

Invitation to Judaism – Lesson Plan – Hanukkah

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Readings: Robinson p. 111-115, Telushkin pp. 109-113, 646-647

1. Hanukkah and Christmas

- a. Christmas is a major holiday for Christians, Hanukkah is not a major holiday for Jews. Hanukkah is not in Torah or even in the Bible. Last (historically) of the traditional holidays (165 BCE).
- b. Aside from commercialism (which many religious Christians generally dislike), there are a lot of warm, happy, family traditions associated with Christmas that many people find difficult to give up. Hanukkah: no tree, no Santa, no stockings, no mistletoe, no crèche scenes, no Christmas caroling, no Grinch, etc. What about “Hanukkah lights/decorations?”
- c. Christmas is a holiday that represents the foundation of the Christian faith. The birth of Jesus (even if it were the right date) is of no consequence to Judaism. (What is Jewish view of Jesus? Ultimately, the answer is “he is not on our ‘radar scope.’”)
- d. What about Grandparents? – can “visit” Christmas at grandparents home with grandchildren, but not part of *Jewish* home. Interfaith families, of course, each need to make their own compromises and decisions.

2. History of Hanukkah. What does it celebrate?

- a. Look at texts from Books of Maccabees (in Apocrypha, not part of our Bible). Civil war as well as war against Syrian (Seleucid) Greeks. (Important names: Anitochus IV, Epiphanes, Mattathias, Judah Maccabee, Modi'in)
- b. Holiday against assimilation. (What about “Hanukkah bushes”?) Where should we draw the line between adapting/adopting surrounding cultural norms and practices and when to avoid them?
- c. Really was “Sukkot” in winter, as stated in Maccabees II, like Solomon’s time, Temple *dedicated* on Sukkot (I Kings 8:2). The Altar for the Second Temple also dedicated on Sukkot (Ezra 3:4). (Hanukkah = dedication) Also explains the 8 days (Sukkot [7] + Shmini Atzeret [1] = 8)
- d. Story of the oil is only found hundreds of years after event – in the Talmud. On the other hand, it captures a spiritual quality of the holiday – the “light” has lasted for thousands of years since. Similarly, “Maccabee” is either a “hammer” – military victory, or “Mi Chamocha B’elim Adonai” – spiritual victory.

3. Practical Hanukkah

- a. Explain and demonstrate lighting candles (menorah/Hanukkiyah), blessings, *hanerot hallalu* (difference between Hanukkah and Shabbat candles) (see also Talmud text for variations on lighting, but halakhah today is fixed as Hillel), why we have a Shamash candle
- b. Explain and demonstrate dreidls (history?) *Nun, Gimel, Hay, Shin = Nes gadol hayah sham* (a great miracle happened there), (In Israel *peh = poh = here*.)
- c. Latkes and doughnuts (it’s the oil)
- d. Presents, parties, decorations, etc.

1 Maccabees 1:43-63 – Antiochus’ Persecutions

All the Gentiles accepted the command of the king. Many even from Israel gladly adopted his religion; they sacrificed to idols and profaned the Sabbath. And the king sent letters by messengers to Jerusalem and the cities of Judah; he directed them to follow customs strange to the land, to forbid burnt offerings and sacrifices and drink offerings in the sanctuary, to profane Sabbaths and feasts, to defile the sanctuary and the priests, to build altars and sacred precincts and shrines for idols, to sacrifice swine and unclean animals, and to leave their sons uncircumcised. They were to make themselves abominable by everything unclean and profane, so that they should forget the law and change all the ordinances. “And whoever does not obey the command of the king shall die.” ... And he appointed inspectors over all the people and commanded the cities of Judah to offer sacrifice, city by city. Many of the people, everyone who forsook the law, joined them, and they did evil in the land; they drove Israel into hiding in every place of refuge they had. Now on the 15th day of Kislev, in the one hundred and forty fifth year they erected a desolating sacrilege upon the altar of burnt offering. They also built altars in the surrounding cities of Judah, and burned incense at the doors of the houses and in the streets. The books of the law which they found they tore to pieces and burned with fire. Where the book of the covenant was found in the possession of anyone, or if anyone adhered to the law, the decree of the king condemned him to death ... On the 25th day of the month they offered sacrifice on the altar which was upon the altar of burnt offering. According to the decree, they put to death the women who had their children circumcised ... and they hung the infants from their mothers’ necks.

1 Maccabees 2 & 3 - the Maccabees Enter

In those days Mattathias the son of John, son of Simeon, a priest of the sons of Joarib, moved from Jerusalem and settled in Modi’in ... Then the King’s officers who were enforcing the apostasy came to the city of Modi’in to make them offer sacrifice ... The king’s officers spoke to Mattathias as follows: ‘you are a leader, honored and great in this city ... now be the first to come and do what the king commands, as all the Gentiles and the men of Judah and those who are left in Jerusalem have done ...’ Mattathias answered in a loud voice: ‘even if all the nations that live under the rule of the king obey him ... we will not obey the king’s words by turning aside from our religion to the right hand or to the left.’ When he had finished speaking these words, a Jew came forward in the sight of all to offer sacrifice upon the altar ... when Mattathias saw it, he burned with zeal and his heart was stirred and filled with righteous anger; he ran and killed him upon the altar and then he killed the king’s officer who was forcing them to sacrifice and he tore down the altar ... Then Mattathias cried out in the city with a loud voice, saying: ‘let everyone who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me!’ And he and his sons fled to the hills ... They organized an army and struck down sinners in their anger and lawless men in their wrath ... Mattathias and his friends went about and tore down the altars; they forcibly circumcised all the uncircumcised boys that they found within the borders of Israel. Mattathias died in the one hundred and forty sixth year and was buried in the tomb of his fathers at Modi’in and all Israel mourned for him with great lamentation. Then Judas his son, who was called Maccabeus, took command in his place.

1 Maccabees 4:36-59 - Rededicating the Temple

Then said Judas and his brothers: ‘behold, our enemies are crushed; let us go up to cleanse the sanctuary and dedicate it.’ So all the army assembled and they went up to Mount Zion and they saw the sanctuary desolate, the altar profaned, and the gates burned. In the courts they saw bushes sprung up as in a thicket, or as on one of the mountains. They saw also the chambers of the priests in ruins. Then they rent their clothes, and mourned with great lamentation, and sprinkled themselves with ashes. They fell face down on the ground, and sounded the signal on the trumpets, and cried out to Heaven. Then Judas detailed men to fight against those in the citadel (*akra*) until he had cleansed the sanctuary ... Early in the morning on the 25th day of the ninth month which is the month of Kislev, in the one hundred and forty eighth year, they rose and offered sacrifice, as the law directs, on the new altar of burnt offering which they had built. At the very season and on the very day that the Gentiles had profaned it, it was dedicated with songs and harps and lutes and cymbals ... So they celebrated the dedication of the altar for eight days, and offered burnt offerings with gladness; they offered a sacrifice of deliverance and praise ... Then Judas and his brothers and all the assembly of Israel determined that every year at that season the days of the dedication of the altar should be observed with gladness and joy for eight days, beginning with the 25th day of the month of Kislev.

