

December 4, 2021  
30 Kislev, 5782  
Shabbat Miketz



*It has been told to you, what is good, and what Adonai requires of you  
Only to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)*

### Love the One Your God

*Music and lyrics by Lincoln Brewster*

Love the One your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might, and with all your strength.

With all your heart, with all your soul,  
With all your might, with all your strength...

### Genesis בראשית 41

נג ותקלינה שבע שני השבע אשר היה בארץ 53 The seven years of plenty that prevailed  
מצרים: in the land of Egypt came to an end,

נד ותחלינה שבע שני הרעב לבוא באשר אמר 54 and the seven years of famine began, as  
יוסף ויהי רעב בכל הארצות ובכל ארץ מצרים: Joseph had foretold. There was famine in  
היה לחם: all the lands, but all over the land of Egypt  
there was food;

נה ותרעב כל ארץ מצרים ויצעק העם 55 yet all the land of Egypt was starving,  
אל פרעה ולחם ויאמר פרעה לכל מצרים לכו so that the people cried out to Pharaoh for  
אל יוסף אשר יאמר לכם תעשו: food. Pharaoh said to all Egypt, "Go to  
Joseph; do whatever he tells you."

נו והרעב היה על כל פני הארץ ויפתח יוסף 56 The famine had spread across the land,  
את כל אשר בהם וישבר למצרים ויחזק הרעב so Joseph opened up all that was in [the  
בארץ מצרים: stores] and he provided for Egypt, for the  
famine had gained strength in the land of  
Egypt.

נז וכל הארץ באו מצרים לישבר אל יוסף כי 57 And all lands came to Egypt to buy  
חזק הרעב בכל הארץ: provisions from Joseph, for the famine had  
taken hold in every land.

## Haftarah for Miketz: Zecharia 4:1-7

**א** וַיָּשָׁב הַמַּלְאָךְ הַדֹּבֵר בִּי וַיַּעֲרֵנִי כְּאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-  
יַעֲזֹר מִשְׁנָתוֹ: **1** The angel who talked with me came back  
and woke me as a man is awakened from  
sleep.

**ב** וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי מָה אַתָּה רֹאֶה וְאָמַר  
רְאִיתִי אִוְהַנָּה מִנּוֹרֹת זָהָב כְּלָה וְגִלְגָּה עַל-רֹאשֶׁהָ  
וְשִׁבְעָה נְרֵתֶיהָ עָלֶיהָ שִׁבְעָה וְשִׁבְעָה מוֹצְקוֹת  
לְנֵרוֹת אֲשֶׁר עַל-רֹאשֶׁהָ: **2** He said to me, “What do you see?” And  
I answered, “I see a lampstand all of gold,  
with a bowl above it. The lamps on it are  
seven in number, and the lamps above it  
have seven pipes;

**ג** וּשְׁנַיִם זַיִתִּים עָלֶיהָ אֶחָד מִיְמִין הַגִּלְגָּה וְאֶחָד  
עַל-שְׂמאלָהּ: **3** and by it are two olive trees, one on the  
right of the bowl and one on its left.”

**ד** וָאֲעֹן וְאָמַר אֶל-הַמַּלְאָךְ הַדֹּבֵר בִּי לֵאמֹר  
מָה-אֵלֶּה אֲדַגֵּי: **4** I, in turn, asked the angel who talked  
with me, “What do those things mean, my  
lord?”

**ה** וַיֹּעַן הַמַּלְאָךְ הַדֹּבֵר בִּי וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי הֲלוֹא יָדַעְתָּ  
מָה-הֵמָּה אֵלֶּה וְאָמַר לֹא אֲדַגֵּי: **5** “Do you not know what those things  
mean?” asked the angel who talked with  
me; and I said, “No, my lord.”

**ו** וַיֹּעַן וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי לֵאמֹר זֶה דְּבַר-יְהוָה  
אֶל-זְרֻבָּבֶל לֵאמֹר לֹא בְחֵיל וְלֹא בְכַח כִּי אִם-  
בְּרוּחֵי אֱמֶר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת:  
**6** Then he explained to me as follows:  
“This is the word of the Eternal to  
Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power,  
but by My spirit—said the Eternal of  
Hosts.

**ז** מִי־אַתָּה הַרְהַגְדוֹל לִפְנֵי זְרֻבָּבֶל לְמִישָׁר  
וְהוֹצִיא אֶת-הָאֶבֶן הָרְאשָׁה תִּשְׁאוֹת תּוֹן חוֹן לָהּ:  
**7** Whoever you are, O great mountain in  
the path of Zerubbabel, turn into level  
ground! For he shall produce that excellent  
stone; it shall be greeted with shouts of  
‘Beautiful! Beautiful!’”

