

LampLighter

26 Kislev
Mikeitz-Chanukah
959
3 December
5771/2010

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The Baal Shem Tov taught, "In the place where a person wants to be, that is where he will be found." May we all be found together in the Holy Temple this Chanuka.

What is the reason for the Jewish people being in exile? What purpose has been served by almost two thousand years of suffering and hardship?

The answer to this age-old question is alluded to in this week's Torah portion, Mikeitz, in Joseph's explanation of his choice of name for his son Ephraim.

"The name of the second he called Ephraim," the Torah states, "for G-d has caused me to be fruitful ("hifrani" - from the same root as Ephraim) in the land of my affliction."

In other words, it is precisely through exile "in the land of my affliction" that Joseph became stronger. Likewise, the entire purpose of exile is to uncover the Jewish people's hidden strengths, bringing them to a higher level of perfection.

On a personal level, Joseph had attained the highest rungs of spiritual service, standing head and shoulders above his eleven brothers; in a certain sense, he was even superior to his father Jacob. Nonetheless, in order to attain the very highest levels, Joseph had to undergo exile "in the land of my affliction."

The Torah alludes to Joseph's exalted spiritual status in its statement that the brothers "recognized him not." According to Chasidic philosophy, Joseph's involvement in worldly matters was perceived by them as an obstacle to spirituality.

The brothers couldn't understand how a person could be worldly and serve G-d at the same time. Thus they deliberately pursued a life of contemplation; as shepherds, they were cut off from civilization and the demands of society. Never in their wildest dreams could they fathom how Joseph, second-in-command over all of Egypt, could remain connected to G-d and indeed surpass their level of service. The concept itself was too radical for them to grasp.

Joseph's superiority to his father is also reflected in the fact that he was punished for putting his faith in Pharaoh's butler, whereas when Jacob addressed his brother Esau as "my master," it was not considered a sin.

Jacob, despite his great spiritual attainments, was still subject to the limitations of the physical world and thus permitted to work within the natural order; Joseph, however, was above such constraints and therefore held to a much higher standard of behaviour, according to which he should have placed his trust in G-d alone.

Nevertheless, we see that it was only through the experience of exile that Joseph was able to attain the very pinnacle of spirituality, paving the way and setting an example for his future descendants.

For just as the Jewish people merited to receive the Torah after the "crucible" of the Egyptian exile, so too will we merit the very highest revelations of G-dliness with the ultimate Redemption, speedily in our days. Amen.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Listen to the Flames

By Simon Jacobson

If we look closely at the details of Chanukah - the Menorah, the history, the number of flames - they can reveal the nature of our soul.

As the sun sets and the shadows of night descend, we kindle the Menorah creating light in the darkness. Listen carefully to the flames and they will tell you a story, a story that will empower you to live a more profound meaningful life, enabling you to rise up toward challenge and overcome difficulty. Sit near the flames and study them quietly.

"The flame of God is the soul of a human being," says the Torah.

As flames warm and illuminate their environment, so too you can use your soul to infuse life with warmth and light. Unlike all other physical entities that are drawn earthward, the dancing flames flicker upward defying gravity. Likewise your soul, not satisfied with mere physical comforts, aspires up toward something beyond.

Chanukah is not just about lighting up our own lives. By placing the Menorah in the window of your home or at your doorpost, you allow the light to radiate into the dark street, illuminating your surroundings. Chanukah reminds us of our ability and responsibility to effect the world around us and prompts us to shine light into the lives of others with daily acts of goodness and kindness. Just as a flame lights another without diminishing itself, so too by sharing yourself you become enhanced rather than diminished. Every day we must increase illumination of ourselves and our environment - each day adding another good deed, lighting an additional flame.

