

MORE THAN H-A-P-P-Y-H-A-N-U-K-K-A

Susan Hecht

Do you remember the story of Chanukah? In a nutshell: The time was 167 BCE. The Syrian-Greeks were ruling Judea. We were succumbing to the temptation of assimilation, and the Greeks began persecuting those Jews who did not embrace Hellenism. Luckily for us, the Maccabees led a victorious revolt against the Greeks. Upon reclaiming the Temple, the Maccabees lit the Temple Menorah with the little oil they had, and, miraculously, this oil lasted eight days.

Little did the Maccabees know that 2,200 years later, their triumph and the miracle that followed would be celebrated during what has become known as the "Holiday Season." The fact that Christmas and Chanukah are so near to each other on the Gregorian calendar is a convenient coincidence. As a result, we enjoy a public acknowledgment of Chanukah—like the small electric Chanukah menorah at the base of a gloriously decorated Christmas tree in a bank; and don't forget the paper-cut H-A-P-P-Y H-A-N-U-K-K-A sign in store windows, perhaps even hanging over the replica of the Christmas manger.

Wonderful family Chanukah celebrations are also common. Often, these parties are centered around child-focused festivities with songs, comical children menorahs and gift-exchanges. As warm and fun as these parties may be, I can't help but feel that they have been strongly influenced by Christmas. After all, it has become commonplace to give children many Chanukah gifts or to organize a gift-exchange among family members. But how did the gift-giving tradition develop? If Purim, instead of Chanukah, took place in December, would gift giving have become a Purim tradition?

Last year, I saw Chanukah in a different light (pun intended). My husband and I packed our bags and with our then-one-year old son travelled to Israel as full-fledged American tourists. We got to experience Chanukah "Israel-style"!

In America, around Chanukah time, we feel revelry, or at least we are supposed to. We see Christmas decorations everywhere: supermarkets, drugstores, movie theaters, banks, etc. We are reminded with Christmas carols, Christmas catalogues, Christmas colors, and Christmas sales. We are reminded constantly, "Tis the season to be jolly." But we also know that it is Chanukah. We appreciate the Chanukah presence around us. The Happy-Hanukkah signs and the plastic menorahs make us feel that, as Jews, we are being considered, not forgotten or ignored. But the spiritual sense of Chanukah is left up to us. We celebrate Chanukah privately in our own homes, perhaps with some friends and family. We light our own Chanukiah, and, perhaps, we have our own parties with food, songs, and gifts for the children. This is the extent of our spiritual celebration. It is up to us to separate our sense of holiday from the decorative, festive, colorful, grand, but not-Jewish Christmas that surrounds us, and remember that



Chanukah is a religious holiday marking an event and miracle in Jewish history.

Chanukah in Israel was refreshingly different. We walked through the cities and saw that there are no sparkling Happy-Hanukkah signs dripping with shimmering tinsel and no Chanukah decorations drowning in the midst of big Christmas arrangements. Instead, in Israel, there are donuts! Jelly, custard, chocolate, cream, and many more. It seemed in almost every food establishment, there they were—numerous, colorful, sweet, and delicious; their oil reminding us of the miraculous event from over 2,000 years ago. Though the ingredients

may not be healthy, somehow these donuts yell out purity, tranquility, and spirituality.

In Israel, seemingly every person with whom we spoke, whether taxi driver, restaurant waiter, or simply someone providing directions, greeted us with, "Chanukah Sameach," a welcomed substitute to the oft-heard "Happy Holidays" or "Merry Christmas" in the U.S.

Once the sun sets on a Chanukah night in Israel, people emerge from their homes to light their Chanukah menorahs outside their doorsteps. The candles sit in small glass boxes and line the streets with the serenity of gently glowing candles, marking each home, one after the other, as a place where the miracle of Chanukah is being celebrated.

I brought my disposable Chanukah menorah and box of colorful candles with us to Israel so that we could light the candles in our hotel room. But there was no shortage of places to go to welcome a new night of Chanukah. There was the beautiful oil Chanukah menorah at the Kotel in Jerusalem, which was kindled with a spectacular festive event, as well as rabbi-led menorah lighting ceremonies at hotels and historic sites.