John 10:22-23

²² At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, ²³ and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon.

Alternative Endings

2 Maccabees 10:1-8

Maccabeus with his men, led by the Lord, recovered the Temple and the city. He demolished the altars erected by the heathens in the public square and their sacred precincts as well ... The sanctuary was purified on the 25th day of Kislev ... This joyous celebration went on for eight days, it was like Sukkot, for they recalled how only a short time before they had kept the Festival while living like animals in the mountains, and so they carried *lulavim* and *etrogim* and they chanted hymns to God who had triumphantly led them to the purification of the Temple. The public assembly decreed that the entire Jewish people should observe these days every year.

Pesikta Rabbati

Why are lights kindled during Hanukkah? At the time the sons of *Hashman* triumphed over the kingdom of Greece, they entered the Temple and they found there eight spears of iron which they grooved out, poured in oil, and kindled wicks.

Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 21b

Our Rabbis taught: on the 25th day of Kislev begins the eight days of Hanukkah, days on which mourning and fasting cease. For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all of the oil, and when the Hasmonians defeated them, they searched and found only one jug of oil with the official seal of the *Kohen Gadol*, enough to burn for one day. A miracle happened and the oil lasted for eight days. In the following years, these days were appointed as a festival on which Hallel was said.

Josephus *Antiquities*, 12.7.7

Now Judas celebrated the festival of the restoration of the sacrifices of the temple for eight days, and omitted no sort of pleasures thereon; but he feasted them upon very rich and splendid sacrifices; and he honored God, and delighted them by hymns and psalms. Nay, they were so very glad at the revival of their customs, when, after a long time of intermission, they unexpectedly had regained the freedom of their worship, that they made it a law for their posterity, that they should keep a festival, on account of the restoration of their temple worship, for eight days. And from that time to this we celebrate this festival, and call it Lights. I suppose the reason was, because this liberty beyond our hopes appeared to us; and that thence was the name given to that festival.

Flavius Josephus. The Works of Flavius Josephus. Translated by. William Whiston, A.M. Auburn and Buffalo. John E. Beardsley. 1895.

<http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0526.tlg001.perseus-eng1:12.7.7>

Hanukkah Home Service

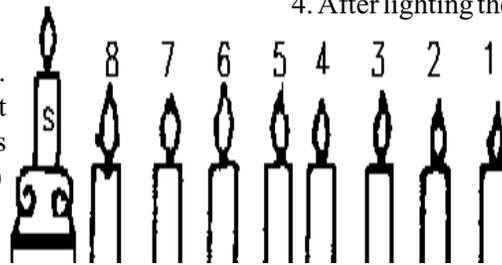
Hanukkah is a wonderful holiday and our celebration must include more than just the custom of giving gifts. Decorating the home with *Hanukkah* symbols increases the holiday spirit. The most important part of the holiday is lighting of the *Hanukkah* candles. The only function of the candles is to be watched. They may not be used for heat or light.

Everyone is obligated to light the candles. If possible, there should be a *hanukiyah* (*menorah*) for every member of the family. A *hanukiyah* is easy to make and using a home-made one can enhance the joy of the holiday.

Home Service

1. Place the candles in the *hanukiyah* as shown in the diagram. The number of candles should equal the number of the night of *Hanukkah*, plus one for the *Shammash*. When the candles are lit, the highest number candle is lit first. The *Shammash* (S) is lit nightly to light the other candles.

Note: On Friday night, light the *Hanukkah* candles before the *Shabbat* candles. On Saturday night, light them after *Havdalah*.



2. Place the *hanukiyah* near a window so people can see the lights. The purpose of lighting the candles is *pirsuma d'nisa*, to publicize the miracle of *Hanukkah*.

3. After lighting the *Shammash* and before lighting the other candles, say the following *brakhot*:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם
אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של חנוכה.

Barukh ata adonai elohenu melekh ha'olam, asher kideshanu bemitz-votav ve'tzivanu lehadlik ner shel hanukah.

Praised are You, Adonai our God, Master of time and space, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to light the *Hanukkah* lights.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם
שעשה נסים לאבותינו בימים ההם ובזמן הזה.

Barukh ata adonai elohenu melekh ha'olam, she-asah nissim la'avoteinu ba'yamim ha'heim u'vazman hazeh.

Praised are You, Lord our God, Master of time and space, who accomplished miracles for our ancestors in ancient days, and in our time.

On the first night, the following is added:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם
שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.

Barukh ata adonai elohenu melekh ha'olam, shehehiyanu ve'kiyemanu ve'hig'ianu lazeman hazeh.

Praised are You, Lord our God, Master of time and space, who has kept us alive, sustained us and enabled us to reach this day.

4. After lighting the candles, recite the following:

We kindle these lights to recall the great and wonderful deeds done by You, Lord our God, through the Macabees. May their light remind us to look to You, source of our help. We remember those who came before us who made every sacrifice to keep the light of Your truth burning brightly. May we and our children be inspired by their example so that Israel may continue to be a light to the world in the ways of righteousness and truth. Amen.

5. All join in singing *Ma'oz Tzur*.

מעוז צור ישועתי לך נאה לשבח
תבון בית תפילתי ושם תודה נזבח
לעת תכין מטבח מצר המנבח
אז אגמר בשיר מזמור חנפת המזבח.

Ma'oz tzur ye'shua'ti lekha na'eh le'shabay-ah. Tikon bate teflati ve'sham todah niza'bay-eah. Le'ate takhin mat'bay-ah me-tzor ha'mina'beyah. Az egmor be-shir mizmor hanukat ha-mizbe'ah.

Other Notes

Tephillin are donned during *Hanukkah*, except *Shabbat*, of course. They are worn for the entire morning service. A special paragraph is added to *Birkat HaMazon*, as noted, on the holiday.

The Blessings



Each of the following three blessings is recited on the first night of Chanukah. On each successive night, only the first two blessings are recited.

The First Blessing

Praised are You,
Our God, Ruler of the universe,
Who made us holy through Your commandments
and commanded us
to kindle the Chanukah lights.

**Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam Asher kideshano
b'mitzvatav Vetzivanu L'hadlik ner shel Chanukah**

לפני הרה"ק מברכים "הרה"ק רבי וישעיה נסים" בערב חראשון מסיים ברכת "שחרית":
**ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו
במצותיך וצונו להדליק נר (שול) חנוכה:**

The Second Blessing

Praised are You,
Our God, Ruler of the universe,
Who performed wondrous deeds for our ancestors
in those ancient days
at this season.

**Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam Sheh'asah nissim
la'avoteinu Ba-yamin ha-heim Ba-zman ha-zeh**

**ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם, שעשית נסים
לאבותינו בימינו בהם בזמן הזה:**

The Third Blessing (First night only)

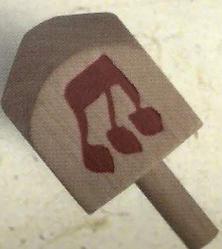
Praised are You, Our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has given us life and sustained us and enabled us to reach this season.

**Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam sheheceyanu v'ki-y'manu
v'higyanu lazman hazeh**

ברכת הראשון מסיים גם "שחרית":
**ברוך אתה יהוה, אלהינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקיימנו
והגיימנו להזמן הזה:**

The following prayer is recited each night following the lighting of the candles:

We kindle these lights
For the miracles and the wonders
For the redemption and the battles
Which You performed for our forefathers
In those days at this season
Through Your holy priests.
During all eight days of Chanukah
These lights are sacred
And we are not permitted to make ordinary use of them
But only to look at them
In order to express thanks and praise to Your great Name
For Your miracles, Your wonders, and Your salvations.



Ha-nerot ha-lalu anach-nu mad-likhn Vi-ehol shimonat ye-mey Chanukah
Al ha-nissim vi-al hanif-laot Ha-nerot ha-lalu kodesh hein,
Al ha-tshu-ot vi-al ha-milchamot Ve-ein lanu reshut li-heesh-tamash ba-hem
She-asata la'avo-telei Ela leor-otam bitved
Ba-yamin ha-heim, ba-zman ha-zeh K'dai le-hodot u-li-hallel il-shimcha
Al ye-dey kohan-echa hakl-doshim. Al ni-sacha vi-al nifo-techa vi-al yeshua-techa.

בן הערב וערב ואילך מחזיקין חזקתן שבת ויום טוב ששומר יומיו
אחר ההדלקה אפ"ר "עצמות ופלי" וימי "עקר וזר שוקק" ו'
הנרות הללו אנו כולקום על הנסים ועל המצוות פנימים
התעוררות ועל המלחמות, שעשית לאבותינו פנימים
הם בזמן הזה, על ידי כהניך הקדושים, וכן ישמרת ימי חנוכה
הנרות הללו קדש הם, ואין לנו רשות להשתמש בהם, אלא
קראתם בלילה, כדי לחדות ולתקל ולשקוד תמיד על נסוד ועל
מלאכתך ועל ישיבתך:

Chanukkah Customs

On Chanukkah, it is customary for children to spin the dreidel (a four-sided top with a Hebrew letter on each side). Taken together, the letters form the initials for the Hebrew words, "Nes Gadol Haya Sham" (A Great Miracle Happened There). In Israel, the letter shin is replaced by a pei (פ) for poh, "A Great Miracle Happened Here."

How to play the Dreidel Game

Each player starts with the same number of marbles, nuts, m&ms, or pennies.

1. Each player puts one piece into the "pot"
2. The first player spins the Dreidel.
3. When the Dreidel stops, do what the letter says:

נ	(Nun)	the spinner gets nothing.
ג	(Gimmel)	the spinner gets the whole pot.
ה	(Hey)	the spinner gets half the pot.
ש	(Shin)	the spinner adds one to the pot.

4. Return to step #1, and the second player plays, etc.



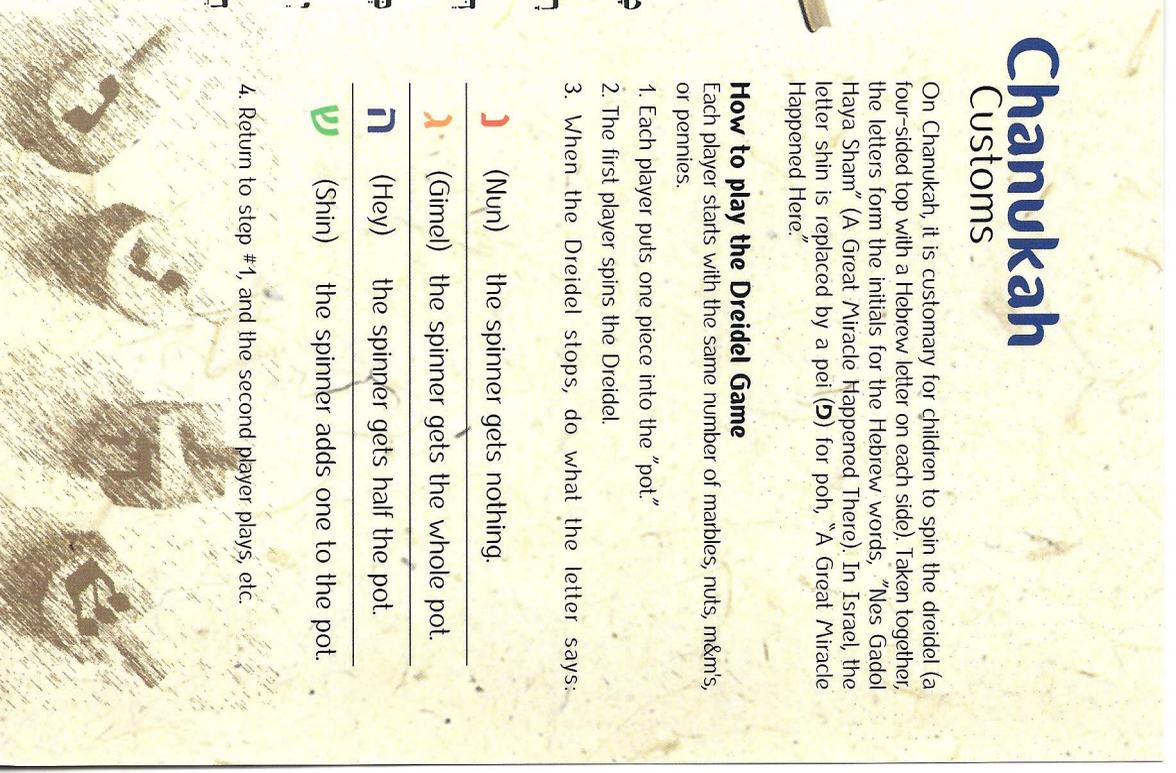
The festive Maoz Tzur prayer is sung in unison:

Maaz tzur yeshua-ti
 Lecha na-eh il-sha-beyach
 Tiklome baiti ti-fee-yalti
 Vi-siham todah ni-za-beyach.

U-ele ta-ehin mat-beyach
 Me-e-tzar ham-na-beyach
 Az eg-more vi-sheer meez-mor
 Chanukat ha-meez-beyach
 Az eg-more vi-sheer meez-mor
 Chanukat ha-meez-beyach.