Chanukah tells yet a deeper story, a story that penetrates the darker shadows of our lives. The Menorah shines a tunnel back through time to the aftermath of a great victory in which a small band of Jews defeated the might of the Greek Empire. In amongst the debris of the desecrated Temple the Maccabees searched ceaselessly until they found a single sealed cruse of oil that miraculously burnt for eight days. When you are defiled, when your inner Temple has been desecrated and there is no oil to be found, you have the power to reach deeper inside and discover light. The soul always remains intact like a "pilot light." When you light your Menorah under such difficult circumstances, creating light in the darkest moment, that light can never be extinguished. The light that has dealt with challenge, that has transformed pain into growth, is a light that transcends nature and transforms darkness into light.

This power to transform darkness must come from a place beyond the conventional. We therefore light eight candles, the mystical number of transcendence and infinity, one beyond the number seven that represents the natural cycle. In order to pierce darkness with light, you can't just rely on the natural, you need to reach a deeper resource which is the eighth dimension.

These elements of Chanukah - the eight flickering flames, the miracle of the oil, the light shining into the dark street - beckon us to connect to the power of our soul. Our soul rises like a flame toward that which transcends itself, not only repelling darkness as is the nature of all light, but transforming the darkness into light.



The Menorah in Union Square

By Boruch Bush

When I was a child, the holiday season always saw our family gathered in the living room, standing quietly in front of the Chanuka Menora. We lit the special candles for eight days. We said the blessings each night to recall the miraculous story of the Maccabees, the Jewish "freedom fighters."

We learned in Sunday school that lighting the Menora is a reminder and a celebration that right can overcome might, and light can dispel darkness. My brother and I took turns lighting the candles. A room and a family full of light and warmth. That was Chanuka for me.

All that was many years ago. As a lawyer and community worker, I had gone far afield from any connection to Jewish tradition, even modern-style. I had not lit a Menora in years, nor really even thought of it. Yet, for some reason, I had begun to feel a need to explore my Jewish "roots." Maybe that was why I found myself walking toward Union Square in San Francisco one cold December night. My family was going to light a Menora, and not just any Menora. This one was 30 feet high.

We get there at about 4:00. The Square is empty and cold. The benches are staked out by the street people. The scene in front of me is a let-down. Then I see a flurry of movement. There's the Menora! I point it out to my daughter, Sarah. As we approach it, it grows bigger in perspective until we're in front of it, looking up at its simple, elegant form. Quite in proportion to the Square after all.

The action is next to the Menora. Parked in the corner of the Square is a camper with a paint job that reads "Mitzva Mobile" and "Chabad House." The Chabad House in Berkeley sponsors this Menora. These Lubavitchers believe in reaching out and sharing their celebration of Jewish life with all Jews, from the very religious to the totally nonreligious. Consequently, they're here. Also consequently, I am a welcome guest, I who haven't seen, much less lit, a Menora in over a decade.

In fact, I soon find myself swept up in a bear hug of a greeting by a tall young man in a black hat, long coat and bright red beard. "Shalom Aleichem," he says. "Greetings, brother!" This is Yosef Langer, one of the

organizers of the event.

There is still time until the lighting, so we just sit and wait. I look around and think to myself, this is an odd scene. Beyond the little circle of activity near the Menora, the Square still belongs to the night and the street people.

Some of the Square-dwellers come over to check out these strange newcomers. It's not a totally comfortable interaction. One fellow is openly hostile. A tall man, long black leather coat draped over his shoulders, walks back and forth loudly proclaiming his opinions of this event—as well as of Israel, Zionists, Jews. The opinions are not flattering and my urban paranoia takes hold and a wave of fear comes and goes. It doesn't contribute much to a festive atmosphere. It's disturbing. It upsets my fantasy picture. Reality always does.

I am caught up in these different strains of fantasy, reality, warmth, hostility, celebration, resentment. I begin to wonder, What are we doing here? Celebrations like this are more of a private affair, aren't they? Like my childhood memories—home and hearth, everyone gathered in the living room. But in the middle of Union Square? My thoughts drift, and I give up trying to figure it out.

When I look up, there are many more people than I noticed just a few minutes before. The beginnings of a crowd, and quite an interesting crowd at that. Easily four generations here tonight. The little circle of 45 minutes ago has grown to fill over half the Square. Everyone is talking to their friends, or to new-found friends.

