

Chapter 1 : Josephus on Hanukkah

*Chanukah in a New Light: Grandeur, Heroism and Depth [R' Pinchas Stolper] on theinnatdunvilla.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. Experience the brilliance and penetrating insight of one of the most original and creative thinkers and teachers of all time.*

Print 0 shares The cruse of oil story that explains the origins of Chanukah has fallen into disrepute. Many people feel that it appeals to children only, because Chanukah for adults is about a military victory against overwhelming odds. The Babylonian Talmud, they say, composed the story to downplay the Maccabean triumph. But they are wrong. After the Babylonian Talmud notes which oils and wicks are appropriate for Shabbat lamps, it segues into a discussion of Chanukah lamps and how they are used Shabbat 21b. And so we celebrate Chanukah for eight days. It first appears in Sifrei Bemidbar sec. Unlike the cruse of oil story, this one is little known. How is this so? Because every night the designated kohen would pour the same amount of oil into all seven branches of the Temple menorah. By the next morning, six of the flames would have gone out. But the seventh, called the Western lamp, would remain lit until the following evening when the kohen would come back to light the menorah. He would use the one remaining flame to kindle the six others. That is, the oil of the Western lamp lasted twice as long as it should have. It cannot be a coincidence that two such similar stories about the Temple menorah appear so close to each other in the Talmud. Why did they adapt the older story and add it to the report of the military victory? The Babylonian Jews lived among Zoroastrians and hence saw everywhere, in this darkest month of the year, Zoroastrian holy fire, a key feature of that religion. By consciously adapting the old Jewish legend of a continuously burning Western lamp, by requiring Jews to place their Chanukah lamps on public display, and by forbidding them the use of the lamps for a practical purpose, the rabbis gave Babylonian Jews a way to light their own holy fires, at a time when the Zoroastrians were kindling theirs. For these Jews, Chanukah assumed added importance. This new understanding of the cruse of oil story should resonate with Jews living in a Christian culture today. There is no denying that Christmas, with its twinkling lights and exchange of gifts, exerts a strong pull on many American Jews. Ramping up Chanukah with presents, songs, a chanukkiah for each person in the family, and even an electric menorah in the window, are contemporary responses to living in an open society. Some look askance at these new practices. But taking our cue from the rabbis of the Talmud, we should celebrate, not denigrate, the transformation of Chanukah from a minor to a major holiday. No need to be embarrassed to tell it to our children and grandchildren, of whatever age.

Chapter 2 : Celebrate Hanukkah in New Jersey: Best Events & Festivals

Chanukah is a festival all about light, centering around the ritual of lighting candles every night for 8 nights. One might even see it as an opportunity to "light up" that which is important to us - or that which we weren't able to see during relative "darkness".

This began to decay the foundation of Jewish life and practice. When the Greeks challenged the Jews to sacrifice a pig to a Greek god, a few courageous Jews took to the hills of Judea in open revolt against this threat to Jewish life. Led by Matitياهو, and later his son Judah the Maccabee, this small band of pious Jews led guerrilla warfare against the Syrian-Greek army. Antiochus sent thousands of well-armed troops to crush the rebellion, but after three years the Maccabees beat incredible odds and miraculously succeeded in driving the foreigners from their land. The victory was on the scale of Israel defeating the combined super-powers of today. Jewish fighters entered Jerusalem and found the Holy Temple in shambles and desecrated with idols. The Maccabees cleansed the Temple and re-dedicated it on the 25th of Kislev. When it came time to re-light the Menorah, they searched the entire Temple, but found only one jar of pure oil bearing the seal of the High Priest. The group of believers lit the Menorah anyway and were rewarded with a miracle: That small jar of oil burned for eight days, until a new supply of oil could be brought. From then on, Jews have observed a holiday for eight days, in honor of this historic victory and the miracle of the oil. To publicize the Chanukah miracle, Jews add the special Hallel praises to the Shacharit service, and light a menorah during the eight nights of Chanukah. Sefardi tradition has just one menorah per family. Otherwise, the candles may not be easily distinguishable and may appear like a big torch. In addition to the eight main lights, the menorah has an extra helper candle called the "Shamash. What Candles to Light The most important thing is that that your candles must burn for at least 30 minutes after nightfall. Those famous colored candles barely qualify! Many Jewish bookstores sell longer colored candles. Actually, it is even better to use olive oil, since the miracle of the Maccabees occurred with olive oil. Glass cups containing oil can be placed in the candle holders of any standard menorah. Many Jewish bookstores even sell kits of pre-measured oil in disposable cups. Where to Light To best publicize the miracle, the menorah is ideally lit outside the doorway of your house, on the left side when entering. The mezuzah is on the right side; in this way you are "surrounded by mitzvot. If this is not practical, the menorah should be lit in a window facing the public thoroughfare. Someone who lives on an upper floor should light in a window. If for some reason the menorah cannot be lit by a window, it may be lit inside the house on a table; this at least fulfills the mitzvah of "publicizing the miracle" for the members of the household. Since the mitzvah occurs at the actual moment of lighting, moving the menorah to a proper place after lighting does not fulfill the mitzvah. When to Light The preferable time to light the menorah is at nightfall. It is best to light in the presence of many people, which maximizes the mitzvah of "publicizing the miracle" and adds to the family atmosphere. The menorah can still be lit with the blessings late into the night, as long as people are still awake. The menorah should remain lit for at least 30 minutes after nightfall, during which time no use should be made of its light. On Friday afternoon, the menorah should be lit 18 minutes before sundown. How to Light On the first night, place one candle at the far right, as you face the menorah. This applies whether the menorah is placed next to a doorway or by a window. Another candle is placed for the Shamash taller helper candle which is used to light the others. It is not counted as one of the candles. First light the Shamash, then recite the blessings, and then use the Shamash to light the Chanukah candle. Follow this same procedure each night of Chanukah

