



THE CHEVRA

Young Israel of Fair Lawn
The Morris J. Kraut z'l Torah Center

Joe Smith - President

This Shabbat:

Parashat Miketz

2 Tevet, 5767

נר שמיני של חנוכה

8 th Day of Chanukah

December 22, 23 - 2006

The Haftorah - Kings I; 7:40-50;

Friday

Candle Lighting 4:14 PM
Mincha 4:15 PM

Shabbat

Chevra Mishnayos Shiur 8:00 AM
Shacharit 9:00 AM
Sof Zman Keriat Shema: 9:33 AM (Gra" h)

Mincha 4:15 PM
Maariv and Havdala 5:19 PM

Sunday Shacharit 8:00 AM

Next Shabbat:

Parashat Vayigash

9 Tevet, 5767

December 29, 30 - 2006

The Haftorah is read from Ezekiel

37:15-28.

Friday

Candle Lighting 4:18 PM
Mincha 4:20 PM

Shabbat

Chevra Mishnayos Shiur 8:00 AM
Shacharit 9:00 AM
Sof Zman Keriat Shema: 9:33 AM (Gra" h)

Mincha 4:20 PM
Maariv and Havdala 5:23 PM

Sunday Shacharit 8:00 AM

From Ezras Torah:

Friday afternoon we light the Chanukah Menorah at home before lighting the Shabbos candles, at the proper time, at least 20 minutes before sunset. (One should recite Mincha before lighting the Chanukah lights. However, one must be careful not to delay the welcoming of Shabbos because of this.) One may not light neither Chanukah nor Shabbos lights, earlier than Plag HaMincha — one and one-quarter proportionate hours before sunset. One must be careful to use enough oil (or light a large enough candle) that will remain lit until thirty minutes after the appearance of three stars.

SHABBOS MORNING,

שחרית / SHACHRIS :

ועל הנסים in Shemonah Esrei for Shabbos; Chazzan's Repetition; complete Hallel; Kaddish Tiskabel. We take out two Sifrei Torah; in the first we have seven Aliyahs in the weekly Sidrah (Mikeitz); the Maftir reads in the second Sefer Torah from Parshas Naso (7:54-8:4) from " ביום השמיני " until " כן עשה את "החנוכה". The Haftorah is read in Kings I; 7:40-50; (no אב or א-ל מלא אש, יהללו הרחמים) אשרי, יהללו.

Torah Insights – Harav Shlomo Riskin

Shabbat Shalom: Parshat Miketz
Genesis 41:1- 44:17
By Shlomo Riskin

Efrat, Israel – The festival of Hanukkah celebrates the victory of a small band of Hasmonean believers in G-d and in the Jewish traditions against the massive forces of the Hellenistic ruling class of Judea together with the military might of Greek – Syria whose misguided goal was to transform Jerusalem into a Greek city-state. As we recite in our "al ha-nissim" ("for the miracles...") prayer in each Amidah and Grace after Meals throughout the eight days of the holiday, it was a victory of the powerful in the hands of the weak, the many in the hands of the few, the impure in the hands of the pure, the wicked in the hands of the righteous, the guilty sinners in the hands of those who were occupied in your Torah..." As such, Hanukkah fits perfectly into the rubric of all Jewish holidays: the bad guys wanted to destroy us, G-d enabled us to beat them, so let's eat (latkes), and give praise to our Divine Protector.

The question is: why wasn't that great military victory sufficient? Why did G-d have to create yet another miracle – which effectively teaches the same lesson about the small amount which stretches and

expands to become a much more significant amount – of the small cruse of pure oil sufficient for one day which managed to bring light to the menorah for eight days (a period of time necessary for the Judeans to procure more oil which would enable the menorah to remain enkindled, as explained by Maimonides in his Laws of Hanukkah)? Furthermore, they did find enough oil for one day; hence, if the miracle was only for the requisite seven additional days, why do we celebrate the festival for eight (and not merely) seven days?