## ***Refuah Shleimah***

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Emily Alpern-Fisch, Alan Appel, Ronni Behar, Ira Berlin, Michael Brenner, Ellen Buckley, Judith Chisholm, Barbara Cleveland, Netanel Felber, Chelo Fournier, Golda bat Yaakova uVelvel, Richard Greenfield, David Hahn, Andrea Hamos, Judy Hurvitz, Jennifer Jaye, Joan Kupferberg, Wasu Lawal, Philip Levine, Stu Levine, Sam Levinson, Sharonette Leonard, Dan Lutenegger, Mildred Marin, Pam Marks, Stephanie Mendez, Sophie Meyers, Robin Parry, Rachel bat Chava, Rivkah Emet Miriam bat Daniel v'Taejin, Lois Rosen, Eric Rosenberg, Rabbi Steve Sager, Saguee Saraf, Shevach Saraf, Zipora Saraf, Sarah Golde bat Shifrah, David Scheever, Charles Schussheim, Cynthia Seymour, Harry Silver, Sam Sinkler, Betty Ustun, Heather Weisman, Mimi Wolf, Ze'ev Chaim ben Golda v'Brian

## ***Rabbi Zemel's Handout for Shabbat Hanukkah***

NEW YORK TIMES

November 15, 1987

REFLECTIONS ON HANUKKAH by CYNTHIA OZICK

HANUKKAH IS ABOUT THE MIRACLE of a little clay lamp - the kind of primordial object, commonplace enough, that has turned up by the score in archeological digs in the old lands surrounding the Mediterranean. It happened once that a lamp of this character - a simple jar hung with a wick - contained only enough oil to last a single day. Providentially, it burned for eight; and that is the miracle of Hanukkah.

A very modest miracle, as miracles in December go.

But halt. If Hanukkah is about a cruse of oil, then it must also be about latkes. Now let it be understood at the outset that if there are any readers of these paragraphs (and they are to be pitied) who do not know what latkes are, no explanation will suffice. A recipe is practically useless - the quantity of chopped onions in latke batter is overwhelmingly, incontestably, intuitive. Nor is there much point in openly admitting that latkes are fundamentally ordinary potato pancakes fried in oil. Hanukkah latkes are, after all, pancakes raised well beyond the temporal and the profane. Imagine, to begin with, a smell like a steaming tropical river. (That will be the oil heating in the pan.) Then the sound of a hundred bird beaks pecking. (Parachutes of batter dropping into hot snapping oil.) And - finally - a tower of airy circles speckled with gold, brown-crisp along their perimeters, jubilantly set down between two vast billowing bowls, one heaped with sunny yellow wavelets (that will be the applesauce), the other snowy and peaked like Alpine mountaintops (the sour cream). Yet consider that all these - pancakes, sauce, sour

cream - barely count for the proper ordering of Hanukkah. (Israeli Jews, for instance, mark the holiday with sufganiot, oil-fried jelly doughnuts.) It is true that on Hanukkah the latkes are incontrovertibly, mouth-wateringly, onion-savoringly, there - if not for long. But it is the oil that matters, in commemoration of the little cruse.

That legendary cruse is the central symbol of Hanukkah - an urgent tiny flame of constancy that ignites the capacious light of freedom. Its story is an ark to carry a family festivity into historical recognitions.

Ah, but the holiday itself! Hiss and sizzle on the stove, the kindling of candles accompanied by prayer and song, lights set in the window to beam into the winter gloom, children and grandparents and embraces and gifts and riddles and games! Festival faces gathered round the menorah. A girl or boy reaching up for the kindling taper, the shamash, to fire the first candle on the first night. The beautiful old syllables of "Hanerot Hallalu," "We kindle these sacred lights in remembrance of Thy wonders, miracles and salvations," and then everyone, not quite together and not quite in tune, ringing out a recently composed (i.e., 13th-century) hymn, "Ma-Oz Tsur Yeshu'ati," "Mighty Rock of My Salvation," followed by the children's scrambling down to the floor for the dreydl game, the dreydl spinning and toppling while the walnuts pile up and change hands!

An affecting domestic interior, sweetly familiar to an American December.