Chapter 3 : Chanukah - Light or Fire? - Jewish Holidays

Experience the brilliance and penetrating insight of one of the most original and creative thinkers and teachers of all time, Harav Yitzchak Hutner zt"l.

Hanukkah celebrated in the Polish Sejm , Warsaw Hanukkah is celebrated with a series of rituals that are performed every day throughout the 8-day holiday, some are family-based and others communal. There are special additions to the daily prayer service , and a section is added to the blessing after meals. There is no religious reason for schools to be closed, although in Israel schools close from the second day for the whole week of Hanukkah. Fried foods such as latkes potato pancakes , jelly doughnuts sufganiyot , and Sephardic bimuelos are eaten to commemorate the importance of oil during the celebration of Hanukkah. Some also have a custom of eating dairy products to remember Judith and how she overcame Holofernes by feeding him cheese, which made him thirsty, and giving him wine to drink. When Holofernes became very drunk, Judith cut off his head. As a universally practiced "beautification" hiddur mitzvah of the mitzvah , the number of lights lit is increased by one each night. This differs from Sabbath candles which are meant to be used for illumination and lighting. Hence, if one were to need extra illumination on Hanukkah, the shamash candle would be available, and one would avoid using the prohibited lights. Some, especially Ashkenazim, light the shamash candle first and then use it to light the others. It is Sephardic custom not to light the shamash first and use it to light the rest. Instead, the shamash candle is the last to be lit, and a different candle or a match is used to light all the candles. Some Hasidic Jews follow this Sephardic custom as well. Many families use an oil lamp traditionally filled with olive oil for Hanukkah. Like the candle Chanukiah, it has eight wicks to light plus the additional shamash light. Schneerson called for public awareness and observance of the festival and encouraged the lighting of public menorahs. Accordingly, lamps are set up at a prominent window or near the door leading to the street. It is customary amongst some Ashkenazi Jews to have a separate menorah for each family member customs vary , whereas most Sephardi Jews light one for the whole household. Only when there was danger of antisemitic persecution were lamps supposed to be hidden from public view, as was the case in Persia under the rule of the Zoroastrians , or in parts of Europe before and during World War II. However, most Hasidic groups light lamps near an inside doorway, not necessarily in public view. Since candles may not be lit on Shabbat itself, the candles must be lit before sunset. Therefore, the Hanukkah menorah is lit first with larger candles than usual, [85] followed by the Shabbat candles. At the end of the Shabbat, there are those who light the Hanukkah lights before Havdalah and those who make Havdalah before the lighting Hanukkah lights. On the first night, the shehecheyanu blessing is added, making a total of three blessings. On the first night of Hanukkah one light candle or oil is lit on the right side of the menorah, on the following night a second light is placed to the left of the first but it is lit first, and so on, proceeding from placing candles right to left but lighting them from left to right over the eight nights. There are several different versions; the version presented here is recited in many Ashkenazic communities: We kindle these lights for the miracles and the wonders, for the redemption and the battles that you made for our forefathers, in those days at this season, through your holy priests. During all eight days of Hanukkah these lights are sacred , and we are not permitted to make ordinary use of them except for to look at them in order to express thanks and praise to Your great Name for Your miracles, Your wonders and Your salvations. Maoz Tzur Main article: The song contains six stanzas. The first and last deal with general themes of divine salvation, and the middle four deal with events of persecution in Jewish history , and praises God for survival despite these tragedies the exodus from Egypt, the Babylonian captivity , the miracle of the holiday of Purim , the Hasmonean victory , and a longing for the days when Judea will finally triumph over Rome. The familiar tune is most probably a derivation of a German Protestant church hymn or a popular folk song. In North America and in Israel it is common to exchange presents or give children presents at this time. In addition, many families encourage their children to give tzedakah charity in lieu of presents for themselves. In the days of the Hasmonean Mattathias, son of Johanan the high priest, and his sons, when the iniquitous Greco-Syrian kingdom rose up against Your people Israel, to make them forget Your Torah and to turn them away from the ordinances of Your will, then

