

December 7th, 2018/29th Kislev, 5779

Dear chevreh,

Each night Scott and I have been lighting our menorahs* and allowing ourselves to find quiet and contentment, gazing at the beautiful lights which bring elegance, simplicity and coziness into our home.

The Bnei Yissaschar, Rabbi Zvi Elimelech of Dinov, Poland [1783-1841] teaches: “On Chanukah, we are given part of the *or ha-ganuz*, the primordial light which has been hidden-away since the moment of Creation and which is preserved for the righteous in the world to come. (This is the light of the first day of creation, before the sun and moon and stars were created; not literal light, but a kind of spiritual or metaphysical light, the light of expanded consciousness.) With this light, you could see from one end of the earth to the other. And with this light, we kindle other holy lights -- the souls within each of us.”**

We light actual lights which illuminate, and we dip into the energy of the illumination of expanded consciousness. The quality of the lights of Chanukah, as they increase each evening, allows us to experience the darkness in changing ways as well. As it gets dark so early, we are invited to move perhaps with more ease into the realms of meditation and dreaming, where a different kind of seeing and light can emerge.

And now, we are entering the Shabbat of Chanukah and Winter Solstice, the darkest time of the year. On this particular Shabbat, we can find restorative potential in both the darkness and the light.

Shabbat shalom,

Rabbi Diana

*many call it a hannukiyah/ot which is a modern Hebrew coinage from 1897; menorah is an older, pre-Hebrew revival word. I grew up with menorah and didn't even hear of hannukiyah until relatively recently.

**from Michael Strassfeld's commentary in *The Jewish Holiday* on the month of Kislev)