4:50
Blessings 1 & 2

 **THURSDAY DECEMBER 26**
after 4:50
Blessings 1 & 2

 **FRIDAY DECEMBER 27***
Blessings 1 & 2
then light Shabbat candles
Blessing 4
before 3:59

 **SATURDAY DECEMBER 28**
after 5:08, when Shabbat ends
Blessings 1 & 2

 **SUNDAY DECEMBER 29**
after 4:50
Blessings 1 & 2

*FRIDAY DECEMBER 27: On Friday afternoon the Chanukah lights (which must burn for 30 minutes after nightfall) are kindled before the Shabbat candles are lit. From the time the Shabbat candles are lit until Shabbat ends the Chanukah menorah should not be relit, moved or prepared.

BEFORE LIGHTING THE MENORAH RECITE THE FOLLOWING BLESSINGS:

BLESSING # 1

Baruch Atah A-donoi E-loheinu Melech
Haolam Asher Kiddishanu Bemitzvotav
Vetzivanu Lehadlik Ner Chanukah.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי יְיָ-לֵהִינוּ מְלֶכֶּךָ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר
חֲנֻכָּה:

Blessed are You, G-d our L-rd, Sovereign of the
universe, who has sanctified us by His command-
ments, and has commanded us to kindle the lights
of Chanukah.

BLESSING # 2

Baruch Atah A-donoi E-loheinu Melech
Haolam Sheasah Nisim Laavotainu
Bayamim Haheim Biz'man Hazeh.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי יְיָ-לֵהִינוּ מְלֶכֶּךָ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ, בְּיָמִים הָהֵם,
בְּזַמַּן הַזֶּה:

Blessed are You, G-d our L-rd, Sovereign of the
universe, who wrought miracles for our ancestors
in those days, at this season.

BLESSING # 3

*The following blessing is said only on the first
evening (or the first time one kindles the lights
this Chanukah):*

Baruch Atah A-donoi E-loheinu Melech
Haolam Shehecheyanu Vekiymanu
Vehigianu Lizman Hazeh.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי יְיָ-לֵהִינוּ מְלֶכֶּךָ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהַחַיְיָנוּ וְקִיְיָמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזַמַּן הַזֶּה:

Blessed are You, G-d our L-rd, Sovereign of the
universe, who has kept us alive, and has pre-
served us, and enabled us to reach this season.

After kindling the lights the following is recited:

Ha-nei-rot ha-lo-lu o-nu mad-li-kin
Al ha-te-shu-ot ve-al ha-ni-sim ve-al
ha-nif-la-ot She-ah-see-ta la-avoi-tei-nu
ba-ya-mim ha-heim biz-man ha-zeh Al ye-dei
ko-ha-ne-cha ha-ke-do-shim Ve-chol
she-mo-nat ye-mei cha-nu-kah ha-nei-rot
ha-la-lu ko-desh hem Ve-ein la-nu re-shut
le-hish-ta-meish ba-hen E-lo lir-o-tan bil-vad
ke-dei le-ho-dot u-le-ha-leil le-shim-cha
ha-ga-dol Al ni-se-cha ve-al nif-le-o-te-cha
ve-al ye-shu-o-te-cha.

הַנְּרוֹת הַלְלוּ אֶנּוּ מִדְּלִיקוֹ, עַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת,
וְעַל הַנִּסִּים. וְעַל הַנִּפְלְאוֹת, שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ
לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בְּיָמִים הָהֵם בְּזַמַּן הַזֶּה, עַל יְדֵי
כֹהֲנֶיךָ הַקְּדוֹשִׁים. וְכָל שְׂמוֹנַת יָמֵי חֲנֻכָּה,
הַנְּרוֹת הַלְלוּ קֹדֶשׁ הֵם, וְאֵין לָנוּ רְשׁוּת
לְהַשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בָּהֶן, אֶלָּא לְרְאוֹתָם בְּלִבָּד, כְּדֵי
לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְהַלֵּל לְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל עַל נִסֶּיךָ
וְעַל נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְעַל יְשׁוּעוֹתֶיךָ:

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

BLESSING # 4

*On Friday December 27, the following blessing is
said after lighting the Shabbat candles. (The
menorah is lit prior to lighting the Shabbat candles):*

Baruch Atah A-donai E-loheinu Melech
Haolam Asher Kiddishanu Bemitzvotav
Vetzivanu Lehadlik Ner Shel Shabbat Kodesh.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי יְיָ-לֵהִינוּ מְלֶכֶּךָ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר
שֶׁל שַׁבָּת קֹדֶשׁ:

Blessed are You, G-d our L-rd, Sovereign of the
universe, who commanded us to kindle the flame of
the holy Shabbat.





S.B. Unsдорfer following liberation.

Chanukah 1944 in Buchenwald

How a brave group of Jews outsmarted their S.S. captors

by S. B. UNSDORFER

There appeared to me to be two ways of surviving these camps of death. The first was to forget or abandon all laws of decency, respect, and trust in your fellow men, and fight recklessly and ruthlessly for your own skin, irrespective of any consequences to your fellow inmates. You had to rob, steal, and “organize” for extra food and better working conditions, curry favor with your *Meisters*, and squeal on your colleagues for the price of an apple or slice of bread.