You in your abundant mercy rose up for them in the time of their trouble, pled their cause, executed judgment, avenged their wrong, and delivered the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of few, the impure into the hands of the pure, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, and insolent ones into the hands of those occupied with Your Torah. Both unto Yourself did you make a great and holy name in Thy world, and unto Your people did You achieve a great deliverance and redemption. Whereupon your children entered the sanctuary of Your house, cleansed Your temple, purified Your sanctuary, kindled lights in Your holy courts, and appointed these eight days of Hanukkah in order to give thanks and praises unto Your holy name. In addition, the Hallel praise Psalms – Psalms are sung during each morning service and the Tachanun penitential prayers are omitted. Since Hanukkah lasts eight days it includes at least one, and sometimes two, Jewish Sabbaths Saturdays. The Haftarah reading for the first Sabbath Hanukkah is Zechariah 2: When there is a second Sabbath on Hanukkah, the Haftarah reading is from 1Kings 7: The Hanukkah menorah is also kindled daily in the synagogue, at night with the blessings and in the morning without the blessings. It still forms part of the liturgy of the Yemenite Jews. According to the teachings of Kabbalah and Hasidism , this day is the final "seal" of the High Holiday season of Yom Kippur and is considered a time to repent out of love for God. In this spirit, many Hasidic Jews wish each other Gmar chatimah tovah "may you be sealed totally for good" , a traditional greeting for the Yom Kippur season. It is taught in Hasidic and Kabbalistic literature that this day is particularly auspicious for the fulfillment of prayers. It is also forbidden to fast or to eulogize during Hanukkah.

Chapter 4 : Messiah Yeshua and Hanukkah are Connected! - YeshuaYeshua

Chanukah begins Sun. night, Dec. 2, and continues through Monday, December 10, Chanukah is the Jewish eight-day, wintertime "festival of lights," celebrated with a nightly menorah lighting, special prayers and fried foods.

Table of Contents Upcoming Dates Festivals in Israel Chanukkah, the Jewish festival of rededication, also known as the festival of lights, is an eight day festival beginning on the 25th day of the Jewish month of Kislev. Chanukkah is probably one of the best known Jewish holidays , not because of any great religious significance, but because of its proximity to Christmas. Many non-Jews and even many assimilated Jews! It is bitterly ironic that this holiday, which has its roots in a revolution against assimilation and suppression of Jewish religion, has become the most assimilated, secular holiday on our calendar. The story of Chanukkah begins in the reign of Alexander the Great. Alexander conquered Syria , Egypt and Judea, but allowed the people under his control to continue observing their own religions and retain a certain degree of autonomy. Under this relatively benevolent rule, many Jews assimilated, adopting much of Hellenistic culture, including the language, customs, dress, etc. More than a century later, a successor of Alexander, Antiochus IV was in control of the region. He began to oppress the Jews severely, placing a Hellenistic priest in the Temple, massacring Jews, prohibiting the practice of the Jewish religion, and desecrating the Temple by requiring the sacrifice of pigs a non- kosher animal on the altar. Two groups opposed Antiochus: They joined forces in a revolt against both the assimilation of the Hellenistic Jews and oppression by the Selucid Greek government. The revolution succeeded and the Temple was rededicated. According to tradition as recorded in the Talmud , at the time of the rededication, there was very little oil left that had not been defiled by the Greeks. Oil was needed for the menorah candelabrum in the Temple, which was supposed to burn throughout the night every night. There was only enough oil to burn for one day, yet miraculously, it burned for eight days. An eight day festival was declared to commemorate this miracle. Note that the holiday commemorates the miracle of the oil, not the military victory: Jews do not glorify war. Chanukkah is not a very important religious holiday. Chanukkah is not mentioned in Jewish scripture; the story is related in the book of the Maccabees , which Jews do not accept as scripture. The only religious observance related to the holiday is the lighting of candles. The candles are arranged in a candelabrum called a Hanukia. Many people refer to the Hanukia incorrectly as a menorah. The name menorah is used only to describe the seven-branched candelabrum that was housed in the Jewish Temple. The Hanukiah holds nine candles: On the first night, one candle is placed at the far right. The shamash candle is lit and three berakhot blessings are recited: The first candle is then lit using the shamash candle, and the shamash candle is placed in its holder. Each night, another candle is added from right to left like the Hebrew language. Candles are lit from left to right because you pay honor to the newer thing first. Because of the law prohibiting the lighting of a fire on Shabbat , Chanukkah candles are lit before the Shabbat candles on Friday night, and they are lit after Havdalah on Saturday night. The following blessings are said: Blessed are You, our God, Creator of time and space, who enriches our lives with holiness, commanding us to kindle the Chanukkah lights. Blessed are You, our God, Creator of time and space, who performs miracles for our ancestors, in the days of long ago and in this time. On the first night, the Shehecheyanu blessing is also recited. Why the shamash candle? The Chanukkah candles are for pleasure only; we are not allowed to use them for any productive purpose. The shamash candle is at a different height so that it is easily identified as the shamash. It is traditional to eat fried foods on this holiday, because of the significance of oil to the holiday. Chanukkah gelt is a Jewish custom rooted in the Talmud: The Torah concept of charity -- tzedakah -- requires us to help the recipient in the most dignified manner possible. A dreidel is marked with the following four Hebrew letters: Nun, Gimmel, Heh and Shin. On Israeli dreidels, there is no Shin but rather a Peh, which stands for Po, meaning here. Actually, it stands for the Yiddish words nit nothing , gantz all , halb half and shtell put , which is the rules of the game! There are some variations in the way people play the game, but the way I learned it, everyone puts in one coin. A person spins the dreidel. When the pot is empty, everybody puts one in. Keep playing until one person has everything. Then redivide it, because nobody likes a poor winner. Judaism and Cardin, Rabbi Nina Beth. The Tapestry of Jewish Time.