(Translation)
 O Rock of my salvation, with delight
 We praise You.
 Restore the Temple where we will
 bring offerings.
 When You will eliminate our enemies,
 Then I shall sing at the rededication.

כי עזו צור ישועתי ד'ה נצ'ה לשבת, הכול בית תפלתו ולשם תודה
 נזכרת, לעית תבין מספרת מצור המנפבת, אז אנמור בשיר מנמור
 תגבת המנפבת:
 ר' עזת לשבעת נפשי בגינו פוהי פל'ה, הוי כורדו בקלשי בשעבוד
 מסוכת עג'רה, וברדו העדולה הוציא אהדהמפלה, הרל פ'עה
 וכל'רועו ה'רוו פאלו במצולו:
 ר' ברד קורשו תביאנו וגם שם לא שקשתי, וכא נגוש והתקתי, פי
 זרבלל, לקן שבעים נאשעה:
 פ'רת קומת פרול בשל אנוי פו המרתא, ונהיחה או ר'פח
 ולמולקש ונאמתו נשפחה, ואלש ימתי נשאת, ואולי, לשמו
 סתרת, ל'כ פניו וקננו על העק תל'תי:
 ו גם נקמנו ע'ף אזי פ'מי השמנים, ופרענו חמות מנה'ר
 ומסאו פל השמנים, ומלותר קננו גם פ'שוענים, פני
 ביקר ימי שמונה קבעו שיר ורננים:
 חשוחו ורוע קדוש וקבר קו תלשעה, פי ארבה ל'ני תלשעה, וואו קו
 מאמה תלשעה, פי ארבה ל'ני תלשעה, וואו קו
 יצמי ורעה, ורת ארמון בצ'ר פ'מון ר'קם ל'ני רועים לשע'ה:
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Hanukkah: A Brief History

By Alan Lucas

Excerpted from [The Observant Life](#)

Although both Hanukkah and Purim are considered minor festivals to which the laws regarding the prohibition of labor on festivals do not apply, both are significant in their own right and both have won a special place in the hearts of the Jewish people.

Some might find it strange to refer to Hanukkah as a “minor” festival, given that it is probably one of the best-known of all the Jewish holidays. But the fact is that Hanukkah has fared well in contemporary times for reasons unrelated to its traditional place in the pecking order of Jewish festivals. For Jews in the Diaspora, Hanukkah has benefited from its proximity to Christmas. In Israel, Hanukkah has benefited (far more reasonably) from the resonance its themes of national pride and identity have with the core values of the modern State of Israel.

The historical narrative that forms the background for Hanukkah is found in the First and Second Books of Maccabees, works preserved as part of the extra-canonical library known as the Apocrypha, as well as in some other ancient works, including the final sections of the Book of Daniel. Modern scholars debate the actual sequence of events that led to the Maccabean revolt, the success of which led to the institution of Hanukkah as a festival. However, the basic picture is clear enough. After the death of Alexander the Great, the Jewish homeland passed back and forth between the Seleucid Empire (based in Syria) and the Ptolemaic Empire (based in Egypt) until the land was firmly part of the Syrian empire named for Seleucus I (c. 358–281 B.C.E.), its first emperor. Some suggest that the Greeks grew impatient with Jewish resistance to Hellenization, and also with the slow spread of Greek culture, ideas, and spiritual/religious values in the wake of Alexander’s death and the dismemberment of his empire among his generals. Seeking to speed up the process, then, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Seleucid king, decreed that the Temple should incorporate sacrifices to Greek gods and that the law of Moses be rescinded as the law of the land. This development appealed to some assimilationist segments of the Jewish population, but dramatically less to the traditionalists among them, who rose up in a revolt led by one Matityahu (sometimes called Mattathias in English) and his sons, foremost among them the one history would eventually call Judah the Maccabee. (The names are a bit obscure.

“Maccabee” is sometimes derived from the Hebrew word for “hammer,” thus making Judah the ancient Jewish equivalent of Charles Martel. The term “Hasmonean,” also of obscure meaning and etymology, is used to describe his family as well.) In the first war ever fought for religious freedom, Judah, his brothers, and their followers drove the Hellenizers from the Temple, if not entirely from Jerusalem, and then managed to reestablish Jewish sovereignty. Other scholars, utilizing the same historical data, describe the revolt against the Seleucids as far more of a civil war between Jews enamored of the Hellenistic ideal and the so-called “community of the pious,” whose members were more zealous for the preservation and maintenance of Jewish law. When these two sides could not reconcile, Antiochus intervened on the side of the Hellenizers. The exact details of the conflict may never be known with certainty, but all scholars agree that, once the fuse was lit, an armed struggle ensued and the eventual result was the reestablishment of

Jewish sovereignty over the Temple and throughout the Land of Israel. Among the first acts of the newly victorious traditionalists was the rededication of the Temple. When this was accomplished, a festival was proclaimed to commemorate the event.

The First Book of Maccabees (4:52–59) describes the inauguration of the festival in these terms: “Now on the twenty fifth day of the ninth month, which is called the month of Kisleiv . . . they rose up in the morning and offered sacrifice according to the law upon the new altar of burnt offerings, which they had made. At the very season and on the very day that the gentiles had profaned it, it was now rededicated with song. . . . And so they celebrated the dedication of the altar for eight days. . . . Moreover, Judah and his brothers, with the whole congregation of Israel, ordained that the days of the dedication of the altar should be observed with mirth and gladness in that same season from year to year for eight days, starting on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Kisleiv.”

In the talmudic era, the rabbis understood this event not so much as the historical victory of the Hasmoneans over the Seleucids, but as a miraculous triumph of God’s might in defense of the Jewish people. The talmudic discussion of these events (at BT Shabbat 21b) describes the Maccabees and their followers entering the Temple that had been defiled by the supporters of the Seleucids. Finding only enough consecrated oil to relight the Temple candelabrum, the *m’norah*, for one day and knowing that it would take a full week to produce new supplies of oil, they kindled the lights of the *m’norah* anyway, despite the obvious futility of such an act. However, a miracle occurred, similar to the one that Scripture describes in the story of the destitute prophet’s widow told in 2 Kings 4, and oil continued to flow out of the lone jug they had found for eight days, thus buying the faithful enough time to prepare new supplies and keep the *m’norah* burning.

As mentioned briefly above, Hanukkah is a holiday that has been embraced in modern times by many different kinds of Jews for many different reasons. Modern Israel has embraced the *m’norah* as its national symbol, and Hanukkah has come to be seen as a festival of Jewish rebirth in defiance of overwhelming odds. Modern Diaspora Jews identify Hanukkah with their own ongoing struggle against assimilation and, indeed, the *m’norah* shines brightly in many nonreligious Jewish homes as a badge of honor and identity. The real challenge for Jews of all types, secular and religious, inside and outside Israel, is to identify with and affirm Hanukkah’s authentic message of optimism and faith. As is stated in the haftarah read in synagogue on the Shabbat of Hanukkah: “Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, says the Eternal One of Hosts!” (Zechariah 4:6).