Anthropologists and myth-decoders will offer an ecumenical theory to wipe out all particularity of celebration: what is happening on this midwinter's night, they say, is what happens in all cold-land cultures when the day shortens, the snow stiffens, the dark thickens, and there is a yearning to bring back the light. All light then is one light, the light that drives against the solstice. Well, grant that it's so. But it's the genius of Judaism (and of Christianity in its turn) to begin with what anthropologists see as inherent and obvious (a natural or pastoral or climatic or psychological order), and then to overlay on the "natural" a civilizing theme. Judaism is famously interpretive; it seizes on nature's givens as an opportunity for the moral imagination. It imposes history on nature. If, for example, Shavuoth, or Pentecost, remembers as clearly as any anthropologist that it is a spring harvest festival, it also remembers an act, and a time, of sacral acceptance: it marks the Children of Israel receiving the Torah, the laws of mercy, conscience and civilization. And if Hanukkah is, as one of its names avers, the Festival of Lights (the only name the Roman-Jewish historian Josephus knew it by in the year 100), it is also the Festival of Dedication. Hanukkah is the Hebrew word for dedication. Dedication to what? To mercy, conscience, freedom and thanksgiving.

For Judaism, anthropological views, while they are not repudiated, are never enough; the holidays already acknowledge, include and transcend them. Nor are winning tableaux of domestic charm, authentic though they are, sufficient to define Hanukkah. It may even be that the Dickensian rosiness has become too popular, too emulative of majority practice, to sustain the simplicity of Hanukkah, with its one little jar of oil. Hanukkah gift-giving, for instance, has begun to follow the seasonal consumerism overload; some families have adopted a brand-new "custom" of saturation - the children are benevolently saddled with eight presents, one for each night. Eight presents! A blow to smallness and to gratitude. In my own family, about 50 years ago, each one of my grandmother's 22 grandchildren received from her at Hanukkah a baytele, a tiny drawstring sack, meticulously sewn out of intimately cherished scraps: a bit of old sleeve from an aunt's worn-out "waist," or a swatch of flowery silk from an exhausted shawl. Inside each sack were 18 pennies - 18, because the Hebrew letters (on the style of Roman numerals) representing that number spell the word for "life," echoing the biblical "Choose life." My grandmother's pennies in their ingeniously turned portable pockets were circumstantial memorials to family history ("This is from the dress that Mary wore to the Hlusker Ball!"), and added up to rich illuminations. In their unaffected make-do way they were suggestive of the history of the little cruse. The joyous old phrase "Hanukkah gelt," which always meant the modesty of pennies - call it the forced modesty of shtetl and immigrant poverty, but it is also the modesty of the holiday itself - is almost gone, crushed by the elephantiasis of a department-store December.

IN THE JEWISH LITURGICAL calendar, Hanukkah - even though it is eight days long - counts as a minor holiday, partly because it was established late, rabbinic rather than biblical in origin. (In Jewish time, "late" means two millenniums ago.) There is no special day or days set aside in the synagogue for its observance, as there is, say, for the introspective moral reclamations of the New Year and the Day of Atonement. On the Sabbath that occurs during the span of Hanukkah, a fresh round of Psalms (called Hallel,

for praise and thanksgiving) augments the service, and the reading from the Prophets consists of passages from Zechariah: "Not by might, and not by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord," and "On that day you will call every man your neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree." Otherwise no elaborate notice is taken in the synagogue. Excerpts from Kings, and certain selections from Numbers - touching on the dedication of the tabernacle in the wilderness - are offered, but there is no tradition of the reading of a discrete Scriptural text, as the Book of Ruth is read on Shavuoth. (A Hanukkah-related historical narrative, the Book of Judith, has in fact vanished out of the Jewish canon and into the Christian Apocrypha.) Hanukkah is not hugely trumpeted - except imitatively, when it is not being true to itself. On Hanukkah people go about their workaday preoccupations as usual. The eight days, except for the Sabbath among them, have an ordinary weekday feel. But when the evening star rises, a brief and unpretentious ceremony flourishes at home, with the nightly kindling of the menorah -on the first night one candle, on the second two, and so on. The single simple rite of a lesser holiday. It is as if even the unassuming status of Hanukkah in the cycle of the year is meant to reflect the little cruse.

There was once a rabbinic argument about how to go about lighting the menorah. The argument was between two philosophical schools: the School of Shammai, a literal-minded, dour bunch of sticklers, and the School of Hillel - liberal, flexible, reasonable, insightful, metaphorical. (It is a pleasure to report that in the long reach of Jewish history, Hillel nearly always won. He wins in this story too.) Shammai said: Begin on the first night with all the eight lights lighted, and then each night decrease the number by one. Oh, the dryness of Shammai - the effect would be to dim the progress of the holiday. But Hillel said: Let the glory grow! Both Hillel and Shammai, of course, intended to honor the little cruse -Shammai by bluntly emphasizing it as a climax, Hillel by expressing the widening power of the still, small voice.