Unlike in America, on the streets in Israel during Chanukah, we felt like we were surrounded by an ongoing religious event. There the celebrations of the holiday carry an essence of spirituality that does not accompany the Chanukah parties that I am used to here at home – where the holiday is focused around children's games and gift-exchanges rather than the serenity and seriousness of recognizing the significance of the Maccabees and the Chanukah miracle.

I am proud to be Jewish and American. I have wonderfully warm feelings about Chanukah from my childhood celebrations of receiving gifts and lighting the Chanukah menorah. But experiencing Chanukah in Israel is enormously special, and I can only hope that those reading this article will one day have an opportunity to share this experience.

Chanukah Sameach!

Susan Hecht found NJOP and Rabbi Buchwald 12 years ago. She lives in NYC, has been married to a wonderful man for almost 3 years and has a 22 month old son.

CONGRATULATIONS AND MAZAL TOV

ENGAGEMENTS

Karin Fleisch and Daniel Silverstein
Mazal Tov to father, Andrew Fleisch
Dr. Shanna Kowalsky and Adam Herbst
Daniella Salig and Sam Schertz
Mazal Tov to parents, Michelle and Eli Salig



Mazal Tov to grandparents, Tineke and Steven Kevelson

BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Naomi Gottlieb
Mazal Tov to parents, Avivah and Michael Gottlieb

CONDOLENCES

Kim Amzallag, on the loss of her father, Herbert Rosenberg
Family of Gerald August
Family of Edward (Yecheil Pinchus) Epstein
Chana Gilman, on the loss of her father, Sylvan Papock
Family of Warren Rich
Ilyce Siegel, on the loss of her father, Dr. Edward Kahan
Laurie Wolff, on the loss of her mother, Pearl Latt

SPEEDY RECOVERY/REFUAH SH'LAIMA

Elisheva Lambert, Elisheva Chana bat Miriam Leah
Regina Ullendorff, Rachel bat Feige
Alexandra Chana bat Yehudit
David Menachem Chaim ben Tova Pesha
Mendel Mosheh ben Reizel
Tivona Chana bat Sarah

TSETCHEM L'SHALOM (To live or Study in Israel)

Sarah (Estefania) Matute

CONGRATULATIONS

Susan Cantor on being honored at Shaare Zedek Medical
Center National Dinner
Judith Weil Epstein for being honored by LSS as Ateret Torah
on Simchat Torah
Lloyd Epstein on being designated on the *NY Times* list of
Super Lawyers

TODAH RABBAH

Chaviva Warner for her all-around helpfulness to the
Beginners, at the Beginners Luncheons, High Holiday
Kiddushes, and packing Beginners High Holiday Materials

Roberto Novig for his "inspiring" ushering during the
High Holiday Beginners Services

Emily and Seth Gerzberg and Michelle and Eli Salig for
making possible the participation of Rabbi Mordechai Reich
and family at the LSS High Holiday Beginners Services.
Thanks also to the management of the Beacon Hotel for
hosting the Reichs

Kiddush Sponsors on the High Holidays: Susan Hecht and
David Cohen, as well as the anonymous sponsors
Break-Fast Sponsors following Yom Kippur Services: Alisa Adler,
Ronnie Landau and Family, and Ellen and Mordechai Lipkis
The Gibber Family and Chaviva Warner for the High Holidays
flowers at Manhattan Day School

The participants who contributed toward the High Holiday
decorations at MDS: Tovah and Assaf Alster, Natalie Lardner,
Aharon Mocchiola, Michael Prell, Megan Quattlebaum,
Petezie Sack, Arnold Weiss and Manny Zareh

Warren Rich (age 87) was a "gentleman's gentleman" and a special human being. A graduate of the Juilliard Music School, Warren was recognized as a great virtuoso pianist. He performed throughout the world in many of the most noted halls, auditoriums and hotels. His passion, however, was teaching. In addition to teaching music skills to his students, he taught all those who knew him, how to be a consummate "mench." After graduating from the Beginners Service, Warren became a mainstay of the Upper West Side Shtiebal community, who loved and cherished him, as he did them in return.