The sainted Rav Elijah of Vilna, Eighteenth Century, known as the Vilna Gaon, suggests that if one counts twenty-five words from the very first word of the Bible, Bereishit (In the beginning), the twenty fifth word is ohr, light, as in the verse, “and the almighty declared ‘Let there be light’ (gen 1: 3).” When we remember that the military victory – and onset of the festival of Hanukkah – takes place on the twenty-fifth of the Hebrew month of Kislev, and that Hanukkah is known by the Book of the Maccabees and the Second Commonwealth historian, Josephus as the Festival of Lights (Hag Ha Urim) after the miracle cruse of oil, the “coincidence” noted by the Vilna Gaon is nothing less than startling. And in order to understand in depth the message of the “coincidence,” we must bring to mind a most profound insight of my teacher and mentor, Rav J. B. Soloveitchik.

Why does our Bible open with the story of the creation of the cosmos and not with the first of the commandments?, queries our classical commentary Rashi. Answers Rav Soloveitchik, the story of the creation of the world includes the very first commandment as well. After all, the central injunction of our Bible is

the command that we “walk in (G-d’s) ways,” act in accordance with the basic “traits” attributed to the Divine: “just as He is compassionate, so must we be compassionate, just as He is filled with loving kindness, so must we be filled with loving kindness.”

Similarly, if G-d created the world, we too must emulate that creativity, we too must become creators. And if the Almighty stood at the abyss of the darkness of the deep and created light – and indeed that was His first act of creation – so must we enter places of darkness and bring light. This is precisely the meaning of “perfecting the world”, tikkun olam, the G-d-given task to Israel to be “a light unto the nations.” (see the Alenu prayer, prescribed to be recited after every statutory prayer). And it takes only a little bit of light to push aside a great deal of darkness.

Rav Prager, sainted editor of the Beit Yaakov magazine and acclaimed witness of the holocaust, writes of a young boy in Auschwitz whose bar-mitzvah was the first day of Hanukkah. He painstakingly collected scraps of oil to craft a make-shift “candle,” and invited a small group to celebrate with him after midnight in his “bunk”. In the blackness of the night, in the hell-hole Auschwitz, a small band of wasted, frightened Jews huddled together to watch the bar-mitvah light the “candle”, intone the blessings and join with him in the traditional Hanukkah songs. Just as they were beginning to feel themselves transported to an almost forgotten time of love and light, a Nazi guard entered, shot into the air, and barked at the youth at the center of the nocturnal activity to put out the candle. The bar-mitzvah looked unwaveringly into the eyes of the nazi. “We Jews do not extinguish light,” he said. “We make light...”

Inexplicably, the Nazi guard turned and strode out without a word.

The Jewish mission in the world is to add to G-d’s light and push away the world’s darkness – which unfortunately remained from the beginning and threatens to overwhelm creation. That is what it means for us to function as G-d’s partners. And that was the higher meaning of the miracle of the menorah light; we added our “human” light and our act of “enlightenment,” to G-d’s initial light at the time of creation. And that is likewise the miracle of the first day: our realization that we must add our own light to the already existent divine light in order to perfect an imperfect (incomplete) world. That too is the link between Hanukkah and the Joseph stories. G-d provides Joseph with miraculous opportunity: Joseph adds to G-d’s provision with his own wisdom and insight as to how to maximize his G-d given opportunity. Yes, G-d has given Joseph the prophetic insight to enable him to interpret Pharaoh’s dreams; but Joseph built upon that to set up the case for his appointment as Guardian of the Grain and Grand Vizier (Gen. 41:33-36). And we learn from Joseph that the Jewish light can even illumine the corridors of Egypt (and hopefully Iran), and from Hanukkah that even a small amount of Torah light can push aside a great deal of Islamic-fundamentalist terror darkness.

Shabbat Shalom and Hanukkah Sameah

Shlomo Riskin

Chancellor Ohr Torah Stone
Chief Rabbi - Efrat Israel