The second was to hang on to dear life by trying to find hope and courage beyond human power.

There were plenty who adopted the law of the jungle, and they became the terror of the camp. I – and many like me – could never bring myself to pick someone else’s pocket while standing to attention at *Appell*, or rob him of his last piece of bread or *wurst*, or indulge in tricks which those who had been in the camps much longer than we appeared to accomplish so easily, and without conscience pricking them.

Some of us preferred to adopt the old and tested Jewish method of finding hope and

strength in G-d, and in prayer to Him. Thus, every morning and evening, fifteen or twenty of us crouched together quietly between the bunks to recite some parts of the prayers, and then go to work or to sleep, encouraged by the knowledge that the G-d for Whose sake we suffered was listening to our pleas.

Some laughed and mocked us. Kapo Otto, the faithful Communist, could cripple you for finding you at prayer; the S.S. would send you to the “cooler” for a couple of days for it, yet most of those sitting at what was called the “religious” table joined us regularly for a prayer session. There were: Benzi, the Table Elder; Baruch Stern, my former neighbor; Modche Fischhof, my “sleeping partner”; Hugo Gross, who wondered what his former Sudeten-German boss would say when he received his letter; Weinberger, the optician who was always hungry; Max Schiff, who was considered foolish for admitting having been a secretary, and yet was rewarded for his frankness by getting an office job with no night shift, with the solace of working in a warm room. Then there were old Mr. Friedman, the eldest in the camp, who escaped the death chambers after showing an S.S. man his rough hands to prove that

he was still able to work; young Walti Braun, who often wet his bed at night to the disgust and annoyance of Benzi, who slept in the bunk directly under him. There were Herlinger, the pessimist; Akiba Simcha Ungar, the young rabbi whose prison number was one less than mine – 95602; Gestetner, Modche Fischhof’s brother-in-law; thin Mr. Herzog; Federweiss, who wanted to chisel his way out of the transport between Sered and Auschwitz; Dr. Tauber, who often repeated to me some impressive words which he heard from my late father’s sermons; and, of course, Joszi Grunwald.

As winter advanced and grew colder, life became much more difficult. The midday soup ceased, and we had to spend the half-hour break inside Halle One watching the *Meisters* eating their sandwiches and smoking their cigarettes. We now felt the effects of working for twelve hours without food or drink. The skin on our hands began to peel, and every tiny cut or prick became septic, and took days to heal. The evening soup became thinner and thinner, and most of us had to run four or five times every night to the toilet. The thirty-minute *Appell* in the knee-high snow froze our feet. This, and the absence of any news about the progress of the war, reduced our nerves to breaking point.

Escape was completely ruled out, not only because of the strong guard and high wire fences, but because we had no chance of replacing our striped clothing, or of obtaining money or documents to get us past the first road control into a train.

When writing the little diary in which I entered the Hebrew dates and festivals, I discovered with great delight that Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, the festival on which we commemorate the recapture of the Temple from the mighty Greeks by a handful of faithful Jews, was only a few days ahead. I decided that we should light a little Hanukkah lamp even in *Nieder-Orschel*, and

that this would go a long way towards restoring our morale.

Benzi was immediately consulted because he had become the most reliable and trusted person in the block. Even those at the other two tables – the “intellectuals’ table,” where the doctors, lawyers, dentists, architects, and businessmen ate, and the “free table,” where the non-believers sat – even they came to Benzi to settle their quarrels, which were mostly about the distribution of their rations. Benzi would stand no arguments at his own table. He cut every loaf into eight portions and shared it out indiscriminately. He who complained received the smallest portion.

“If you are dissatisfied,” Benzi would shout angrily, “go and join another table, where they have scales and judges.”

Nobody ever left our table.

Benzi was enthusiastic about my idea. “Yes, we should get a Hanukkah light burning,” he said. “It will boost our morale and lighten the atmosphere. Work on a plan, but be careful.”

Two problems had to be overcome: oil had to be “organized,” and a place had to be found where the lighted wick would not be seen.

There was no lack of oil in the factory, but how could we smuggle even a few drops into our barrack in time for Monday evening, December 11, the first night of Hanukkah?

We knew, of course, that Jewish law did not compel us to risk our lives for the sake of fulfilling a commandment. But there was an urge in many of us to reveal the spirit of sacrifice implanted in our ancestors throughout the ages. We who were in such great spiritual, as well as physical distress, felt that a little Hanukkah light would warm our starving souls and inspire us with hope, faith, and courage to keep us going through this long, grim, and icy winter.

Benzi, Grunwald, Stern, Fischhof, and I were in the plot. We decided to draw lots. The first name drawn would have to steal the oil; the



Slave laborers in Buchenwald

third would be responsible for it, and hide it until Monday evening; and the fifth would have to light it under his bunk. I was drawn fifth.

