

THE OXFORD SYNAGOGUE-CENTRE

20 North Avenue, Riviera

✉ P.O. Box 87406, Houghton, 2041

☎ 011-646-6020 📠 011-486-2214

🌐 www.oxfordshul.com 📧 info@oxfordshul.com

📘 facebook.com/oxfordshul

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

December 2016/January 2017

Kislev/Tevet 5777

SHABBAT TIMES

🔊 Parasha - 🕯 Candle Lighting

🕯 Shabbat ends (Maariv & Havdalah)
For service times see page 2

16 & 17 December – 17 Kislev

🔊 Vayishlach

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:32

23 & 24 December – 24 Kislev

🔊 Vayeishev

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:35

31 & 31 December – 2 Tevet

🔊 Miketz

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:38

6 & 7 January – 9 Tevet

🔊 Vayigash

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:39

13 & 14 January – 16 Tevet

🔊 Vayechi

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:39

20 & 21 January – 23 Tevet

🔊 Shemot

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:38

27 & 28 January – 1 Shevat

🔊 Va'era (Rosh Chodesh)

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:35

3 & 4 February – 8 Shevat

🔊 Bo

🕯 6:15 – 🕯 7:31

RABBI'S MESSAGE

A joke keeps on doing the rounds on the Internet. You've probably all found it in your inbox several times.

Summary of all Jewish Holidays: "They tried to kill us. We won. Let's eat."

This may be true of most Jewish festivals. Chanukah, however, which we are currently celebrating, is the exception to this summary.

Chanukah is indeed different from all the other festivals. Even its timing in the month is

exceptional. All our redemption holidays fall out in the middle of the month. Pesach is on the 15th of Nissan, Sukkot on the 15th of Tishrei, Purim on the 14th of Adar. Since the Jewish calendar follows the lunar cycle, all of these are therefore full moon festivals.

Now Chanukah is the moonless festival. It begins on the 25th of the month of Kislev and ends a couple of days into Tevet, days when the moon is just a sliver of a crescent, if even visible at all. So what makes this festival different from all other festivals? The fact that they did not try to kill us.

Pesach and Sukkot celebrate freedom from Pharaoh's attempts to destroy the Jewish nation in Egypt; Purim we rejoice that Haman's decree of extermination was foiled. So they are celebrated at full moon, because the symbol of the Jewish nation is the moon, to show how we overcame this physical threat.

Antiochus, the villain in the story of Chanukah, did not seek the elimination of the Jewish people. His aim was to stop the practice of Judaism. He enacted decrees against observing Shabbat and festivals and barring circumcision.

He was not trying to destroy the Jewish bodies. He was seeking to obliterate the Jewish soul. He wished no harm on us, as long as he could sever our connection to Torah. Our link with Hashem, who is known as the "Sun and the Shield."

This is why our celebrations take place around the waning

and waxing moon, because we are marking our spiritual survival.

On all other festivals, therefore, we say "Let's eat." The meals in the Sukkah, the Pesach Seder and the famous Purim feast, all these are tangible physical ways to mark the victory of the bodies. Latkes aside, on Chanukah the main commemorations centre on a spiritual celebration: the lighting of flames. For, as we read in Proverbs, "the Soul of a Man is the candle of G-d." The little lights of the Menorah flicker to remember the survival of the Jewish Neshoma and its eternal connection with the Al-mighty.

It is not either quite accurate to say that "We won." For even after the victory of Chanukah, the Jewish soul still remains in Exile. Various forms of Antiochus have challenged the survival of our yiddishkeit since the first Chanukah, some two thousand years ago. In a sense we won the battle, but have not yet won the war.

We are nearly there. We stand on the threshold of the era of Moshiach, when the connection between G-d and the Jewish soul will never be threatened again. So the Chanukiyah that we light has space for eight candles. Eight is the number of strings on Moshiach's harp. For as we gaze at the little flames that remind us of the battles we have won, we look wistfully and longingly towards the day when the war will finally be won for good.

Wishing you all a Happy Chanukah and a relaxing holiday.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin

FROM THE REBBETZIN

Has anyone else noticed that the mosquitos this year are particularly chutzpadik! There are also a lot more than usual (I think) and I spend a good part of every evening and night chasing, catching and squashing mosquitos (the mosquito brings out a mean, murderous streak in me). I don't think there are many things more annoying than the "whine" of the mosquito, teasing you as it flutters by your ear, nose, hand, neck, eye... ("revenge for my squashed brothers").