Hanukkah: Selected Laws

By Alan Lucas

Excerpted from [The Observant Life](#)

The m’norah may be lit anytime after sundown, except on Friday evening when the *m’norah* should be lit just prior to the Shabbat candles. Special effort should be made on Friday night to make sure that the Hanukkah candles lit prior to sundown are long or thick enough to last well

into the evening. Other than on Shabbat, the candles may be lit into the evening for as long as there are people out and about in the street to see them burning (SA Orah Hayyim 672:1).

The *shammash* is lit first and it is used to light the rest of the candles. On the first night of Hanukkah, the *shammash* is used to light one candle. On the second night, it is used to light two, and so on, until all eight candles are lit on the eighth night of the holiday. The candles are placed in the *m'norah* from right to left as one faces the *m'norah*, but are lit from left to right so that the first candle lit first is the one being kindled for the first time that evening (SA Orah Hayyim 676:5).

After the *shammash* is lit, but before the rest of the candles are lit, three blessings are recited the first night, and two on each remaining night. These and the following prayers can be found in any standard prayerbook. The first blessing is *barukh attah adonai, eloheinu, melekh ha-olam, asher kidd'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivvanu l'hadlik neir shel hanukkah* (“Praised are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe, who, sanctifying us with divine commandments, has commanded us to kindle the Hanukkah lamp”). The second is a blessing recited in only two contexts in the course of the year, when we read the Book of Esther at Purim and on this occasion of lighting the Hanukkah candles: *barukh attah adonai, eloheinu, melekh ha-olam, she-asah nissim la-avoteinu bayamim ha-heim ba-z'man ha-zeh* (“Praised are You Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe, who wrought miracles for our ancestors at this time in ancient days”). On the first night of Hanukkah, the She-he'eyyanu blessing is also recited. The candles are then lit. After lighting the candles, it is customary to recite the paragraph Ha-neirot Hallalu, which makes explicit the purpose of our lighting the *m'norah* and the prohibition of making practical use of the light it casts. (That is why we use the *shammash* in the first place, to guarantee that the light of the *m'norah* is always mixed with other light, thus at least ensuring that it is never used all by itself for practical purposes.) This is followed by the singing of Ma-oz Tzur (Rock of Ages), the most famous of all [Hanukkah songs](#).

If the *m'norah* has been lit elsewhere, it should then be placed in a window, a doorway, or any place where it will be visible from the street (SA Orah Hayyim 671:5). This is done because the express purpose of this *mitzvah* is to publicize the miracle that happened so long ago, an aspect of the *mitzvah* usually referenced with the Aramaic expression *pirsuma d'nissa* (literally, “the promulgation of the miracle.”) To share the light of our *m'norah* with all who pass by is the fulfillment of this *mitzvah*. Given that the newest candle should be the one the furthest left and that the point of the *mitzvah* is to publicize the miracle, the general custom is to light the *m'norah* in the correct way for those looking at it from inside the house, then to turn it around to facilitate proper viewing from the street when it is on display.

The *shammash* should be allowed to burn with the rest of the candles and not be extinguished after use, because its presence also guarantees that the light of the “real” Hanukkah candles are not used for any other purpose without the admixture, at least, of some “permitted” light (SA Orah Hayyim 673:1).

During Hanukkah, a special prayer, called [Al Ha-nissim](#) (after its first words), is interpolated into both the penultimate blessing of the Amidah and the Grace after Meals. Also, the complete [Hallel](#) Service is recited every morning just after the repetition of the Amidah. Except on

Shabbat and on the day or days of Rosh Hodesh, there is no Musaf Service on Hanukkah. It is customary to light the *m'norah* in synagogue just before the Evening Service and to recite the appropriate blessings. It is also customary to light the *m'norah* in synagogue before the Morning Service, but without saying the blessings. This is not intended as the performance of the specific *mitzvah* to kindle lights at Hanukkah (which must be done in the evening), but merely to publicize the festival and to proclaim a community's faith in the miracle story that rests at its center.

The Torah is read each day of Hanukkah. Three individuals are called forward for *aliyot*; the reading, taken from the seventh chapter of the Book of Numbers, details the gifts the princes of Israel donated to the Tabernacle when it was inaugurated for use. The reading for each day follows the Torah's description of the twelve days of the Tabernacle's dedication (with the passage detailing the last five of the twelve days, ending at Numbers 8:4, read on the eighth day of the holiday).

The sixth day of Hanukkah is always Rosh Hodesh, the beginning of the new month of Teivet, and so two scrolls are always removed from the Ark. Three people are called forward for *aliyot* as a passage about Rosh Hodesh is read from the first scroll, then a fourth individual is called up for an *aliyah* as a passage about Hanukkah is read from the second scroll. In some years, however, Rosh Hodesh is observed for two days and so the sixth and seventh days of Hanukkah are both days of Rosh Hodesh. In years in which the seventh day of Hanukkah is the second day of Rosh Hodesh, the Torah reading procedure (with the exception of the specific passage read as the fourth *aliyah*) is the same for both days.

Depending on the year, one or two Shabbatot will fall during Hanukkah. On such days, two scrolls are taken from the Ark. The portion for the week is read from the first and the *maftir* reading, in honor of Hanukkah, is read from the second. The *haftarah* is Zechariah 2:14–4:7, which contains not only a reference to the *m'norah* but also the verse: “Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, says the Eternal One of Hosts,” which can serve as an appropriate motto for the entire holiday. In years in which there are two *Shabbatot* during Hanukkah, the *haftarah* for the second Shabbat is 1 Kings 7:40–50, which also deals with the Temple. If Rosh Hodesh and Shabbat fall on the same day of Hanukkah, then three scrolls of the Torah are removed from the Ark. (This happens only rarely.) In such a case, the weekly portion is divided into six *aliyot*, which are read from from the first scroll, the Rosh Hodesh portion is read from the second scroll as the seventh *aliyah*, and then the Hanukkah portion is read from the third as the *maftir*. The *haftarah* on such a Shabbat is Zechariah 2:14–4:7.

Hanukkah: Selected Customs

By Alan Lucas

Excerpted from [The Observant Life](#)

Although both Hanukkah and Purim are considered minor festivals to which the laws regarding the prohibition of labor on festivals do not apply, both are significant in their own right and both have won a special place in the hearts of the Jewish people.