Chapter 5 : Shedding New Light On Chanukah | Jewish Week

The cruse of oil story that explains the origins of Chanukah has fallen into disrepute. Many people feel that it appeals to children only, because Chanukah for adults is about a military victory.

During the period of the second temple, the Syrian-Greek kingdom issued decrees against the Jews observing the Torah and following the commandments in an attempt to cause them to culturally assimilate. They disrupted the Sanctuary of the Temple and rendered it ritually impure. G-d sent redemption through a rebellion led by the Chashmonaim Hasmoneans, a family of kohanim priests popularly referred to as the Maccabees. Following the overthrow of the invaders, the Jews regained sovereignty, which they retained for more than years. After overcoming the Syrian-Greeks, the Jews entered the Sanctuary on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Kislev. They found only one cruse of pure oil in the Temple. This was enough oil to keep the Menorah burning for but a single day. Miraculously, the oil lasted for eight days, until a new supply of oil could be produced. The Sages of that generation therefore decreed that the eight-day period beginning on 25 Kislev should be observed as days of rejoicing and of praise to G-d. Candles are lit each evening to commemorate the miracle. The altar of the Temple. Chanukah occurred in the Second Temple era, after prophecy had ceased and the Bible canon was closed. Nevertheless, there are allusions to Chanukah in the Torah. For example, the twenty-fifth place the Jews camped in the desert was Chashmonah Numbers Chanukah begins on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Kislev and the Maccabees were Chashmonaim. The Books of the Prophets also allude to Chanukah. In the fourth chapter of Zechariah, we are given a vision of future events involving olive oil and the Menorah. In the eighth chapter of Daniel, the prophet speaks of an arrogant Greek king, whom many understand to be Antiochus of the Chanukah story. The bullet points of the Chanukah story are recounted in the Talmud in tractate Shabbat 21b. The story of Chana, whose seven sons allowed themselves to be martyred rather than submit to idolatry, is retold in tractate Gittin 57b. The circumstances that led Yehudit to behead the Syrian-Greek general Holofernes are referenced in tractate Ketubot 3b. All of these stories are told in greater detail in the Midrash. The full story of Chanukah is told in a work called Megillat Antiochus, which dates to the second century. Josephus also discusses Chanukah at some length. How Do I Light a Menorah? How can we recite a blessing that contains an untruth? Others include hearing the Megillah read on Purim, ritually washing hands before eating bread, and lighting candles for Shabbat and holidays. On each of these, a blessing is recited. The reason is because the Torah commands us to follow rabbinic laws. Nevertheless, the sages only instituted brachot to be said on a very small number of especially significant acts. The oil lasting the first day is pretty normal, so why is the first day commemorated? The commentators have various explanations for how this might be. For example, the Maccabees might have divided the oil into eight parts so that they could use a little each day. In such case, even lasting the first day would have been a miracle. Another explanation is that they might have poured all the oil into the lamps on the first day, only to find that the cruse from which they poured it was still full. There are many other possible explanations. What all agree to, however, was that the first day was indeed part of the miracle. In fact, that is a very common misconception. Al HaNissim, the prayer recited throughout the holiday, spells it out for us: You waged battle for them, You defended their rights, and You avenged the wrongs that had been done to them. What Should We Eat? Because of the miracle of the oil, the tradition is to eat fried foods on Chanukah. The most well-known in America are potato pancakes, known as latkes. In Israel, the custom is to eat jelly doughnuts, called sufganiyot. For generations Chanukah has been observed by many families and individuals as the last vestige of a Judaism otherwise lost to them. Chanukah has been the thing that kept them connected to Judaism and enabled just one more generation to know they were Jewish. Many of these people later found their way back into the fold. Hardly a Jewish Christmas, Chanukah has actually helped to stem the tide of assimilation. Why Do We Give Presents? Many people think that giving presents is a modern practice, instituted solely to keep our kids from feeling bad while their non-Jewish peers are being showered with holiday presents. Some feel the practice originated because the Talmud tells us Shabbat 22a that we may not use the Chanukah lights to count coins. We therefore give our children coins to teach them how to use and not

to use the light of the menorah. How Do I Play Dreidel? With the Candle-lighting, presents, and fun foods, Chanukah is one of the most engaging holidays for children. Dreidel is another kid-friendly way to have Chanukah fun. A dreidel is a four-sided top decorated with four Hebrew letters: Nun, Gimmel, Hei and Shin. If you spin a Nun, nothing happens. The next player goes.

Chapter 6 : Hanukkah - Wikipedia

Hanukkah: Laws, customs, recipes and inspiring videos and articles relating to the Jewish holiday of Chanukah (Hanukkah), when is Hanukkah.