Mosquitos are a reality of life in summer. Like lots of other things in life – there are realities that are annoying.

There are things that bring out the worst in us (and worst of all, in life, when we can get rid of one bothersome thing, there are 1000 more...)

So how to deal with mosquitos (or life's annoyances...)? Here are some ideas:

A strong fan or air conditioner. When the air circulating is stronger than the mosquito, it can't easily fly and bother you. So too in life we need to 'blow' stronger than the thing that is annoying us.

Citronella or some other repellent sometimes works but may bother us too. In life, 'revenge' sometimes works, but doesn't necessarily make us feel good.

One of the best solutions I have found, is when I am able to get into bed, tired from a good day and say to the mosquito, "I am going to sleep now. Bite me if you must" and I turn over and go to sleep.

When we can ignore those who bother us, satisfied with our 'days work', we can sleep even if there are mosquitos in the room!

Have a good month

Rivky

DVAR TORAH

How to Change Your Life: A Talmudic Chanukah Debate

by Menachem Feldman (chabad.org)

I want to change. Should I stop engaging in destructive behaviors abruptly, or should I focus my effort on gradually introducing positive behaviors into my life?

My eating habits are terrible. Should I cut out sugary and fatty foods all at once (what's the point of eating a vegetable with one hand, while holding a bottle of Coke in the other?), or should I slowly introduce broccoli and lettuce into my diet?

I want to write a book. Should I stop everything that I'm doing and devote every minute of the next year to the task, or should I focus on writing for 10 minutes each day?

I would like to climb out of my spiritual darkness. I can put all my effort into stopping the negative behaviors. But perhaps I should recognize that for the time being I will not be able to stop entirely, and that I should direct my energy toward introducing productive activities into my routine.

Obviously, no two situations are the same, and in most cases we need to use both tactics in tandem. But there is certainly room for discussion on where to focus our efforts.

This question is at the root of a Talmudic dispute about the number of lights kindled on each night of Chanukah.

The House of Shammai says: On the first day we light eight, and after that we gradually reduce. But the House of Hillel says: On the first day one is lit, and thereafter they are progressively increased.

Ulla said: In the West [Israel], two sages, Rabbi Yosi bar Avin and Rabbi Yosi bar Zevida, argue. One maintains: The rationale of the House of Shammai is to represent the

days still to come, and that of the House of Hillel is to represent the days that are gone. But the other maintains: The House of Shammai's reason is that it should correspond to the bulls [offered on the altar during] Sukkot, while the House of Hillel's reason is that we ascend in [matters of] sanctity but do not descend.

According to Shammai, we start out by lighting eight candles on the first night, and then we decrease by one candle each night. Hillel maintains that we start out by lighting one candle, and then we increase until we have a full menorah on the eighth night. (The halachah follows Hillel.) Why the difference of opinion? Let's examine the second explanation:

Shammai says to decrease, corresponding to the bulls offered in the Temple on Sukkot. Hillel says to increase because, as a rule, we are meant to increase in holiness and not decrease. This requires additional explanation. According to Hillel, why does the Torah command us to decrease the number of bulls offered each day of Sukkot? Does that not contradict his principle that we must increase in holiness? As for Shammai, does he not subscribe to the principle of increasing holiness?

Shammai and Hillel differ on the question of where to begin.

Shammai says that the first thing you must do is fight your evil—completely. When you want to fight evil, you can't take baby steps. You have to come out swinging. You must tell yourself things like "I will never [fill in any destructive behavior] again." If alcohol is your challenge, and you say, "I'll only have three drinks instead of four," you will never win. Taking small steps in the right direction, argues Shammai, is like building a sand castle on a beach: it will be washed away by the first wave of the raging sea.

Therefore, says Shammai, on the first night of Chanukah you must kindle all your lights, as you need every ounce of energy to fight the darkness outside. Here's the good news: Tomorrow it will be a bit easier. You weakened the evil on the first night, so there is less of it on the second; hence, all you need on the second night is seven lights. Eventually, you will rid yourself of the darkness, and you won't need any light with which to fight it.

Hillel says: Forget the evil.

Perhaps in Temple times we had the spiritual strength to battle the darkness head-on, and that is why the Sukkot offerings decreased every day. In exile, bereft of the spiritual power of the Holy Temple, we need a new strategy altogether.

