

evil to the righteous, the wanton into the hands of those involve themselves in your Torah.” The prayer highlights the qualities of the nation of Israel and the Syrian Greeks, who battled each other. The Syrian Greeks were larger in number. They were stronger. They were warriors. They should have won the war. However, they lost the war to the Jews, who were pure and righteous. They were students of the Torah. They were of a greater quality than their opponents. The victory of the Jews represents a victory of quality over quantity. The miracle of the oil involved quality overcoming the natural bounds of quantity. It is this lesson which should be taken to heart on Hanukah. We should remember that when it comes to our performance of *Misvot* and good deeds, numbers are not all that counts. The quality of our performance is of extreme importance, and Hanukah attests to the importance of quality. Hanukah should serve as an inspiration to all of us, so that we can all improve the quality of our deeds and the quality of our lives. (Rabbi Yehudah Prero)

Got A Light?

December 25, 1938 was a day for celebration around the world. For many it was Xmas, for some it was Hanukah - and for the Geier family it was the day they would escape the murderous clutches of the Germans. Shortly after Kristallnacht, the Geier's had received their passports and visas to leave Germany for the United States.

It was a sunny but cold day as their train bound for Holland pulled out of the Berlin station. The Geier's shared their compartment with two very stern-looking Germans. Arnold Geier, age 12, and his sister, 15, sat quietly with their parents. In a whisper, Arnold overheard his mother reassure his father that G-d would forgive him for not lighting his *menorah* that night. Mr. Geier was a cantor and a devout Jew and had packed a small *menorah* and some candles in his briefcase.

"Not long after darkness," recalls Arnold, "the train slowed and puffed its way into a special railway station at the German-Dutch border. We braced ourselves for our final encounter with the German police, Nazis and Gestapo. Just a few more miles and our old lives would be behind us.

The train sat in the station and the Geier's watched as the Border Police and the Gestapo carefully compared lists and prepared to check everyone's passports and papers.

"Finally, small groups of officers boarded the train for their inspection. Papa looked tense and broke out in a sweat. I was afraid. Suddenly, without any warning, all the lights in the station and on the train went out. A number of people lit matches for light and the glow on their faces was an eerie sight. I felt like screaming."

In the confusion, Mr. Geier managed to find his overcoat, and pulled eight small candles out of his coat pocket. He struck a match and lit one candle. Using that candle he warmed the bottoms of the other candles and lined up all eight candles on the windowsill of our compartment. He quietly recited the Hanukah blessings and lit the candles.

"For the first time in a long time, I saw a smile appear on Papa's face. Then someone shouted, 'There's light over there!' The Border Police and the Gestapo men soon came to our compartment and used the light of the candles to conduct their checking of the passports and papers. One of the officers commended Papa on his resourcefulness for thinking ahead and packing 'travel candles.'

"About a half hour passed and then, as suddenly as they had gone off, the lights flickered on again. The officers thanked Papa and left our compartment to finish their work throughout the train.

"Remember this moment," Papa said to me, "like in the time of the Maccabees, a great miracle happened here." (Aish Hatorah)

Special Hanukah Section



Laws of Hanukah

The holiday of Hanukah begins on Sunday night, December 18 and ends on Monday, December 26. Here are a few *halachot* regarding the holiday:

A) The optimum time to light the Hanukah candles is 20 to 30 minutes after sunset, but they may be lit any time after that as long as there are at least two members of the household still awake.

B) On the first night, three blessings are recited: 1) להדליק נר חנוכה 2) שעשה נסים לאבותינו 3) שהחיינו. On subsequent nights, שהחיינו is not said. However, if one neglected to say שהחיינו on the first night, if he realizes within a half hour after he lit the candles, he can say it then. Otherwise, he should say it the following night when he lights the candles. All the blessings should be recited before one begins to light the candles.

C) The candles should be arranged in the *menorah* from the right side (facing the lighter). Thus, on the first night, the right-most candle will be placed in the *menorah*, on the second night, the two right-most, etc. The candles should always be lit beginning with the newest candle, which is the one that is the most towards the left side, proceeding down to the right side.

