

THE CHABAD WEEKLY ^{B'H} Vol 6, #9

Chabad of North Beverly Hills, 409 Foothill Rd. Beverly Hills, 90210

beverlyhillschabad.com

Rabbi Yosef Shusterman 310-271-9063

As related in this week's Torah portion, Vayeishev, when Joseph went at his father's behest to check on his brothers in Shechem he met a man "wandering in the field," who was actually the angel Gabriel. In response to Joseph's question if he knew where they might be, the man replied, "They have departed, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dotan.'"

Rashi, the foremost Torah commentator, explains that with these words the angel was trying to warn Joseph to keep away from his brothers, who were intending to harm him. "They have departed" suggested "they have removed themselves from brotherhood," and "let us go to Dotan" meant they were looking for a legal way ("datot") to kill him. Nonetheless, Joseph ignored these veiled warnings and continued on his way.

Thus we see that in his desire to fulfill his father's request Joseph demonstrated true self-sacrifice, to the point that he was willing to endanger his life. Yet this in itself raises several questions: Jacob had asked Joseph to "go see the welfare of your brothers and the welfare of the flock, and bring me back word." If Joseph were to be killed by his brothers, he would obviously not be able to report back to Jacob.

Furthermore, what justification did Joseph have for endangering his life in order to fulfill the commandment of honoring one's parents, when it is not one of the three mitzvot a Jew is permitted to give up his life rather than transgress: idolatry, illicit relations and murder?

The great codifier of Jewish law, Moses Maimonides, explains that in certain circumstances it is indeed permissible to demonstrate this extreme level of self-sacrifice, even when it isn't "necessary": "If the person is tremendously great, pious and G-d-fearing, and sees that the generation is reckless [in observing that particular mitzva], he is permitted to sanctify G-d's Name and sacrifice his life for even a minor commandment, in order that the people see and take note."

Joseph was well aware that his brothers were lacking in the mitzva of honoring parents, which had been amply demonstrated by their behavior in the incident of Shechem as well as in their antipathy toward him. He thus resolved to fulfill his father's wishes at all costs.

The same dynamics are also evident in the story of Chanuka, which we are now celebrating. Strictly speaking, there was no need for Matityahu and his sons to risk their lives and engage in war against the Syrian-Greeks. Nonetheless, it was their willingness for self-sacrifice above and beyond the "letter of the law" that ultimately led to miracles and wonders.

In fact, in the merit of their deeds they found the "cruse of pure oil with the High Priest's seal," symbolic of the inner essence of every Jew, and merited "to institute these eight days of Chanuka to give thanks and praise to Your great Name." (Adapted from Vol. 35 of Likkutei Sichot., From: L'Chaim 5761, # 649) - lchaimweekly.org

The Fire In The Flint: Chanukah expresses the power of Judaism to survive the forces of assimilation. At the time of the Maccabees many Jews had adopted the Greek way of life. They abandoned Judaism completely and worshipped idols together with the Greeks. However, the Maccabees succeeded in reminding people that they were Jews.

According to Chassidic teaching, within each Jew is a spark of the Divine which cannot be extinguished. It is the flint'. A glowing coal put into water the fire is has the power to produce effected by the way the immersed in water for a long time, and when it is removed it still has the power to produce a spark. The 'fire in the flint' is always present as a potential force.

In the same way, Judaism is always present as a potentially powerful force in the life of any Jew, however remote he or she may have become from Jewish life. The single flask of pure oil which was found in the Temple, and the Chanukah lights which it fuels, represent the eternal Jewish flame which might be hidden but cannot be put out. It is simply waiting for the opportunity to express its beautiful radiance. — lchaimweekly.org



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It Should Again See Light

By Blair P. Grubb, M.D.

Several years ago, a physician from southern France contacted me. His granddaughter had taken ill with a disease that baffled the physicians there. He called after reading several of my articles on disorders of the autonomic nervous system. His granddaughter's symptoms seemed to match those I had described, and he asked me if I could help. I readily agreed, and for many months, I collaborated with the child's French physicians by telephone and by fax, directing their diagnostic testing. At last we came to a diagnosis, and I prescribed a course of therapy. During the next several weeks, the child made a seemingly miraculous recovery. Her grandparents expressed their heartfelt thanks and told me to let them know should I ever come to France.

In the summer of 1996, I was invited to speak at a large international scientific meeting that was held in Nice, France. I sent word to the physician I had helped years before. Upon my arrival at the hotel, I received a message to contact him. I called him, and we arranged a night to meet for dinner.

On the appointed day we met and then drove north to his home in the beautiful southern French countryside. It was humbling to learn his home was older than the United States. During the drive he told me that his wife had metastatic breast cancer and was not well, but she insisted upon meeting me. When introduced to her, I saw that despite her severe illness, she was still a beautiful woman with a noble bearing.

After dinner, we sat in a 17th-century salon, sipping cognac and chatting. Our conversation must have seemed odd to the young man and woman who served us because it came out in a free-flowing mixture of English, French, and Spanish.

After a time the woman asked, "My husband tells me you are Jewish, no?" "Yes," I said, "I am a Jew." They asked me to tell them about Judaism, especially the holidays. I did my best to explain and was astounded by how little they knew of Judaism. She seemed to be particularly interested in

Chanukah. Once I had finished answering her questions, she suddenly looked me in the eye and said, "I have something I want to give to you."