It's a full five minutes before the emcee on the platform can get everyone's attention. The man at the mike—black hat, black beard, and big smile—is Rabbi Chaim Drizin. When the crowd finally quiets down he speaks, giving a little introduction about the Chabad House and about Chanuka. After the introductions, Rabbi Drizin launches into a story that teaches a lesson.

The Rabbi finishes the story to a round of applause, and the nicest part of all this to me is that somehow this story has the effect of drawing the crowd closer, making the Square a more "homey" place. We all seem to be joined in a moment of shared intimacy. Almost like a family. Is it possible that this Menora lighting mirrors my childhood recollection? Only the family is much bigger.

Yosef, my red-bearded friend from earlier on, plunges into the crowd carrying high a lit torch so that each of us can touch it and join in the lighting of the candles. He is moving slowly, allowing each one to join, to make contact. Children are lifted to touch the torch. There is no pushing. All are confident of being included. I lift Sarah and she puts her hand next to Yosef's for a moment.

As the torch moves on, Rabbi Drizin starts singing and urges the crowd to join him. Shema

Yisrael—Hear O Israel, the L-rd our G-d, the L-rd is One. The words echo the feeling given by the passing torch—the unity and commonality of this body of Jewish people of different ages, types, cultures, languages, in affirming their connection to each other and to their faith.

Singing along and watching the progress of the torch, I am suddenly aware that a man is pushing through the crowd toward Yosef. It is the man who, much earlier, was angrily proclaiming his anti-Jewish feelings. He approaches Yosef. I feel myself tighten. Does he want to try to stop Yosef, grab the torch? It seems crazy, but who knows...?

He is closer now, almost at Yosef's side. From the man's face, it is impossible to read his intent. Now he is next to Yosef, and he reaches up. He puts his hand on the torch, not just touching but holding it tight. Yosef stops momentarily. Here is where fantasy meets reality, I am thinking.

And—I see this very clearly—Yosef looks directly into the man's eyes, gently puts his other hand on the man's arm, and gives a kind of quiet nod. A gesture of recognition, a silent request for mutual respect. All this in just a few seconds. And then the man's hand relaxes its hold. Yosef moves on. The man recedes to the crowd's edge. Looking at him after some moments, I see that he is singing.

From this moment until the end of the evening, the quality of that interaction stays with me and begins to pull together the different feelings I've experienced here. I begin to feel that this event has a lot to do with Chanuka. Chanuka, when the tiny Maccabean band vanquished the foreign armies, when a tiny supply of oil lasted eight days. When, in an apparently magical way, light reigned and darkness was driven back, figuratively and literally.

But behind the magical moment when the light drives back the darkness, perhaps there is always a lifetime, a generation, an eon, of hard work and careful investment. That builds our knowledge and awareness and spiritual strength, until we are able to burst forth in the moment of need and make manifest the "magic," the light, the Divine spark, that is always latent within us and around us.

Completing his circuit with the torch Yosef hands it to Rabbi Drizin, who climbs into the cherrypicker and is lifted to the top of the Menora. The blessings are said and the first candle is lit on this first night of Chanuka.

For the first time in 15 years there was a Menora in my home after that night in Union Square. We lit it together and put it in Sarah's window. To shine light out into the darkness. We'll do it again this year, too. After all, like the Chasidic saying goes, you can't fight darkness with a stick.

Reprinted from the San Francisco Chronicle

Published by The Chabad House of Caulfield in conjunction with the Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.

P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA
Phone (04) 3039-5770
Email: lamplighter_weekly@hotmail.com

The Lamplighter contains words from sacred writings. Please do not deface or discard.