MARRIAGES

Nomi Jacobs and Dov Ariel
Mazal Tov to parents, Batya and Eddie Jacobs
Mazal Tov to grandparents, Vicky and Rabbi Shlomo Riskin
Leah Morse and Oz Ben Ami

Mazal Tov to parents, Michele and David Morse
Shari Keller and Jeff Goldberg
Labrini Nakopoulos and Jeffrey Goldgrab
Patricia Anne Levinson and John Brian Kosecoff
Devra Nusbaum and Shimon Gedalia Radovsky
Mazal Tov to parents, Yocheved and Chaim Radovsky
Felicia Korman and Moshe Yair Simon
Mazal Tov to parents, Toby and Bruce Simon
Rebecca Shanker and Shai Sinbeti
Mazal Tov to parents, Pam and Dr. Alan Shanker
Bar Osher and Daron Spivack
Mazal Tov to parents, Sharona and Steven Spivack

BIRTHS

Aurelie (Rachel) Ramond and Cedric Binisti,
on the birth of a girl, Eden
Blanche and Yedidiah Buchwald,
on the birth of a girl, Batsheva Shirel
Mazal Tov to grandparents, Aidel and Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald
Kayla and Leonard Cooper, on the birth of a girl, Toni
Emily and Seth Gerszberg, on the birth of a boy,
Jonah Neighthaniel
Dr. Daniella Kevelson Goldman and Ari Goldman,
on the birth of a boy, Noah Hillel

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Fri December 7, 2012 - 23rd of Kislev
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Candle Lighting 4:10 PM
 Mincha 4:15 PM

Sat December 8, 2012 - 24th of Kislev
Vayeishev
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Mishnayot 2:45 PM
 Talmud & Bible Class 3:15 PM
 Mincha 4:00 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 5:10 PM
 Light first Chanukah candle after 5:15 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 4:15 PM

Sun December 9, 2012 - 25th of Kislev
1ST DAY CHANUKAH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM
 Light two candles after 4:59 PM

Mon December 10, 2012 - 26th of Kislev
2ND DAY CHANUKAH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM
 Light three candles after 4:59 PM

Tue December 11, 2012 - 27th of Kislev
3RD DAY CHANUKAH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM
 Light four candles after 4:59 PM

Wed December 12, 2012 - 28th of Kislev
4TH DAY CHANUKAH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM
 Light five candles after 5:00 PM

Thu December 13, 2012 - 29th of Kislev
5TH DAY CHANUKAH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM
 Light six candles after 5:00 PM

Fri December 14, 2012 - 1st of Tevet
ROSH CHODESH 6TH DAY CHANUKAH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM
 Light seven candles before Shabbat candles 4:11 PM
 Mincha 4:15 PM

Sat December 15, 2012 - 2nd of Tevet
7TH DAY CHANUKAH Miketz
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Mishnayot 2:45 PM
 Talmud & Bible Classes 3:15 PM
 Mincha 4:00 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 5:11 PM
 Light eight candles after 5:11 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 4:20 PM

Sun December 16, 2012 - 3rd of Tevet
8TH DAY CHANUKAH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM

Fri December 21, 2012 - 8th of Tevet
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Candle Lighting 4:14 PM
 Mincha 4:20 PM

Sat December 22, 2012 - 9th of Tevet
Vayigash
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Mishnayot 2:50 PM
 Talmud & Bible Classes 3:20 PM
 Mincha 4:05 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 5:14 PM

Sun December 23, 2012 - 10th of Tevet
ASARAH B'TEVET
 Fast begins at 6:06 AM
 Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM
 Mincha 4:10 PM
 Fast Ends 5:04 PM

Mon December 24, 2012 - 11th of Tevet
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:50 AM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 4:30 PM