AND JUST HERE IS WHAT IS startling and paradoxical about Hanukkah: that it is purely a spiritual possession even as it is derived from a war story, a story of armed resistance against a militarily powerful, dominating, oppressively punishing and ultimately genocidal majority culture out to undo the tiny Jewish nation. Though Hanukkah's theme is scarcely pacifist or quietist (it records, after all, a revolutionary uprising), though the Jews achieved victory and restored their national and religious independence, Hanukkah nevertheless disclaims and invalidates heroes and weaponry as the prime movers of history. Its principles are mercy and conscience. "Not by might, and not by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord." The skirmishes were real and bitter; the internal politics of Israel were acerbic and divided; all the same, it is Zechariah's words that enduringly fuel Hanukkah.

The oppressor was the Hellenized Syrian empire, as fiercely domineering in the year 165 B.C. as Rome was to become later on. Syrian culture, approximately Greek, was nevertheless a coarse shadow of the noble old Greece of the philosophers: a rough showplace of drained values, physicality without the inspiration of beauty, supremacy without discourse, the Periclean notion of the civilized polis transmogrified into a brutishly colonizing structure ruled by a megalomaniac. His name was Antiochus IV; he

called himself Epiphanes, Divinity-Made-Manifest. The Jews privately dubbed him His program was to secure Syrian hegemony through the imposition of a uniform culture on a subdued population. To achieve this, he set out to destroy Judaism. Circumcision and the observance of dietary laws were banned. The Sabbath was outlawed. Religious study became a crime punishable by death. Syrian troops pulled down the walls of Jerusalem, marched into the city, and raised up statues of the gods in the public squares. They broke into the Temple with axes and tore apart the altar; they poured pigs' blood over the scrolls of Scripture and set them aflame. Amid the cinders a huge golden Zeus rose up. In the name of the emperor it was required that swine be sacrificed and eaten before the idol. Pig was forced down Jewish throats. Jews were compelled to deck themselves with ivy and emit wild cries in honor of Dionysus. Women who were discovered to have circumcised their newborn sons were hanged, together with their babies. The choice was abandonment of Judaism or death. When the villages resisted, blood ran. The Syrians went from town to town all over the land, burning books and killing Jews.

However they may have felt about the bloodshed, not all Jews were opposed to the new decrees. Greek domination had an appeal for deracinated intellectuals and would-be aristocrats. Antiochus attracted allies among urban sophisticates who were confident that to be Hellenized, to be adaptable, to cast aside one's own nurturings, to emulate the powerful majority, to throw oneself into foreign rites, to surrender the heritage of monotheism for acceptance by upper-class style setters, was to be transcendently universalized. In order to take part in stadium games demanding nakedness, zealously acculturated young stalwarts were even willing to undergo an operation to reverse circumcision - in an age without anesthesia. It was their country cousins, the village people, who organized as citizen-soldiers against Antiochus; their intent was to defend the future of monotheism. They were only a handful, led by a fiery family who acquired the name Maccabee: the hammer.

AT ITS INCEPTION, THE resistance to Antiochus was also, perforce, a minor civil war. The Hellenizers scoffed at these embarrassing primitives from the countryside, stiff-necked loyalists to the outmoded, the regressive, the moribund, the irrational - backwater fanatics who were pointlessly defying modernity. The progressive city of Ashkelon had imaginatively allowed Aphrodite to be substituted for its venerable Astarte. Resplendent Tyre - the Big Apple of its day - obligingly took up Heracles in place of Melkart. All these images and symbols - clearly no more than political or psychological metaphors, after all - were interchangeable in the mythopoetic scheme. Why not let the humanly recognizable limbs of Zeus stand in for the incorporeal Creator of the Universe, so that the Jews might at long last turn out to be reasonably on a par with all the other peoples of the modern world?

Antiochus easily managed to entice quislings and puppets among the Hellenizers, who penetrated even into the administration of the Temple. And yet his success with these collaborators failed to satisfy; steadily he progressed from strategies of Hellenization to a war of calumny and extermination - which finally did not overlook the Hellenized Jews. In the end it was the whole of Israel that he purposed to destroy. The Jews, he said, venerated the head of an ass; their holy books taught hatred of mankind. Moreover, a

Greek was annually murdered by the Jews, and his intestines devoured. The Maccabees fought back. Antiochus's armed forces were numbered in the thousands and amply supplied with elephants. The Jews were an occupied small nation without even the pretense of a militia. What they had instead was a rallying cry: "Whoever is for the Lord, come!" And, miraculously, the Syrians were routed. On the 25th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev, 2,000 years ago (Judaism was older than Christianity is now), the Temple was redeemed, purified, rededicated; the idol dismantled, the altar rebuilt. The Syrian invaders had vandalized all but one of the small sealed containers of consecrated oil used for lighting the great candelabrum. New provisions were expected; in the meantime, the oil from the little clay cruse was fed into the arms of the candelabrum. There was enough for one day's light. On and on it burned.