ISSUE 959

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Jewish people are presently in the dungeon of a harsh and bitter exile; for many years we have been bound and fettered by its shackles. But just as Joseph, in this week's Torah portion, went directly from confinement to rulership, so, too, our whole nation will speedily leave the prison of exile and simultaneously ascend to the status of royalty with the full and Final Redemption.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe, 28 Kislev, 5750-1989)

INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



In the Month of Kislev,
In the Days before Chanukah, 5739 [1978]
To the Sons and Daughters of our people Israel who are, at present, in Correctional Institutions.
Greeting and Blessing:

With the approach of Chanukah, bringing blessing to all our Jewish people, I extend to each and all of you prayerful wishes for a bright and happy Chanukah. This is also to acknowledge receipt of your letters, and to respond to the request of many of you for a word of encouragement and hope. For various reasons it is impossible to reply to each one individually, which you will surely excuse.

The Mitzvah (commandment) of kindling the Chanukah Lights is unique in that it becomes due immediately "after sunset," prior to the other observances connected with Chanukah (special prayers, etc.). This pointedly emphasizes the concept of "light" in human life in general, and in a time of crisis - "after sunset" - in particular.

Although man was, of course, created to be free in all his affairs, with freedom of will and freedom of action, including personal freedom in the ordinary sense, without being subjected to external constraints even for a short period of time - the real bright light in human life is the ability to see the right path in life, and follow it faithfully in terms of daily conduct, filling it with all that is bright and good, in a state of consistent inner peace and tranquillity.

This has to do, and is dependent upon, a person's world outlook, including a full measure of Bitachon (trust) in G-d, the Creator and Master of the world, which has to be expressed in appropriate conduct, in actual practice, for the essential thing is the deed.

And this is largely up to the person himself, regardless of circumstances. For it is a matter of common knowledge that there are people who, considering their external circumstances, should be content and happy, yet they are not; while there are those whose external circumstances are just the opposite, yet they are at peace with themselves, are cheerful, and are strong in their confidence that the external circumstances will also change for the good very soon, the kind of good that is manifest and obvious.

Moreover, and this, too, is an essential point, this very confidence and feeling hastens and brings closer the day when the undesirable circumstances will be over and done with, if not all at once, at least gradually, and in a satisfactory manner in all respects.

I am strongly confident that the Almighty will bless each and every one of you in your needs and will fulfil your hearts' desires for good, particularly - to regain your freedom, in the good and proper way; freedom from all constraints and distractions, including full personal liberty in the ordinary sense,

And, at the same time, true inner freedom in the spirit of the Festival of Chanukah and the Chanukah Lights, which are kindled in increasing numbers and getting ever brighter from day to day.

May G-d grant that the message of Chanukah and of the Chanukah Lights should serve as a guiding light for all our Jewish people, and for you in particular even in your present situation.

To increase and spread the light of the Torah and Mitzvos ("for a Mitzvah is a candle, and the Torah is light") in all aspects of Yiddishkeit [Judaism], and G-d, on His part, will increase His blessings to each and every one of you, and all yours, both materially and spiritually.

With blessing for a bright Chanukah, illuminating all the coming days throughout the year.

A WORD from the Director

What does Chanuka have to do with Moshiach and the ultimate Redemption? A lot! Everything is connected to Moshiach and the Redemption. In fact, the Lubavitcher Rebbe stated clearly that it is natural for a person who is involved every day in yearning for the coming of Moshiach to look for a connection to Moshiach's coming in every event or concept which he encounters.

This also applies to Chanuka. And since we are in the days of Chanuka it is appropriate to look at the Festival of Lights with "Moshiach eyes."

Since the Chanuka miracle took place in the Holy Temple, its commemoration arouses an even greater yearning for the era when the Menora will be kindled again in the Third Holy Temple.

Similarly, there is a connection between the above and this week's Torah portion, Mikeitz.

When a Jew hears the name Mikeitz, because he is constantly yearning for Moshiach's coming, he immediately associates it with the word "keitz" which refers to the time for Moshiach's coming. And on Shabbat, when the Haftorah is read and he hears the vision for the Menora mentioned, he once again immediately associates it with the Menora of the Holy Temple.

Let us all join together on Chanuka this year in the lighting of the Chanuka Menoras, large and small, public and private. And as we light the Menora let us envision ourselves watching the lighting of the rededicated Menora in the Third and Eternal Holy Temple.