D) The candles should burn for at least a half hour on weekday nights. On Friday night, however, when the Hanukah lighting takes place 20 minutes before sunset, they should last at least 1-1/3 hours. Therefore, the colored Hanukah candles are unacceptable for Friday night, and Shabbat candles or oil should be used instead.

E) The *menorah* may not be moved from the place it was lit during that half hour.

F) If one's candles go out before the half hour goes by, he has still fulfilled his obligation, since the actual lighting is the primary obligation of the *misvah*. However, it is recommended that he re-light the candles without repeating the blessings (except on Shabbat).

G) It is a nice custom to train the children to light, but if they are under *bar/bat misvah* age, they should only be given the *shamash* to light. NEVER LEAVE CHILDREN UNATTENDED FOR ANY PERIOD OF TIME WITH THE LIT CANDLES.

H) Both men and women are obligated to light the *menorah*. It is therefore advisable that if a man knows that he will be getting home after everyone is asleep, or if he is traveling away from home, he should have his wife light the candles at home at the proper hour. By this he will have fulfilled his obligation, and he may not light another *menorah* where he is with a *berachah*, or when he comes home, since each household is required to light only one *menorah*. However, if he wishes, he may light for himself without a *berachah*.

I) One may not use the light of the *menorah* for any purpose, not even to learn Torah by its light. Therefore, one may not light a match or an extra candle from a candle on the *menorah* for the purpose of lighting another candle on the *menorah*. However, one may light one *menorah* candle directly from another candle.

J) After sunset, no work or meals are permitted before lighting the *menorah*. A snack is allowed.

K) On Friday night, light Hanukah candles before lighting Shabbat candles; on Saturday night make *Habdalah* first and then light the *menorah*.

L) The following changes are made in our daily prayers on Hanukah:

a) על הנסים is recited in every *amidah* and *bircat hamazon*. If one forgets to say it, he does not repeat the prayer.

b) Complete *hallel* with a *berachah* is recited all eight days of Hanukah. Women are not obligated to say *hallel* on this holiday but may do so without a *berachah*.

c) *Sefer Torah* is read on all eight days of the holiday.

Renewal

We recite two blessings prior to lighting the Hanukah candles: "...who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to light the Hanukah candles," and "...who has done miracles for our ancestors in those days at this time of year". The 'miracle' referred to in the second blessing is the miracle of the jug of oil. It was only through Divine Providence that they even found a jug of pure oil and then this small jug miraculously continued to burn for eight days.

Rav Pam observed as follows: In the *Bet HaMikdash*, miracles occurred every single day. The *Mishnah* [Abot 5:5] lists the miracles that occurred: The *Lehem HaPanim* [Show Bread] never became stale, flies never descended upon the sacrifices, etc. If so, asks Rav Pam, why don't we recite the blessing "...who has done miracles for our ancestors in those days at this time of year" every single day? What was so special about the Hanukah miracle that only that one is commemorated with a special blessing?

Rav Pam answers: Many of the commentaries ask why the miracle of the jug of pure oil was necessary at all, based on the *halachic* principle that "*Tumah hutra* (or *dechuya*) *b'Tzibur*" [when the majority of the people are impure, the *Bet HaMikdash* Service may be carried out even in a state of impurity]. Had no miracle occurred, they could have lit the Menorah with impure oil. The *Pnei Yehoshua* answers this question by conceding the point and stating that halachically the whole miracle of the oil on Hanukah was unnecessary. The reason, he suggests, that G-d created the miracle was only to demonstrate "an added amount of endearment" (*chibah yeterah*) to the Jewish people.

What does the *Pnei Yehoshua* mean by this term "*chibah yeterah*?"

"*Chibah yeterah*" can be understood based on a comment of the *Bach* (Chapter 670). The *Bach* points out that if the Jewish people were subjected to the decrees of the Greeks and to the punishment of having their *Bet HaMikdash* desecrated by the pagans, then they must have done something terrible to deserve such a punishment. He suggests that their sin was becoming negligent and lazy in their Service of G-d. They performed the *Bet HaMikdash* service by rote without proper intent and enthusiasm.

G-d punishes 'measure for measure'. "If you take the *Bet HaMikdash* Service for granted, I will now deprive you of that *Bet HaMikdash* Service".