Tue December 25, 2012 - 12th of Tevet
LEGAL HOLIDAY
 Morning Services 7:10 & 8:30 AM

Fri December 28, 2012 - 15th of Tevet
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Candle Lighting 4:18 PM
 Mincha 4:25 PM

Sat December 29, 2012 - 16th of Tevet
Vayechee
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Mishnayot 2:55 PM
 Talmud & Bible Classes 3:25 PM
 Mincha 4:10 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 5:18 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 4:25 PM

Mon December 31, 2012 - 18th of Tevet
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:50 AM

Tue January 1, 2013 - 19th of Tevet
NEW YEAR'S DAY
 Morning Services 7:10 & 8:30 AM

Fri January 4, 2013 - 22nd of Tevet
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Candle Lighting 4:24 PM
 Mincha 4:30 PM

Sat January 5, 2013 - 23rd of Tevet
Shemot
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Mishnayot 3:00 PM
 Talmud & Bible Classes 3:30 PM
 Mincha 4:15 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 5:24 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 4:35 PM

Fri January 11, 2013 - 29th of Tevet
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Candle Lighting 4:31 PM
 Mincha 4:35 PM

Sat January 12, 2013 - 1st of Shevat
ROSH CHODESH Vaerah
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Mishnayot 3:05 PM
 Talmud & Bible Classes 3:35 PM
 Mincha 4:20 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 5:31 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 4:40 PM

Mon January 14, 2013 - 3rd of Shevat
MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY
 Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM

Fri January 18, 2013 - 7th of Shevat
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Candle Lighting 4:39 PM
 Mincha 4:45 PM

Sat January 19, 2013 - 8th of Shevat
Bo
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Mishnayot 3:15 PM
 Talmud & Bible Class 3:45 PM
 Mincha 4:30 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 5:39 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 4:50 PM

Fri January 25, 2013 - 14th of Shevat
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Candle Lighting 4:47 PM
 Mincha 4:50 PM

Sat January 26, 2013 - 15th of Shevat
Beshalach TU B'SHEVAT
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Mishnayot 3:20 PM
 Talmud & Bible Class 3:50 PM
 Mincha 4:35 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 5:47 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 4:55 PM

Fri February 1, 2013 - 21st of Shevat
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Candle Lighting 4:56 PM
 Mincha 5:00 PM

Sat February 2, 2013 - 22nd of Shevat
Yitro
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Mishnayot 3:30 PM
 Talmud & Bible Class 4:00 PM
 Mincha 4:45 PM

Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 5:56 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 5:05 PM

Fri February 8, 2013 - 28th of Shevat
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Candle Lighting 5:04 PM
 Mincha 5:10 PM

Sat February 9, 2013 - 29th of Shevat
Mishpatim - Parashat Shekalim
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Mishnayot 3:40 PM
 Talmud & Bible Class 4:10 PM
 Mincha 4:55 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 6:04 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 5:15 PM

Sun February 10, 2013 - 30th of Shevat
ROSH CHODESH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM

Mon February 11, 2013 - 1st of Adar
ROSH CHODESH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM

Tue February 12, 2013 - 2nd of Adar
LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM

Fri February 15, 2013 - 5th of Adar
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Candle Lighting 5:13 PM
 Mincha 5:20 PM

Sat February 16, 2013 - 6th of Adar
Teruma
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Mishnayot 3:50 PM
 Talmud & Bible Class 4:20 PM
 Mincha 5:05 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 6:13 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 5:20 PM

Mon February 18, 2013 - 8th of Adar
PRESIDENTS DAY
 Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM

Thu February 21, 2013 - 11th of Adar
TA'ANIT ESTHER
 Fast Begins 5:29 AM
 Morning Services 6:50 & 7:40 AM
 Mincha 5:10 PM
 Fast Ends 6:09 PM

Fri February 22, 2013 - 12th of Adar
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Candle Lighting 5:21 PM
 Mincha 5:25 PM