Have a good Shabbos and happy Chanuka!

J. I. Guterik

Oil & Cheese

Chanukah commemorates an oil-based miracle—which explains why we eat oily foods to commemorate it. Some eat fried potato pancakes, a.k.a. *latkes*, while others eat *sufganiyot*—deep-fried doughnuts. Some eat both. Most survive the holiday. Yes, food can be dangerous. One of the greatest Maccabee victories was the result of feeding the enemy cheese—so we also eat dairy foods on Chanukah. Again, we survive.

Chanukah Gelt

During Chanukah it is customary to give *gelt* (money) to children, so that we can teach them to give some of it to charity—and just to keep things festive and happy. Some have the admirable custom of *gelt*-giving each weeknight of Chanukah. They survive this, too.

Dreidel

The Greek oppressors outlawed Torah schools, so the children would study in the forests, posting a sentry to alert them of Greek patrols. When the alert came, the children would hide their texts and start playing with *dreidels* (spinning tops).

We, too, play *dreidel* games on Chanukah to commemorate the courage of these heroic children. The four Hebrew letters on the *dreidel* are an acronym for "*Nes Gadol Haya Sham*"—a great miracle

happened there. So playing *dreidel* keeps us mindful of the Chanukah miracles even during fun and games.

The Prayers

Each day of Chanukah we thank G-d by reciting the complete Hallel in the morning prayer service. We also insert a special prayer of thanksgiving, *V'al Hanissim*, in the prayers and Grace after Meals. Every morning we read from the Torah about the inauguration offerings brought in honour of the dedication of the Tabernacle—reminiscent of the Maccabean rededication of the defiled Temple.

Shabbat Chanukah

On Friday afternoon, light the menorah *before* lighting the Shabbat candles. The Friday night Chanukah candles must burn for around 1½ hours—so you may need more oil or larger candles. (*The standard 30-minute Chanukah candles cannot be used on Friday.*) On Saturday night, light the menorah after dark, *after* the *Havdallah* ceremony.

CUSTOMS CORNER

It Happened Once...



Most of the people of the shtetl of Roshvenitz were very poor, but, being Chasidim, poverty could not detract from their joy of life, as it was derived from their Rebbe, the great Rabbi Avraham Yaakov of Sadigora.

In those days, travelling to the Rebbe was not an easy undertaking. It cost far more than most of them could afford, and so they established a special fund to pay the travelling expenses of one person. Each Jewish family would contribute to the communal pot, and when a special occasion would arise, a raffle would be held. The winner would travel to the Rebbe as an emissary of the community.

At the Rebbe's court, the representative was given a private interview with the Rebbe who would question him about the state of his Chassidim in the little village. But that wasn't all. When the emissary set off, the Rebbe always presented him with a pure, silver coin. These coins became the property of the community and were its prized treasure.

It was a month before Chanuka and a special meeting was called, the caretaker of the shul began to speak: "My dear brethren, we have called you here tonight to discuss the matter of the holy coins of our beloved Rebbe. We have merited to amass many coins, and we have decided to make from them a most beautiful Menora."

Excitement rose as the congregants murmured their approval to one another. "The beautiful Menora, we will put in our study hall, and each Chanuka we will sell the honour of lighting it to the highest bidder. This money will help pay for the many needs of our community - food and medicine for the sick and poor, dowries for needy brides, salaries for the teachers." The congregants were all very excited, and each of them dreamed about the beautiful silver Menora made from the Rebbe's holy coins.

The first night of Chanuka arrived and every corner of the shul was packed tight. The bidding began, and then rose quickly. It wasn't long before the poor and average homeowners were outbid, leaving only the wealthy to continue the contest. In the end, Reb Lipa, a wealthy wood merchant won the honour. With great emotion he approached the Menora. He recited the three blessings, and ignited the wick.

This scene was repeated each night of Chanuka. The same bidding, the same enthusiasm, and in end, the same result: one of the wealthy congregants always emerged the winner.