The sons of Matityahu rededicated themselves. They went to war over the *Bet HaMikdash* Service. There were renewed dedications and enthusiasm. The Jewish people picked themselves off the floor, so to speak. They came back with a new strength and enthusiasm for the Divine Service. They "returned the crown to its former glory."

The *Pnei Yehoshua* can be understood as follows: A husband and wife had a terrible fight and then made up. However, it is difficult to get back to the way it once was. G-d wanted to show the Jewish people that after they did *Teshubah* [repentance], the relationship He now has with them is just as good as it 'once was.' There was no lingering complaint on G-d's part. From His perspective - after *Teshubah* - the relationship was fully restored. True, impure oil would have worked under those circumstances, but G-d

wanted to show that the relationship was fully equivalent to what it had been "in the old days" - and was prepared to miraculously change nature to demonstrate that fact.

Yes, certainly the *Bet HaMikdash* was full of miracles. But this particular miracle was special. This was the miracle that showed that G-d will allow us to come back and that He will not hold grudges against us if we return to Him with complete *Teshubah*.

The *Bnei Yissaschar* comments that Hanukah is unique among the Jewish holidays in that it is the only holiday that spans two months (Kislev and Tebet). This means that Hanukah always contains a '*Rosh Hodesh*' [First day of the Month] within it. Why?

We can perhaps suggest that the same idea applies to *Rosh Hodesh*. *Rosh Hodesh* implies renewal (of the moon and of the month). This is the theme of Hanukah — the renewal of the spirit of the Jews and the renewal of the Service in the *Bet HaMikdash*.

The Jewish people are compared to the moon - sometimes their fate seems to darken and fade but we are always confident that it will be renewed in the future. This too is a pattern that sometimes reflects our relationship with the Almighty. There are ups and downs. There are peaks and valleys. It waxes and it wanes. *Rosh Hodesh* demonstrates that there can be renewal. There can be a new moon. The moon returns. It can get bigger.

This is why Hanukah is connected with *Rosh Hodesh*. The whole theme of Hanukah is that the Jewish people's relationship with G-d slackened; but then they came back and the relationship was fully renewed to its previous level. (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

Quality Over Quantity

There is a famous question posed by the *Bet Yosef* regarding how many days of Hanukah we celebrate: If the oil the Maccabees found was sufficient to last one day in the Menorah, and the oil miraculously lasted eight days, the miracle, then, only occurred on seven days. Why then is Hanukah celebrated for eight days?

One answer to this question is put forth by the *Taz* (*Orach Hayim* 670:1). On the first day the Menorah was lit, there was enough oil put in each branch of the Menorah to last one day. However, the oil lasted for the next eight days. Therefore, being that all the oil was not consumed on the first day as it should have, a miracle occurred on the first day as well. Hence, we appropriately celebrate Hanukah for eight days.

In the "*Klei Chemdah*," we find an interesting question. It appears that the miracle the *Taz* is describing is one of replenishment: the oil, as it burned, miraculously replenished itself. Therefore, there was enough oil to last the entire eight days. But there is a problem with this oil. The Torah explicitly describes what type of oil is to be used in the Menorah: pure olive oil, pressed, for lighting. This is the only oil that can be used in the Menorah. However, the oil in the Menorah was "miracle oil." It looked like olive oil. It burnt like olive oil. However, practically speaking, it was *not* olive oil. So how could the Menorah be lit the last seven days with oil that was not permitted for this purpose?

The answer, Rav Chaim of Brisk says, is that the oil in the Menorah did not replenish itself each day. The miracle was that the quality of the oil was so greatly improved that only a fraction of the amount usually needed to last a day was actually consumed on the first day. This explanation answers the problems posed. First, a miracle did occur on all eight days. Because the quality of the oil was miraculously improved, the oil burnt more efficiently on the first day as well. Second, the oil that was used was not "miracle" oil. It was the same pure olive oil that had been found and used on the first day. The reason why the oil lasted for eight days instead of one is because the oil burnt more efficiently, not because the oil miraculously replenished itself.

The fact that the miracle occurred in a qualitative fashion fits in with the theme of Hanukah. The prayer "*Al HaNissim*" which is recited on Hanukah reads "You handed over the mighty to the weak, the large in number to the small, the impure to the pure, the