We need to focus on positive action.

Don't worry about the darkness; just take one small step in the right direction. Just light one small candle. No big deal. Anyone can do it. The key, however, is that tomorrow you add one more light. Small but consistent growth. Before you know it, your menorah will be full.

And so too in our own lives, with our own personal struggles—making small, manageable changes can add up to a great deal of goodness and light..

SERVICE TIMES

SHACHARIT (A.M.)

Sunday and Public Holidays	8:00
Monday to Friday 30/12 (Rosh Chodesh): 7:00	7:15
Shabbat & Festivals	9:00

MINCHA AND MAARIV (P.M.)

Sunday to Thursday	6:15
Friday from 13/01	6:00 5:45
Shabbat	6:30

CHANUKAH QUIZ

(aish.com)

1. What does the word "Chanukah" mean?

- A. candles
- B. triumph
- C. dedication
- D. potato pancake

2. The best place to light the Menorah is:

- A. outside your front door
- B. in your front window
- C. on your living room table
- D. on your rooftop

3. Who is the Greek-Syrian leader that took harsh steps to destroy Judaism?

- A. Alexander the Great
- B. Antiochus Epiphanes
- C. Julius Caesar
- D. Judah Maccabee

4. On Friday afternoon, the menorah should stay lit for at least:

- A. 18 minutes
- B. 30 minutes
- C. 48 minutes
- D. 72 minutes

5. What is the name of the courageous Jewish woman who defied the Greeks and killed one of their generals?

- A. Yehudit
- B. Devorah
- C. Miriam
- D. Esther

6. According to Jewish law, how many gifts must be given during the holiday of Chanukah?

- A. 0 presents
- B. 1 presents
- C. 8 presents
- D. give until it hurts

7. The preferred arrangement of a menorah is where the candles:

- A. are all at the same height
- B. all are in a straight line
- C. are at least 2 cm apart
- D. all of the above

8. Jews who assimilated into Greek culture were called:

- A. Greeks
- B. Maccabees
- C. Hasmonians
- D. Hellenists

9. How many branches did the Menorah in the Holy Temple have?

- A. 6
- B. 7
- C. 8
- D. 9

10. What do the four Hebrew letters on the dreidel (nun, gimel, hey, shin) stand for?

- A. Eternal values will always triumph
- B. A great miracle happened there
- C. G-d saved us from our enemies
- D. Try your luck and win the pot

11. Who is allowed to say a blessing on the lights of Chanukah?

- A. one who does the lighting himself
- B. one who does not light, but has someone else light on his behalf
- C. one who merely sees the Chanukah lights
- D. all of the above

ANSWERS: 1C; 2A; 3B; 4C; 5A; 6A; 7D; 8D; 9B; 10B; 11A

MAZALTOV

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to:

BIRTHS

- Edeline Kantor on the birth of a great grandson.

ENGAGEMENTS

- Mazaltov to David Klatzkin on his engagement to Ronel Zef.
- Mazaltov to Gary and Melanie Epstein on the engagement of their daughter Sheree to Anthony Sarak.

BIRTHDAYS

- Solly Burgin on his 90th birthday on 10 December.
- Susan Slotar on her 65th birthday on 22 December.

- Looky Braude on his 85th birthday on 4 January.
- Lance Cohen on his 45th birthday on 10 January.
- Barry Jammy on his 85th birthday on 16 January.
- Bessie Shneier on her 95th birthday on 21 January.
- Michael Salomon on his 75th birthday on 26 January.

ANNIVERSARIES

- David & Rayanne Jacobson on their 20th anniversary on 15 December.
- Gary & Debbie Katzman on their 10th anniversary on 9 January.
- Arnold & Marion Rapp on their 55th anniversary on 21 January.
- Sam & Hazel Benard on their 55th anniversary on 28 January.

REFUAH SHLEIMA

We wish a Speedy Recovery to

- Barry Speigel
- Marion Rapp
- Allan Sher

**BEREAVEMENTS**

Our condolences to the following who have suffered bereavements recently:



- Audrey Kobrin on the death of her husband, Frank
- Leah Lange on the death of her husband, Myron.
- Roy & David Abramowitz, Diana Smullen and Karen Aginsky on the death of their father, Sidney. Abramowitz

Happy Chanukah
חנוכה שמחה