The poor people of the shtetl realized that the coveted honour would never fall to one of them. They had to content themselves with watching the lighting and answering "Amen" to the blessings.

One of them, however, couldn't accept the situation. Reb Baruch, the blacksmith, was a Chasid to the core of his soul. His love for his Rebbe filled his entire being, and he was heartbroken that he couldn't light the Menora even once. Chanuka passed and once again life's dreary sameness returned to the inhabitants of the little shtetl.

But for Baruch the blacksmith life was different. He had a mission which filled his nights and days. He began to work a little extra every day, and he hoarded every penny he managed to scrape together — all this for his much

longed-for Chanuka lighting. Months went by and he managed to amass a tidy sum.

A month before Chanuka his wife took ill. When all the old remedies failed to cure her, a doctor was summoned from the big city. The doctor's fee was tremendous and the medications very costly. When G-d blessed his wife with a complete recovery, Reb Baruch's entire hard-earned savings were gone.

Chanuka arrived and Reb Baruch was inconsolable. He had come so close to attaining his heart's desire, and now it was lost.

As the nights of Chanuka passed by, Reb Baruch watched the successive lightings with a pained heart. Finally, the eighth and final night came. The bidding was frenzied, and the poor looked on as their wealthy brethren bid astronomical sums for the honour. Reb Baruch felt that his heart would break.

Suddenly all was still. All eyes focused on the figure ascending the podium. Could it be Reb Baruch, the blacksmith!? With tears running down his face, he turned to the crowd: "My dear friends, this is the second year that I have yearned with my whole soul to kindle the holy Menora. All year I saved, but then my wife became ill. G-d has granted her a complete recovery, but my savings are gone. Believe me, my brothers, I cannot continue; my soul is expiring from longing. So, I am making you a proposition. My house is very small— worth about 300 crowns. I am giving it to the community. I will continue to live in it, but as a tenant of the community. Accept my plea and restore the soul of a poor blacksmith."

Reb Baruch's heartfelt words touched everyone. Tears flowed freely, and a great roar came up from the crowd. "Reb Baruch has won the bidding!" was heard from every corner. When he rose to kindle the silver Menora, there was not one heart which did not tremble at the sight of the flame that burst forth and rose up from the soul of Reb Baruch, the blacksmith.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

And he sought to weep, and he entered his room and he wept there...and he restrained himself. (Gen. 43:30-31)

The soul "weeps" because it does not want to be imprisoned in a body; it abhors its fleshly confinement and longs to be reunited with G-d. Nonetheless, it "restrains" itself and overcomes its inclination, recognizing that G-d wants the body and soul to work in tandem to observe His mitzvot. (*Ohr HaTorah*)

Your G-d, and the G-d of your fathers, has given you a treasure...and he brought Shimon out to them. (Gen. 43:32)

This verse alludes to Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, who would one day reveal the treasures hidden within the Torah in his holy book, the Zohar. (*Ma'ayana Shel Torah*)

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

PARSHAS MIKEITZ • 27 KISLEV • 4 DECEMBER

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:09 PM
	MINCHA:	7:30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:55 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:30 AM
	THE MOLAD OF THE MONTH OF TEVET IS	
	MONDAY 6 DECEMBER:	9:48 AND 4 CHALAKIM
	MINCHA:	8:05 PM
SHABBOS ENDS:		9:15 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	8:20 PM
	MAARIV:	9:15 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 3 DECEMBER 2010

Begins		Ends
8:09	MELBOURNE	9:15
7:57	ADELAIDE	9:00
6:12	BRISBANE	7:10
6:42	DARWIN	7:35
6:12	GOLD COAST	7:10
6:51	PERTH	7:51
7:34	SYDNEY	8:36
7:46	CANBERRA	8:49
8:12	LAUNCESTON	9:21
8:08	AUCKLAND	9:12
8:21	WELLINGTON	9:30

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

צוקללה"ה נב"מ ז"ע

May he succeed in imploring the Almighty to redeem His people speedily in our days.