Why this relatively minor incident, to the exclusion of almost everything else? Would we not expect the Talmud to relate the intolerable Greek oppression, the betrayal by the Jewish Hellenists, the heroic struggle of loyal Jews to observe the Torah under pain of death, or the battles of Matityahu, Yehudah HaMaccabi and his valiant brothers against an overwhelming foe? The miracle of how a bit of oil, good for only one day, which lasted for eight, is no doubt unusual, even fascinating and significant. But, does it rate against the battles, the victory and heroism of a people who fought against impossible odds to restore their freedom, Temple and their very right to live as a people? The question goes deeper. Why are the Sages so concerned with the dedication of the Temple, and not with the heroism of the Maccabees? Why the emphasis on light and oil, as opposed to the land liberated with fire and blood from an oppressing foe? The puzzle is solved when we appreciate that the significance of Chanukah relates in a very special way to the survival of the unique Jewish spirit as exemplified by Torah and Temple. The Sages want us to realize that the battles and the heroism pale in significance when we consider the lessons to be learned from the confrontation of Greece and Judea in the realm of ideals and ideas. Throughout history, two distinct types of enemies have challenged the Jews. One practiced genocide, seeking to destroy the Jewish body. He seeks not to destroy bodies but the sanctity and uniqueness of the Jewish people by attacking the foundations of ideology and tradition. Chanukah is the prototype of the second type of struggle, and it has a special message for American Jews. While American Jews are safe physically, secular culture has a powerful tendency to assimilate the Jew by watering down the Jewish content and commitment of our lives, by causing the neglect of study and observance and by gradually dissolving the Jews bonds with a unique history and destiny. How is this accomplished? By worshiping things, money, and pleasure instead of striving for direction, purpose, and commitment to eternal ideals which reach beyond the gratification of the physical senses. Because the essence of Chanukah is the battle of ideas more than the battle of armies, we must have a deeper appreciation of how the situation then parallels ours today. In the wake of the spectacular conquests of Alexander the Great, the Greeks at the time of the Maccabees established Greek cities and planted Greek culture, art, music, philosophy, and sport in every corner of the known world. Most nations found Greek culture attractive and willingly accepted it, superimposing it onto, and integrating it into their own cultures. Before long, Hellenism became a world culture, dictating standards, goals, and styles to all. They discerned a unique element in the Jews they had yet to encounter in any other people. To understand the conflict of Jew and Greek, of Torah and Hellenism, turn to the eighth chapter of Genesis where, after the Great Flood, Noah relates a prophecy to his three sons, Shem, Cham, and Yafet. Each son was destined to be the founding father of one of the principal branches of civilization. The Jew and the Greek were the standard bearers of the two spiritual elements which mark the decisive struggle for the mind of man; the two elements which in the history of civilization exerted the major influences in shaping the laws, institutions and ideals of mankind. The Greek deified physical perfection. He was concerned with symmetry and harmony, with art, music, sculpture, architecture, song and dance. Greek philosophy and science were concerned with the ideal of the physical structure and perfection of political society. They were concerned only with those things that are in and of this world, limited by time and space. Their idealism was limited to what man could see, touch, hear, and smell. They ignored what man is and can become when he reaches beyond himself and this world, out to G-d. In the pagan view, the gods were not the source of all that is "the gods were rooted in this world, bound by its nature and subject to its laws. The concept of a Divine will, sovereign and absolute, which governs all and is the cause of all being, was unknown in paganism. To the pagan mind, there are independent, autonomous forces in the world which limit the Divine. Fate, for example, controls the gods as well as man. The Greek concept of a deity was based on fantasy, mythology and magic. The Pantheon was a lively community of gods and goddesses who love and hate, fight and make peace; eat, drink and procreate. Behind the refined well-mannered Greek gentlemen, the Jew saw a world that had no