It has become customary to celebrate Hanukkah by eating potato pancakes, commonly called by their Yiddish name, latkes, by Ashkenazic Jews. In Israel, jelly doughnuts, called sufganiyyot in Hebrew, are the more common holiday delicacy. What they have in common is that both are cooked in oil and so are able to evoke the miracle of the oil. Other Jewish communities also have special fried foods associated with Hanukkah for the same reason. Another custom associated with Hanukkah is the four-sided spinning top called s'vivon in Hebrew, but more commonly referred to by its Yiddish name, dreidel. Each side displays a Hebrew letter that corresponds to the first letter of the words: *neis gadol hayah sham* (a great miracle happened there). In Israel, the final letter is the first letter of the word *poh* (here) instead. The sentence is just a made-up phrase, however; the real meaning of the letters has to do with the rules of the popular gambling game played with the dreidel, in which, depending on the letter one spins, one may win all or half the pot, or have to give some coins into it. (Although some rabbis have suggested the dreidel dates back to Hanukkah's origins and was used as a ploy to distract the Greeks while the Jews studied Torah, Rabbi David Golinkin argues that the dreidel is based on a sixteenth-century game popular in England around Christmastime called totum. Our dreidel games are very similar to a German version of this game.)

The giving of gifts in the days and weeks around the winter solstice, when daylight is minimal and the weather is cold and unpleasant, is part of many cultures, especially those indigenous to temperate climates where the distinction between the seasons is the most pronounced. The point is clear. Giving gifts is a sign of confidence in the future and in the eventual arrival of spring: one can afford to be generous with one's stores since one clearly believes that they will soon be replenished. Thus, gift-giving is connected in different cultures with winter festivals—with Hanukkah among Jews, but also with Saturnalia among the ancient Romans, Christmas among Christians, and Diwali among Hindus. Traditionally, Jews gave children coins. (Among Ashkenazic Jews, these coins were called by the Yiddish name of Hanukkah gelt.) In North America and Western Europe, this has mostly developed into more elaborate gift-giving, especially to children. While there is nothing wrong with making Hanukkah into a holiday that children associate with presents and thus anticipate all the more keenly, care should be taken not to allow that specific aspect of the holiday to overwhelm its spiritual character or to make its historical background seem to be of lesser importance.

In some circles, and especially in North America, the Christian festival of Christmas exercises a distinctly counterproductive influence on Hanukkah. Indeed, when Jewish parents make the holiday into a parallel orgy of materialistic acquisitiveness, imagining just a bit pathetically that they are merely helping Hanukkah to "compete" successfully with Christmas for their children's attention, they are merely bowdlerizing the meaning of the holiday, subverting its significance, and ruining its spiritual potential. Sensitive Jewish parents will always try to resist unfair comparisons to the festivals of other religions, for no good can ever come from fostering the impression that Judaism is merely the Jewish version of Christianity (or any other faith, for that matter). Hanukkah is not the Jewish Christmas any more than Passover is the Jewish Easter, and suggesting even obliquely to children that this is the case will at best confuse them. Moreover, doing so will set up a kind of competitive evaluative process that will inevitably denigrate the worth of both festivals and both faiths.

The Revolt of the Maccabees: The true story behind Hanukkah

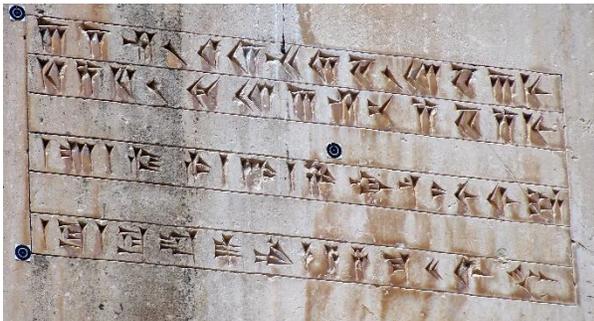
The ancient Israelites, led by Judas Maccabeus, did vanquish the oppressor Antiochus - but Greek rule would only be shaken off 20 years later under Judas' younger brother. A must-read before the holiday begins Tuesday night.

By [Elon Gilad](#) | Dec. 10, 2014 | 4:21 PM

Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of lights, celebrates the Maccabean Revolt (167-160 BCE), and the narrative that Jewish rebel Judas Maccabeus vanquished the evil Greek emperor Antiochus and rededicated the Temple, at which the miracle of the oil occurred.

All true, with the possible exception of the miracle of a day's supply of lamp oil lasting eight days: but that narrative skips over the schisms within the ancient Hebrews' society, mainly – who exactly was rebelling against who.

In the late 6th century BCE, the Persian emperor Cyrus the Great let the Jews go home after decades of exile in Babylon, and turned Judea into a semi-autonomous theocracy run by the High Priest and the powerful priestly families in Jerusalem.



"I am Cyrus, Achaemenid King", written in ancient Akkadian, Persian and Elamite, carved onto a column in Pasargadae. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Judea's semi-autonomy would continue for centuries - after Alexander the Great conquered the region in the 4th century BCE; and it would persist under the Ptolemaic Kingdom, based in Egypt, and the Seleucid Empire in the north, which dominated Israel at different times.

During this time, the Hellenic domination of the Near East spurred economic development; and the dominant urban class in Judea, the priests, became increasingly wealthy and Hellenized.

But the majority of Judeans were rural farmers. They were not becoming rich, nor were they adopting the ways of the sophisticated, cosmopolitan Jerusalemites. This socio-economic divide would play a decisive role in the following events.

The rise of Antiochus IV

In 175 BCE, Antiochus IV Epiphanes ascended to the throne of the Seleucid Empire, which at that point controlled Judea.

Wanting to outdo his father and capture Egypt, and unite the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms into one superpower, Antiochus needed money. When a faction of Judean priests offered to pay him to replace the High Priest Onias III with his younger brother Jason, he took the money. Why not?



But this created a dangerous precedent. Three years later, another rich priest, Menelaus, offered even more money and was appointed high priest by Antiochus. Jason went into exile.

Menelaus however was not from the line of high priests and his appointment upset the conservative Judeans. Worse, he took treasures from the Temple to pay Antiochus, which was sacrilege – and on top of all that, he was a radical Hellenizer. His appointment was not popular, and had to be enforced by force.

Meanwhile in Antioch, Antiochus decided it was time to make history. He led his army to Egypt to achieve what his father had not. Upon rumors of his death in battle there, civil war erupted among the Jews in Jerusalem as Jason reappeared from exile, and led a popular revolt against Menelaus.

Reign of terror

But Antiochus was not dead. He had been humiliated by the Romans and forced out of Egypt. Yet while retreating, he heard of the struggle in Jerusalem - and reinstated Menelaus.

Once back in power, Menelaus led a reign of terror and set out to Hellenize the Jews. A statue of Zeus was placed in the Holy of Holies, among other violations of Jewish law.

Many pious Jews resisted Menelaus' measures, some by martyrdom, others by escaping into the wilderness, and still others by active revolt.