Sat February 23, 2013 - 13th of Adar
Tetzaveh - Parashat Zachor
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Mishnayot 3:55 PM
 Talmud & Bible Class 4:25 PM
 Mincha 5:10 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 6:21 PM
 Zachor reading after Mussaf and Mincha 6:55 PM
 Additional Megilla Reading 9:15 PM

Sun February 24, 2013 - 14th of Adar
PURIM
 Morning Services 6:45 & 8:30 AM
 Megilla Reading 10:00 AM
 Mincha & Megilla Reading 12:45 PM
 Mincha & Ma'ariv 5:30 PM

Mon February 25, 2013 - 15th of Adar
SHUSHAN PURIM
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM

Fri March 1, 2013 - 19th of Adar
SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Candle Lighting 5:29 PM
 Mincha 5:35 PM

Sat March 2, 2013 - 20 of Adar
Ki Tisa - Parashat Parah
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM

Beginners Mishnayot 4:05 PM
 Talmud & Bible Class 4:35 PM
 Mincha 5:20 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 6:29 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 5:40 PM

Fri March 8, 2013 - 26th of Adar
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Candle Lighting 5:37 PM
 Mincha 5:40 PM

Sat March 9, 2013 - 27th of Adar
Vayakhel-Pekudei - Parashat Hachodesh
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services 7:40, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Mishnayot 4:10 PM
 Talmud & Bible Class 4:40 PM
 Mincha 5:25 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 6:37 PM
 Move clock forward
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 6:45 PM DST

Tue March 12, 2013 - 1st of Nisan
ROSH CHODESH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM

Fri March 15, 2013 - 4th of Nisan
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Candle Lighting 6:45 PM
 Mincha 6:50 PM

Sat March 16, 2013 - 5th of Nisan
Vayikra
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Beginners Mishnayot 5:05 PM
 Talmud & Bible Class 5:35 PM
 Mincha 6:35 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 7:45 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 6:55 PM

Fri March 22, 2013 - 11th of Nisan
 Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
 Candle Lighting 6:52 PM
 Mincha 6:55 PM

Sat March 23, 2013 - 12th of Nisan
Tzav - Shabbat HaGadol
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Mincha & Shabbat HaGadol Drasha 6:25 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 7:52 PM
 Daily Mincha & Maariv 7:00 PM

Sun March 24, 2013 - 13th of Nisan
 Morning Services 7:10 & 8:30 AM
 Bedikat Chametz after 7:44 PM

Mon March 25, 2013 - 14th of Nisan
EREV PESACH
 Morning Services with Siyum 6:30 & 7:30 AM
 Latest time to eat Chametz 10:21 AM
 Latest time to burn Chametz 11:32 AM
 Candle Lighting 6:56 PM
 Mincha 7:00 PM
 Begin Seder after 7:45 PM

SAVE THE DATES
Beginners Chanukah Party
\$20 in advance, \$25 at the door
 Mon, Dec 10, 7:00 PM

Beginners Shabbat Luncheons - \$20
 Saturdays, 12:30 PM
 Jan 5, Feb 2, March 2

Purim Party
\$20 in advance, \$25 at the door
 Sat, February 23, 6:20 PM

SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA
 Fri, March 1

Beginners Shmooze - Free
 Mon, March 4, 8:15 PM

Edward (Yechiel Pinchas) Epstein (age 92) was a "character with character." He served for many years as a librarian in the New York City public school system. A meticulous dresser, and a self-proclaimed agnostic, Yechiel Pinchas became the most effective recruiter for the LSS Beginners Service in the late 1970s and early 80s. After leaving the LSS Beginners Service, he became a regular at the KJ Beginners Service on his home turf, the Upper East Side, where he added much to the color and the atmosphere.

Although **Professor Gerald August** (age 68) had a yeshiva background, he considered himself enough of a skeptic to qualify for the Beginners Service. It also provided a front for him, allowing him to be regarded by others as a Beginner. The Beginners Service also became a source of many new friends and enduring friendships. A master speaker and teacher, Gerald regularly shared Divrei Torah with the Beginners on important family occasions. He also taught homiletics to rabbinical students at Yeshiva University, where he was extremely beloved.