living faith, with state supported pagan temples whose gods no one really believed in. The gods of Mt. Olympus were not taken much more seriously than Santa Claus. With their passing, the philosophers turned to metaphysical abstractions, impractical dreams about utopian cities and perfect societies. The masses, left without a meaningful faith, turned to cynical skepticism, superstitious cults and fads. They went from one blind extreme to another, on one hand believing nothing, and on the other, accepting the most astonishing nonsense, no matter how absurd. This faith presents the Jew with a consistent system of laws and practices which constructively govern every phase of life. The most basic Jewish conviction is that G-d is supreme. There is no realm or power above or beside Him. He is absolutely sovereign. No laws, forces, or powers transcend Him. Despite its surface glitter, to the thinking, knowing Jew, the Greek world offered nothing but degenerate paganism. It was a grand floating night club filled with music, wine, dancing girls and wild all night orgies. But the engine was shot, the crew tired, the fuel tanks empty, the heatless ship filled with holes and cracks bound to sink at any moment. While the Greek possessed the polished finesse of the gentleman, he lacked basic values. While he had surface culture, when stripped of the veneer of his fancy front, he was, in essence a barbarian. To the Jew life was sacred; each human being had worth and dignity. Since each person possessed G-dliness, he was of infinite significance. The Jew opposed all forms of human exploitation. Unlike the pagans, Jewish courts were reluctant to impose capital punishment. While the Greeks worshipped form, beauty, and the power of the body, they had no reverence for life. The economic basis of Greek society was brutal inhuman slavery, and most of the population of the Greek cities were slaves. Human life was cheap. To the Jew, the physical function of sex was good and essential, the foundation of a healthy, stable, and closely knit family. Used correctly, it is the instinct on which family and society is established. Sex was neither an evil to be avoided nor an instrument for sensual bestiality, to be abused or flaunted. It is an essential function, guarded and sanctified by the laws of the Torah and the institutions of marriage and home. In contrast, the Greek world seesawed from the extremes of complete abstinence from the flesh, which was fed by deep guilt and uneasiness, to widespread sensual excesses, drunken parties, pornographic literature and perverted practices. While the Jewish man generally lived a normal family life, respected and loved his wife, and considered the family home the basic structure on which to develop a life of purpose, the Greek man needed his wife only to bear and nurture children. He often fled the home to develop social outlets in the company of courtesans. While most conquered nations succumbed to the allure of Greek music, art, architecture, drama, and philosophy, the Jew saw beyond the cultural veneer and detected the deep fundamental voids and basic lacks in every aspect of Greek life. Aristotle states that some humans are naturally slaves. Only the Jew developed a sense of identification with the oppressed and lived by laws which protected the poor, the orphan, the widow, and the stranger. Greek literature and theater glorified violence and sex. The worship of the physical brought about the sensual worship of the body. Enslaved to the body and its desires, the Greek was not his own master. Greek civilization was dead; it died because it had nowhere to go. Instead of becoming the master of the world through his concern with the physical, the physical world overpowered him and led to ultimate decay. The Jews who came into contact with the Greeks through business and government were exposed to the pleasant side of Greek life and were tempted to break loose from the restraining control of the commandments and taste of the excitements and pleasures of their masters. Many Jews copied Greek dress and language, attended their theaters, amusements and sports; and, because the Jew generally carries whatever he does to its logical conclusion, many paid lip service to Greek pagan gods as well. Not that they believed in them, even the Greeks had ceased to believe in them, but because Greek religion was civic in nature, almost every facet of Greek life involved some form of worship. Hellenized Jews hoped to fill their lives and the life of the Jewish land with Greek content. It is essential that we be aware that this voluntary betrayal of Judaism by many priests and upper class Jews preceded the decrees of King Antiochus; without them, Antiochus would never have interfered in the inner life of the Jewish people. At the crux of the Chanukah struggle was not the battle with the Greeks, but the ideological civil war with those who hoped to reform the spiritual foundations of Jewish peoplehood. Time has not erased the basic differences that delineate western civilization and the classic Jewish view of civilization. The battle rages on. But the flower does not last, its appeal is limited, it soon dies. Most of all, it is not life giving. Fruit provides nourishment, sustains life, and bears the

seeds of the future. Fruit does not deceive, its external charms are a true reflection of a tasty, nutritional, meaty inside. Contemporary culture comes to us in the form of the Greek flower, with its emphasis on externals, aesthetics, leisure, and recreation, form without inner content. America is a nation of spectators, not participants. We speak of people, but are callous to individuals. Many practice Judaism without religious commandments; a religion stripped of Shabbat, Kashrut, family laws, and sanctity. There are great budgets, prestigious organizations, magnificent press relations – Too often, these are little but window dressing. Who searches for the truth, who is immersed in the fruit? Who is concerned for the individual, his needs and character, his growth in Torah? Those who will survive as Jews are those concerned with individuals. Chanukah proclaims the faith and certainty that victory is ours, that there is nothing to fear but our own lack of integrity and truth, our own failure to pass on untarnished, the values of our Heritage to our children. The Maccabees were, after all, a conquered people facing the greatest military power on earth. They lacked a government, an army, training, and arms. Yet, they proclaimed the battle. It was won, not because of their faith in arms, but because of their faith in an invisible, but much present G-d.

Chapter 7 : The Laws of Chanukah Â« Chanukah Â« Ohr Somayach

Hanukkah (Chanukah) is an Eight Day Jewish Festival Also known as the "Festival of Lights". This year the eight day Jewish festival of lights Begins on Tuesday, December 12, and ends Wednesday, December 20,