She disappeared and returned several moments later with a package wrapped in cloth. She sat, her tired eyes looking into mine, and she began to speak slowly.

"When I was a little girl of 8 years, during the Second World War, the authorities came to our village to round up all the Jews. My best friend at that time was a girl of my age named Jeanette. One morning when I came to play, I saw her family being forced at gunpoint into a truck. I ran home and told my mother what had happened and asked where Jeanette was going. 'Don't worry,' she said, 'Jeanette will be back soon.'

"I ran back to Jeanette's house only to find that she was gone and that the other villagers were looting her home of valuables, except for the Judaic items, which were thrown into the street. As I approached, I saw an item from her house lying in the dirt. I picked it up and recognized it as an object that Jeanette and her family would light around Christmas time. In my little girl's mind I said 'I will take this home and keep it for Jeanette, till she comes back,' but she and her family never returned."

She paused and took a slow sip of brandy. "Since that time I have kept it. I hid it from my parents and didn't tell a soul of its existence. Indeed, over the last 50 years the only person who knew of it was my husband. When I found out what really happened to the Jews, and how many of the people I knew had collaborated with the Nazis, I could not bear to look at it. Yet I kept it, hidden, waiting for something, although I wasn't sure what. Now I know what I was waiting for. It was for you, a Jew, who helped cure our granddaughter, and it is to you I entrust this."

Her trembling hands set the package on my lap. I slowly unwrapped the cloth from around it. Inside was a menorah, but one unlike any I had seen



before. Made of solid brass, it had eight cups for holding oil and wicks and a ninth cup centered above the others. It had a ring attached to the top, and the woman mentioned that she remembered that Jeanette's family would hang it in the hallway of their home.

It looked quite old to me; later, several people told me that it is probably at least 100 years old. As I held it and thought about what it represented, I began to cry. All I could manage to say was a garbled "merci." As I left, her last words to me were "Il faudra voir la lumiere encore une fois" -- it should once again see light.

I later learned that she died less than a month after our meeting. This Chanukah, the menorah will once again see light. And as I and my family light it, we will say a special prayer in honor of those whose memories it represents. We will not let its lights go out again. (chabad.org)

My father would kindle Chanuka lights between Mincha and Maariv; he was not particular whether the doorway was south-north or east-west. Haneiroth hal al u he said after kindling all the lights. He would sit near the lights for a half hour, except Fridays when he did not stay that long. He took care that the lights burned at least 50 minutes. The order we follow is: Mincha, Chanuka lights, then Shabbat candles. (From Rebbe's Hayom yom Kislev 25).

The light of Chanukah comes from the future.

Chanukah and Purim are in a different category than the regular cycle of holidays such as Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot which are connected to the Exodus from Egypt. Since the miracles of Chanukah and Purim both occurred well after the Exodus, they are connected to something else entirely. Chanukah and Purim both draw down into the world a completely different light - not one from the past, but rather from the Perfected Future World. It is this light that created the miracles of Chanukah. Every single year, we enter and are encompassed within this extraordinary light. This future light gives us a profound strength right now, in the depths of exile, to hang on until the perfected era of the future.

- Taken from a talk given in Tsfat by Rav Ephraim Kenig.

PARTICIPATE IN DAILY CLASSES

Sunday 8:00 AM Gemara-Tractate
Rosh Hashana (men)

Monday 8:00 PM Chumash
(men and women)

Tuesday 8:00 PM Gemara-Tractate
Makos (men)

Wednesday 8:30 PM Halacha and Tanya
(women)

Thursday 10:00 AM Chassidus (women)

8:00 PM Class for Beverly Hills
Highschool Students

Daily 6:45 to 7:15 AM Chassidus

Between Halacha
Mincha and
Maariv

There will be no classes Monday-Thursday, Dec. 2nd - Dec. 5th.

DAILY MINYONIM:

Shacharit: Mon-Fri 6:00 AM and 7:30 AM

Sunday 9:00 AM

Mincha/Maariv: 4:40 PM

**On Wednesday night, Dec. 4, we begin saying Vesein
Tal Umatar Livracha.**

SHABBOS PARSHAS VAYESHEV
Shabbos Mevorchim
Shabbos Chanuka
November 29, 2002

Candlelighting:(Los Angeles) 4:26 PM

Friday Mincha: 4:40 PM

LATEST TIME FOR SHEMA: 9:10 AM

SHABBAT MORNING

- **Tehillim** 9:00 AM followed by
Kiddush, Cholent &
Farbrengen
- **Chumash** 3:50 PM
- **Mincha** 4:20 PM followed by
Seuda Shlishit
- **Shabbat ends** 5:26 PM

Happy Birthday to Haim Katzir, Ruben Molayem,
Menasheh Levy, Rita Lowi, Abigail Beroukhim and
Joanna Bekhor.

Happy Anniversary to Rabbi and Mrs. Moshe Kesselman,
Shmuel and Karen Einstein

SHUL CHANUKA PARTY
Monday, Dec. 2 at 6:00 PM
9017 W. Pico (Upstairs)
**Featuring: Take home arts and crafts, Raffles,
Prizes, Menorah ice carving, Delicious dinner.....**

Please RSVP



Helen: 275-2974
Sara: 271-9063

GOOD SHABBOS!