Most prominent of these rebels was the group led by Mattathias of Modiin and his five sons – of whom Judas Maccabeus proved to be the most able and drew the rest of the Jewish rebels into his camp.

Judas and his band of rebels staged guerrilla warfare against Hellenized Jews; Menelaus in response summoned the Greek armies from neighboring Seleucid provinces.

Judas crushes the Greeks

The first army to arrive, from Samaria in the north, was led by Apollonius. Judas was tipped off, and crushed the small army on the road to Jerusalem. He was to take Apollonius' sword and use it until his death.

Next came a larger force, led by Seron, from Palestine in the west. Once again Judas ambushed them, and 800 enemy soldiers were killed.

Alarmed, the Seleucids dispatched a real army, from Antioch, led by two generals, Nicanor and Gorgias. But once again, Judas proved his military prowess: he routed the army and seized its weapons.

Even after this defeat, the Seleucid army remained bigger and badder than the small rebel force. There was real danger that it would press on and crush the rebellion.

But at this point, the rebels caught a lucky break. In 167 BCE, King Mithridates I of Parthia attacked the Seleucid Empire and captured the city of Herat, in modern-day Afghanistan. Antiochus had to concentrate his forces on the Parthians.

With the Seleucid army thus preoccupied, the rebels captured Jerusalem in 164 BCE, though the Akra Fortress overlooking the Temple Mount remained loyal to Antioch (within it, Assyrian soldiers and Hellenized Jews would remain steadfast).

The Temple was rededicated and the eight-day holiday of Hanukkah was created, modeled on the eight-day holiday of Sukkot. The story of the miraculous oil lasting eight days is apocryphal: It would only appear centuries later in the Talmud (Shabbat 21b).

Jerusalem under siege

With his power base in Jerusalem firmly established, Judas began attacking gentile cities around Judea, though the purpose seems to have been not subjugation, but spoils. Then he returned to Jerusalem and laid siege to the Akra.

By this time, following Antiochus' death in Parthia in 164 BC, the Seleucid Empire was ruled by Lysias, regent for the child King Antiochus V Eupator. Lysias set out to destroy Jerusalem and crush the Maccabean revolt once and for all.

After beating Judas in battle south of Bethlehem, Lysias laid siege to Jerusalem.

The rebel Jews' situation was desperate. They lacked the supplies to withstand a lengthy siege, not least because that year was a shmita year.

Once again, luck intervened. Philip, one of Antiochus' generals, revolted and set out to storm the capital, Antioch. Anxious to return to the capital, Lysias reached terms with the Jerusalemites. Judea was restored to its former semi-autonomous state and Menelaus was replaced as High Priest by Alcimus, a moderate.

But as soon as Lysias left, fighting broke out again between Judas' rebels and the moderates who supported Alcimus. An army led by the Seleucid general Nicanor was dispatched to aid the moderates. In 161 BCE, Judas beat Nicanor's army in the Battle of Adasa and Nicanor was killed.

That same year, after defeating Philip, Lysias and Antiochus were killed by Antiochus' cousin Demetrius I Soter, who ascended to the Seleucid throne. He dispatched another army, led by the general Bacchides.

They faced off in the Battle of Elasa in 160 BCE. Judas' band was no match for that 20,000-strong army. The Jews were crushed and Judas was killed.

Thus the revolt ended in tragedy. But some years later, changes in the geopolitical landscape would lead to Judas' youngest brother Jonathan Apphus ascending to the high priesthood, and to the establishment of the Hasmonean Dynasty that would rule an independent Judea from 140 to 37 BCE.

http://www.haaretz.com/jewish-world/jewish-world-features/.premium-1.630770?utm_campaign=3226945&utm_content=13052773773&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Emailvision

Hanukkah – The Real Miracle – 5773

Rabbi Steven Morgen, Congregation Beth Yeshurun, November 30, 2012

Hanukkah is coming soon to a shul near you! I know it seems early, but this year we light the first candle for Hanukkah next Saturday night – a week from tomorrow. And if you think **that** is early, wait till next year! The first day of Hanukkah is Thanksgiving! That means we will light the first candle on Wednesday night before Thanksgiving!

Since next Friday night we are having our special Friday Night Alive service, and we will be welcoming in our brand new Torah into the Barg Sanctuary, we won't have an opportunity to talk a lot about Hanukkah next week. So, I thought I'd take this opportunity to remind ourselves about the real meaning of Hanukkah.

Why does Hanukkah last for eight days? Why do we light candles on Hanukkah? What miracle is referred to by the letters on the dreidl – the letters that stand for *nes gadol hayah sham* – a great miracle happened there?

We all know the answers to these questions as we have been taught from our childhood. The miracle is that after the Maccabees fought the Syrian Greeks to liberate the Temple in Jerusalem, they found only one jar of oil that had been left unopened. One jar of pure olive oil that could be used to light the Great Menorah in the Temple, the seven-branched lampstand that lit up the inner Temple courtyard at night. That one jar, as the story goes, was only enough oil to last one night, and it would take eight days to pick more olives, press them, and make new jars of olive oil. But the Maccabees lit the Menorah anyway, and a miracle happened: that little jar of oil lasted for eight nights, long enough to secure more oil. *That* is the miracle referred to on the *dreidl*, the top we spin on Hanukkah, and *that* is the reason we light a menorah or Hanukkiyah (a special Hanukkah menorah) on this holiday, and *that* is the reason the holiday lasts for eight days – representing the eight days of the miraculously burning oil.

Or so I was taught in religious school, and I imagine you were, too. But, as many of you may already know, that is not exactly what happened. It's a nice story to tell children. Just as other families may tell their children about some big fat guy with a white shaggy beard and a red suit, that flies through the air on a magical sleigh, with flying reindeer, dropping presents down chimneys as he flies by. (I guess by comparison, a jar of oil lasting eight days is not nearly as dramatic.)

But the fact is there is a real story of Hanukkah, one that is very well documented, and does not rely on fairy tales or supernatural special effects. It is also a story that I think we can relate to as modern American Jews living in a country with a very exciting and advanced culture that is very engaging and seductive. So tonight I would like to talk about the **real** story of Hanukkah, the **real** miracle and why we **really** celebrate the holiday for eight days. It is a story you may have heard before, but it is worth retelling every year as we celebrate this holiday.

The story of Hanukkah begins a long time ago in a land far, far away. Actually, it was about 2,170 years ago, when the Jews in Israel were under the dominion of the Greeks in Syria who were then being ruled by Antiochus IV. Ever since Alexander the Great had conquered most of the world about 150 years before our story takes place, Greek civilization was very, very attractive. Just as the world today finds American movies and sports captivating, people all over the world 2,200 years ago were captivated by Greek entertainment: Greek plays and the athletic

competitions in gymnasia. Just as people all over the world today wear American fashions, people all over the world 2,200 years ago adopted Greek clothing and hair styles. Just as many, many people in the world today speak English and read American novels and non-fiction works, back then many people spoke Greek, and read Greek stories, Aesop's fables, poems, and philosophy books. Back then, Greek art and forms of government were also very popular. And Greek religion, including the sacrificing of pigs to the Greek gods and goddesses, became commonplace.