But when he with the whole multitude came to Jerusalem and found the Temple deserted, its gates burned down, and plants growing in the Temple of their own accord because of the desolation, he and those with him began to lament in their distress at the sight of the Temple. So he chose some of his soldiers and gave them an order to fight the men that guarded the upper city until he has purified the Temple. When therefore he had carefully purged it he brought in new vessels -- the menorah, the table and the incense altar, which were made of gold, and hung up the veils at the doors and restored the doors themselves. He also took down the altar and built a new one of stones that he gathered together, and such as had not been hewn with iron tools. As it happened, these things took place on the very same day on which, three years before, the divine worship had been reduced to an impure and profane form of worship; for the Temple had remained desolate for three years after being made so by Antiochus. And the desolation of the Temple came about in accordance with the prophecy of Daniel, which had been made four hundred and eight years before; for he had revealed that the Macedonians would destroy it. And so Judah and his fellow citizens celebrated the festival of the restoration of the sacrifices of the Temple for eight days, and omitted no sort of pleasure, but everyone feasted upon very rich and splendid sacrifices; and they honoured God, and delighted themselves with psalms of praise and the playing of harps. As Marcus points out in the Loeb edition, Josephus omits the detail of 1 Macc 4: But it is a Messianic prophecy which Josephus ascribes as the cause that more than anything else incited his countrymen to war against the Romans. Thus, omitting the reference is probably deliberate censorship of this inflammatory idea at a time when Josephus is hoping to improve relations between Romans and Jews -- which was the only way the Temple could be rebuilt and a new dedication held. In Talmudic times there was related a story of the miracle of finding a small amount of ritually pure oil that beyond expectation burned for eight days. Neither the books of Maccabees nor Josephus, however, tell this story, although that cannot be taken to mean Josephus does not know it. The name of the festival. The holiday in 1 Maccabees is instituted to celebrate the "dedication of the altar" 1 Macc 4: It is by this name the festival appears in Rabbinic literature. But even today the name Hanukkah is usually "translated" into English as the "Festival of Lights", the name given ascribed to it by Josephus, who is the only ancient author to do so. Why does Josephus call Hanukkah the Festival of Lights? In modern times we assume the term refers to the custom of lighting the Hanukkah menorah, a nine-branched candelabrum to which one candle is added each night during the eight nights of the festival there is a ninth, central candle used to light the others. But Josephus says nothing about this custom, and in fact he seems to be unaware of it, for he invents his own explanation of the name: The Greek word for lights, *phota*, Josephus uses not only in the name of the festival but also a few sentences before: Could there be a reason he does not? Or why he does not call it by the term we know was in use at the time, the Festival of the Dedication as in the New Testament? If we again look to the obvious and, for Josephus, uncomfortable parallels between the Hanukkah story and the recent revolt against Rome, two speculations suggest themselves. One is that Josephus wants to make the point to his readers that Jews should have freedom to worship, that it is something that delights them and which they celebrate as "light" each year; as elsewhere in his works, he has one eye to gaining sympathy from the Romans so that the Temple can eventually be restored. The other, more concrete speculation is that Josephus did not want the celebration of Hanukkah and the lighting of its lamps interpreted as a rebellious act against Rome. The very menorah, supposedly, that Judah Maccabee had lit had been taken from the Temple by Titus and was spectacularly paraded through Rome at the time of the triumph celebrating the defeat of Judaea: These were the golden table, of the weight of many talents, and a lampstand also, that was made of gold, but constructed on a different pattern from those we use in daily life; for fixed upon a pedestal was a central shaft, from which there extended slender branches arranged trident-fashion, a wrought lamp being attached to the extremity of each branch. These lamps were in number seven, and represented the dignity of the number seven among the Jews. And the last of all the spoils

was carried the Law of the Jews. Note that Josephus distinguishes the shape of the Temple menorah from that ordinarily used by Jews. In addition, he repeats that this menorah has seven lamps. It is unstated here, but the Hanukkah menorah has nine lamps, so the Hanukkah menorah is not a representation of the Temple menorah. In this way, he separates the lighting of the Hanukkah lamps from any semblance of a covert rebellious act. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the Temple, in the portico of Solomon. Comment Note that John calls the festival "Dedication" [egkainia], and not "Lights" as does Josephus. In this sense John is closer to Rabbinic literature and to 1 Maccabees than is Josephus. Is Josephus more familiar with the usage of ordinary Jews, while John uses the "official" name? Or is it that Josephus deliberately avoids associating Hanukkah with restoring the Temple as surmised above in order not to cause friction with the Romans, whereas John deliberately reminds his audience of this. There is no obvious symbolic or historic reason why John places this scene at the time of Hanukkah.

Chapter 8 : Chanukah overview, Hanukkah: what is Hanukkah, when is Hanukkah, Menorah blessings, Ca

The problem was, it was sufficient to light the Menorah only for one day, and it would take eight days to produce new pure oil. Miraculously, the oil burned for eight days. Reply.