Hanukkah marks the earliest battle for religious freedom in the history of our planet. But more than that: Hanukkah marks the beginning of the very concept of religious freedom. If the life of a little people had been extinguished, if a small nation had not been victorious over a savagely reductive oppressor, if Judaism had been uprooted - if the light of Torah had been snuffed - what would our allegiances look like today? There would be no legacy of monotheism. The Ten Commandments would be absent from the treasure house of world culture. There would be no Christianity. There would be no Islam. There would be no Bill of Rights. That little bit of oil has lasted and lasted - like the burning bush it reflects, it stands for the glory of God.

Or, if that phrase tends to embarrass us skeptical moderns (in whichever millennium our modernity happens to fall), let us choose words more accessible, more comprehensible - but also more arduously demanding, because they are ineluctably bound to the immediacy of human responsibility. Say, then, that the little cruse stands for mercy, conscience, freedom, dedication, thanksgiving. Call it civilization.

THE EGALITARIAN MENORAH is lighted by women and men and children. The rule is to set it in a window - liberty's annunciation - for passersby to see. (The rule does not apply when there is danger of persecution, as in ancient Babylon, when the surrounding fire worshipers prohibited the lighting of the menorah, or in Inquisitional Spain, or in certain cities of Germany and Poland in the 1930's, when a glimmering candelabrum might bring a rock through the glass.) No work may be done by the light of the menorah - its light is for celebration, not for commonplace household use - so while the candles burn, play is decreed. Hence the dreydl, that four-sided medieval teetotum carrying the initials of the words A Great Miracle Happened There - there in Jerusalem, long ago. Dreydl spinning is a kind of gambling game, with nuts for stakes; in a more puritan era it represented a dispensation for other frivolities - riddles, acrostics, even card playing. Under the menorah's light, lightness reigns.

Well, then: Hanukkah as cheerful lively domestic bustle and cozy Jewish family festival? Unquestionably. And surely here and now, in an American December. But when the latkes in their frying pan, bubbling and spurting and crackling, suddenly sparkle with little bursts of oil, know that those sparks are for the redemption and rededication of the world.

***We Remember a Few of Far Too Many Lives Lost to COVID-19***

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Hannes Schedel, 59, radiologist and parent, Passau, Germany  
Ryan Moe, 37, connoisseur of garage sale bargains, Rapid City, South Dakota  
Teresa Sperry, 10, Girl Scout who loved drawing and dancing, Suffolk, Virginia

***We Remember Those Lost to Violence in Washington, DC***

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Deandre Hunter, 28, SE DC

***Shiva***

---

Steven Sondheim

***Shloshim***

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Ida Lessman, Blanche Levin, Goldie Nussbaum, Mary Lou Reck, Alex Schiffman-Shilo

***Yahrzeit***

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Lillian Chait Pose, Livia Chertoff, Belle Cohen, Zelda Diskin, Charles H. Enda, Sylvia Faber, Adam Gale, Harry Gitlitz, Yoram Goren, Myron B. Green, Ruth Greenwald, Elin Grogan, Sylvia Jennis, Naomi Josephs, David Krooth, Anne Layton, Syd Lazere, Morris Lefko, Paul Lublin, Eugene Miller, Faith Parris, Toby Passel, Harold Povill, Graine Robinson, Jacob Samuels, Carrie Silverman, Alma Stone, David Van Praagh, Evan Weisman, Lawrence Yogodzinski

*Temple Micah acknowledges our synagogue stands on the traditional territory of the Piscataway and Nacotchtank (Anacostan) peoples. We pay respect to their elders past and present and recognize their stewardship of this land and the vital contribution of indigenous peoples to this nation we share.*

**DANIEL G. ZEMEL**, Rabbi

**JOSHUA BERAHA**, Associate Rabbi | **STEPHANIE CRAWLEY**, Associate Rabbi

**BETH WERLIN**, Executive Director | **DEBRA WINTER**, Director of Spiritual Arts

**SHARON TASH**, Education Director

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