It is not surprising, then, that some Jews in Israel were also quite taken by Greek civilization and wished to become more like the Greeks. This was not necessarily bad, and I would say it was even **good** ... up to a point. Greek science and philosophy had a lot to offer, as did Greek plays and stories. But some of these Jewish folks went so far as to suggest that maybe it would not be so bad if we gave up keeping our dietary laws (kashrut), gave up the observance of the Sabbath, gave up circumcising our baby boys, and stopped teaching Torah (our Jewish history, values, culture and thought) to our children. Some of these folks even started worshiping according to the Greek religion.

Had all the Jews gone down that road, needless to say, that would have been the end of Judaism. Giving up those things which define us a unique people, with a special relationship to God and to each other, with special responsibilities to speak out for justice, for protecting God's creation, and for extending kindness and compassion to others – giving up those things, which our Hellenized comrades wanted to do, would have meant the disappearance of our people, the silencing of those values forever – long before Christianity or Islam would have come along.

The story we learned when we were children was that Antiochus, the big, bad king of the Syrian Greeks, came into the city of Jerusalem and decreed that all Jews should stop practicing Judaism, stop learning about Judaism, and start worshiping like the Greeks. This is true. But it is only part of the truth. It is also true that he may have been invited to do this by a faction of Jews who *wanted* to Hellenize. In any case, Jews who were loyal to Judaism revolted against this decree and attacked – not only the Syrian Greek army, which was sent in to enforce the new laws, but also the Hellenized Jews who had given up Judaism.

These rebels were from a family of Priests called the Hasmoneans, and were led by a priest named Mattathias, and later by his son Judah, who was nicknamed “Maccabee” or “hammer.” The Maccabees, as these rebels were later called, engaged in guerilla warfare against the Syrian Greeks until they were able to recapture the Temple Mount, purify the area and rededicate it to the worship of God.

All of this information we know from many sources. We have two versions of the story preserved in books called Maccabees I and Maccabees II, both of which are found in the Catholic Bible as part of what is called the Apocrypha, or Hidden Books. They are called “Hidden Books” because we Jews did not include them in our Bible. We didn't exactly “hide” them; rather, we just decided not to include them in our collection of sacred texts. Anyway, both of these books were written shortly after the battles were fought and seem to reflect eyewitness-like accounts of the events. We also hear about this important conflict from the Jewish historian Josephus who wrote a little more than 200 years after the events took place.

But – and here is the interesting thing – there is no mention of the Maccabees finding only one jar of oil that lasted for eight days. Not in Maccabees I. Not in Maccabees II. And not in Josephus. It's just not there. All three sources include the detail that the Lampstand was set up

again in the Temple and the lights were lit. But they don't say that there was only one jar of oil to light the fires with.

Why, then, did the celebration last eight days? The Second Book of Maccabees explains that the fighters were still fighting the Greeks in September and October, when the holiday of Sukkot occurred. They had wanted to celebrate Sukkot, but could not, because Sukkot is one of the pilgrimage festivals that is supposed to be celebrated at the Temple in Jerusalem. Now that they had regained control of the Temple, they decided to celebrate Sukkot in December even though it was three months too late. Why Sukkot? Because the Maccabees had read the Bible. They knew that King Solomon had dedicated the First Temple on the festival of Sukkot.¹ Now they were **rededicating** the Temple and they wanted to do so on the same holiday. But they missed it by a couple of months.

They also wanted to celebrate on the very same day of the year that the Greeks had initially defiled the Temple, which was the 25th of the Jewish month of Kislev. So they timed the ceremony to begin on that date, but celebrated it as though it were Sukkot, waiving lulavs and etrogs and living in booths. Now, how many days does the festival of Sukkot have? Seven! ... Plus one extra day tacked on at the end called Shmini Atzeret – the Eighth Day of Assembly. So the Maccabees celebrated for eight days. And, they lit the Menorah in the Temple as part of the rededication. The Menorah was an integral part of the Temple furnishings. In the Book of Exodus it is commanded that the Menorah be lit every single night. When the Maccabees re-established the Temple service, they also had to relight the Menorah as commanded. So we light our Hanukkah menorahs to re-enact that momentous event.

So what, then, is the real miracle of Hanukkah? I think there are actually many. It's a miracle that all of the Jews didn't assimilate back then. It's a miracle that this small group of zealots were able to defeat the Syrian Greek army. It's a miracle that the Maccabees were able to adapt Judaism to the needs of the time. They decided it was okay to violate the Sabbath in order to fight the war, unlike another group of zealots called the Hassidim, who refused to fight on the Sabbath and were consequently slaughtered by the Greeks. They also adapted the celebration of Sukkot and Solomon's dedication of the First Temple to meet their needs of celebrating a new Temple dedication. It's a miracle we are still here today despite centuries of persecution as well as assimilation. It's a miracle we have a State of Israel today with a strong military force. It's a miracle that Judaism has continued to adapt to changing times and changing needs. These are real miracles. We wouldn't be here today without them. And Judaism won't last in the future unless we choose to remember these many miracles and continue to learn lessons from them.

But where did the story of the jar of oil lasting eight days come from? It comes from the Talmud, a text written several hundred years after the Maccabees were gone. It may well not be historically correct. However, our Sages in the Talmud may have been on to something. They didn't focus on the military victory. They transformed the victory into a spiritual one. A little oil lasts a long time, our Sages tell us. If we have the courage to light the fire in our day, a miracle will happen and we will find that the flame will keep burning for many, many days – even many years, many generations, and many centuries. The flames the Maccabees lit 2,165 years ago are still burning in our hearts, and in the hearts of our children, and God-willing in the hearts of their children and their children's children. Now **that** is a miracle!

Shabbat Shalom and Happy Hanukkah.

¹ I Kings 8:2, 62-64. It seems that sacrifices were also offered for the first time at the altar constructed for the Second Temple on either Sukkot (Ezra 3:4) or Rosh Hashanah (Ezra 3:6). The Second Temple itself was not finished until a few years later on the 3rd day of Adar (Ezra 6:15) and it is not clear if the dedication described in Ezra (6:16-17) occurred on that date or some weeks later. Passover is the holiday that is mentioned immediately following the dedication. (Ezra 6:19-22) Also, Ezra the Scribe reads from the Torah Scroll beginning on Rosh Hashanah (Nehemiah 8:1-2) and when he reads that they are to celebrate the Feast of Booth, they all make Sukkot for the festival (8:14-18) which would appear to be another kind of dedication event.