Chanukah begins on the evening of the 25th of Kislev and continues for eight days. For the entire eight days of Chanukah it is forbidden to fast or to eulogize. The types of activities that are forbidden are things like sewing and laundry etc. There is no obligation to have festive meals; however it is customary to celebrate by eating special meals anyway, because of the fact that the dedication of the Temple and Altar took place during Chanukah. It is customary to sing during the meals songs that thank and praise Hashem. To sing and speak about Torah makes the meal into a seudat mitzvah, a meal of religious significance. It is customary to eat milk foods because Yehudit, daughter of Yochanan the High Priest, was taken to be defiled by the Greek ruler Holofernes. She fed him cheese to make him thirsty and wine to quench his thirst ; and after getting him drunk she killed him. This was one of the events that sparked the Maccabean uprising. Food fried in oil is also eaten to commemorate the miracle of the Menorah. Latkes and donuts are the most common foods. The festivities of Chanukah should be combined with study of Torah. Although many people have a custom to play card games on Chanukah, the Mishna Berurah states that, "He who cares for his soul should not involve himself in card games. If a poor person needs money for Chanukah candles the community is obligated to provide for him. The minimum obligation is that every household should have one candle burning every night. It is customary to be scrupulous regarding this mitzvah: Any type of oil is acceptable for use in the menorah, however, it is best to use olive oil. The oil should not be made of a forbidden substance, nor should it be something from which it is forbidden to derive benefit. The menorah should be similar to the Menorah in the Temple and hence most authorities forbid using electric lights or gas lamps. The light should be clear, and the wicks should not flicker Wax candles are also acceptable, providing they have a single wick. All wicks are acceptable, but it is best to use cotton. The same wicks may be used over and over again. It is correct to have a Menorah of glass or metal if one is lighting with oil, since other substances such as clay become disgusting after one use. If one can afford it, it is correct to buy a beautiful Menorah. If one is using candles a Menorah is not necessary. If a number of people are lighting in one household they should make a slight separation between their menorahs so that there is no confusion to the observer as to the number of candles. Ideally, the Menorah should be placed outside the house to the left of the entrance. Since anti-Semitism was so common throughout Jewish history it became customary among many communities to place the Menorah inside the house, near the entrance or on the table. In many families it is the custom to place the menorah in a window facing the public, especially where many people share one entrance e. In Israel it is customary to light outside in a special box that prevents the flames from blowing out. In most Yeshivot and Seminaries, it is customary for students to place their menorahs in the dining room at windows facing the street or public thoroughfare. Lighting in the dormitories is usually a fire hazard and should therefore be avoided The menorah should be no lower than three tfachim from the floor approx. Ideally, it should be about 10 tfachim high 35 inches or 90 cm. The Menorah should have all the candle or wicks on the same level, none higher or lower than the others. The shamash should be placed in a way that shows that it is not one of the Chanukah candles. It is forbidden to derive benefit from the light of the Menorah just as it was forbidden to derive benefit from the Menorah in the Temple, and also in order to show that its purpose of the Menorah is for a Mitzvah, not just for illumination. It is preferable to have the candles in a straight line, and not in a semi-circle, however it is permitted to have them in a semi-circle providing each candle is clearly separated from the others. It is prohibited to light the shamash from the Chanukah candles. Left over wicks and oils should be destroyed after Chanukah except for unused oil left in bottle since they may not be used for anything else. One should not store the used wicks and oil for the next year, since there is a probability that it will be used for profane purposes by accident. There are different customs as to the lighting of the Menorah. Some light at sunset. Some specifically light after the evening service is recited Maariv. Ideally a person should follow the custom of his father. If this is not known or is inapplicable for any reason, one should follow the custom of the local community. In exceptional

circumstances one may light one and a quarter hours before sunset with a blessing. However one should be careful to put in more oil or to use longer candles. If possible it is better to appoint an agent to light candles at the correct time, than to light early. If one forgot or was not able to light at the correct time, one may light as long as people are still awake in the house in which one is lighting. One should prepare the wicks and candles etc. It is best to light in the presence of many people in order to publicise the miracle. On the first night three brachot, blessings are recited. On the other nights only the first two blessings are said. All the blessings should be recited before actually lighting the candles. First light the Shamash before the blessings to avoid delay. It is forbidden to speak between the recitation of the blessings and the completion of candle lighting. Place first candle on the extreme right of the Menorah. On the second night add a candle on the left. Light the newest candle first and proceed to the right. There are different customs regarding the placement of the candles, some follow the right and left of the observer from outside, some follow the right and left of the person lighting inside. Do not remove the Shamash from the wick until the flame catches on most of the wick. One does not add candles if they forgot to light on any night.. The Menorah should not be moved after it has been lit. If the Menorah was lit in accordance with the requirements of Jewish law and it was extinguished, one is not obligated to relight it, but one may relight it without reciting a blessing. On Friday afternoon, the Chanukah candles should be lit before the Shabbat candle-lighting time if one accepted Shabbat early, it is forbidden to light Chanukah candles. Mincha should be said before lighting, if possible. Try to light just before the Shabbat candles, without of course delaying the lighting of the Shabbat candles. When lighting on Saturday night, some authorities say that one should light Chanuka candles before Havdalah, others say after Havdalah. One should follow their family custom in this. One may not use the Menorah as the candle for Havdalah. Alternatively the guest may light his own Menorah. If one is eating out then one should light the Menorah at their place of residence. During morning prayers, Shacharit, one should recite the full Hallel every day. If one forgot to say this addition, one should not repeat either Shmoneh Esreh or Grace. It is customary to light a Menorah in the Synagogue every evening. It is placed at the southern wall of the Synagogue, in imitation of the Menorah in the Temple in Jerusalem. Articles may be distributed to another person intact without prior permission. We also encourage you to include this material in other publications, such as synagogue or school newsletters. However, we ask that you contact us beforehand for permission in advance at ohr ohr.

Chapter 9 : Shedding Light on Chanukah: A Practical Guide - Jewish Holidays

Time to light the menorah! As one of the best NYC events in December, Hanukkah reminds us to nosh on classic Jewish food, hit up a holiday market to find some great gifts and bond with loved ones.