Grunwald, who was to “organize” the oil, did his part magnificently. He persuaded the hated *Meister Meyer* that his machine would work better if oiled regularly every morning, and that this could best be arranged if a small can of fine machine oil was allotted to us to be kept in our toolbox. *Meister Meyer* agreed, so there was no longer the problem of having to hide it.

On Monday evening after *Appell*, everyone else sat down to his much awaited portion of tasteless but hot soup, while I busied myself under the bunk to prepare my *menorah*. I put that oil in the empty half of a shoe-polish tin, took a few threads from my thin blanket and made them into a wick. When everything was ready I hastily joined the table to eat my dinner before I invited all our friends to the Hanukkah Light Kindling ceremony. Suddenly, as I was eating my soup, I remembered we had forgotten about matches.

I whispered to Benzi.

“Everyone must leave a little soup,” Benzi ordered his hungry table guests, and told them why.

Within five minutes, five portions of soup were exchanged in the next room for a cigarette. The cigarette was “presented” to

the chef, Josef, for lending us a box of matches without questions.

And so, as soon as dinner was over I made the three traditional blessings, and a little Hanukkah light flickered away slowly under my bunk. Not only my friends from the “religious” table were there with us, but also many others from the room joined us in humming the traditional Hanukkah songs. These songs carried us into the past. As if on a panoramic screen, we saw our homes, with our parents, brothers, sisters, wives, and children gathered around the beautiful silver candelabras, singing happily the *Maoz Tzur*. That tiny little light under my bunk set our hearts ablaze.

Tears poured down our haggard cheeks. By now, every single inmate in the room sat silently on his bunk, or near mine, deeply meditating. For a moment, nothing else mattered. We were celebrating the first night of Hanukkah as we had done in all the years previous to our imprisonment and torture. We were a group of Jewish people fulfilling our religious duties, and dreaming of home and of bygone years.

But alas! Our dream ended much too soon.

A roar of “*Achtung*” brought our minds back to reality, and our legs to stiff attention. “The Dog” – that skinny little *Unterschaarfuehrer* – stood silently at the door, as he so often did on his surprise visits, looking anxiously for some excuse, even the slightest, to wield

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

CHANUKAH 1944 IN BUCHENWALD – CONTINUED

his dog-whip. Suddenly he sniffed as loudly as his Alsatian, and yelled:

“Hier stinks ja von Oehl!” (“It stinks of oil in here.”)

My heart missed a few beats as I stared down at the little Hanukkah light flickering away, while “The Dog” and his Alsatian began to parade along the bunks in search of the burning oil.

The *Unterschaarfuehrer* silently began his search. I did not dare bend down or stamp out the light with my shoes for fear the Alsatian would notice my movements and leap at me.

I gave a quick glance at the death-pale faces around me, and so indeed did “The Dog.” Within a minute or two he would reach

our row of bunks. Nothing could save us... but suddenly...

Suddenly a roar of sirens, sounding an air raid, brought “The Dog” to a stop and within seconds all lights in the entire camp were switched off from outside.

“Fliegeralarm! Fliegeralarm!” echoed throughout the camp! Like lightning I snuffed out the light with my shoes and following a strict camp rule, we all ran to the open ground, brushing “The Dog” contemptuously aside.

“There will be an investigation.... There will be an investigation,” he screamed above the clatter of rushing prisoners who fled out into the *Appell* ground.

But I did not worry. In delight, I grabbed my little menorah and ran out with it. This

was the sign, the miracle of Hanukkah, the recognition of our struggle against the temptations of our affliction. We had been helped by G-d, even in this forsaken little camp at Nieder-Orschel.

Outside, in the ice-cold, star-studded night, with the heavy drone of Allied bombers over our heads, I kept on muttering the traditional blessing to the G-d who wrought miracles for His people in past days and in our own time. The bombers seemed to be spreading these words over the host of heaven. ■

*This account of Chanukah 1944 in Nieder-Orschel slave labor camp, a Buchenwald subcamp in Germany, is an excerpt of **The Yellow Star** by S.B. Unsdorfer.*

MTC FAVORITE • TRIED AND TRUE RECIPE

Oil played a significant role in the Chanukah story – which is why we eat oily foods to commemorate it. Some eat fried potato pancakes, a.k.a. latkes, while others eat sufganiyot – deep-fried doughnuts. Some eat both. Most survive the holiday.



POTATO LATKES

INGREDIENTS

- 5 large potatoes, peeled
- 1 large onion
- 3 eggs
- 1/3 cups flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 3/4 cup oil for frying

Use: 10-inch skillet

Yields: 4 to 6 servings

DIRECTIONS

Grate potatoes and onion on the fine side of a grater, or in a food processor; or put in a blender with a little water.

Strain grated potatoes and onion through a colander, pressing out excess water. Add eggs, flour, and seasoning. Mix well.

Heat 1/2 cup oil in skillet. Lower flame and place 1 large tablespoon batter at a time into hot sizzling oil and fry on one side for approximately 5 minutes until golden brown. Turn over and fry on other side 2 to 3 minutes.

Remove from pan and place on paper towels to drain excess oil. Continue with remaining batter until used up, adding more oil when necessary.

Serve with applesauce on the side.