

Congregation and Talmud Torah Ahavath Achim

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Affiliated with the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America



December 2012

CHANUKAH NEWSLETTER

December 8 First Night



THE NATURE OF THE CHANUKAH CELEBRATION

Our codifiers make an interesting distinction between our two major rabbinic holidays. Purim is described as a day of “*mishte vsimcha* (banquets and happiness) while Chanukah is a time of “*l’hallel u’lihodot*” (to praise and give thanks). Obviously, these descriptions are not arbitrary. They reflect the behavior that is to be exhibited. So that we see that Chanukah doesn’t require a ritual or mitzvah meal. Why not?

The *Levush* responds that we must look at the source of the celebration. On Purim we were facing physical annihilation, so it is appropriate to celebrate this holiday in a physical way i.e. by eating. On Chanukah we were facing a spiritual threat. The Greek culture sought to obliterate our Judaism. So our victory over Hellenism is reflected by songs of praise indicating a spiritual victory.

In our modern era we face both types of threats to varying degrees and at different times. This is the nature of our existence in the diaspora. The Holocaust was mostly physical but it had some spiritual elements as well. The establishment of the State of Israel also had both motifs. Certainly our interaction with western culture usually is spiritual although there are instances where the physical comes into play.

Let us fortify ourselves for battle both spiritually and physically so that we can emerge victorious and enter the Messianic age.

A freilicher Chanukah,
Rabbi Ari Kagan

CANDLES

1. The menorah should be lit as soon as the first stars come out or as soon as possible thereafter.
2. The menorah is placed in a window facing the street, within thirty feet of the street (three floors above ground level) or in a prominent place in the home.
3. The lights must be capable of burning at least one half hour on weekday nights. On Friday night, eruv shabbos, the Chanukah menorah must contain enough or be large enough to burn eighty minutes or more.
4. On Saturday night, at home, havdalah is recited first; then the Chanukah lights are lit. (In the synagogue the order is reversed).

5. The order of placement has the first light at the right end of the menorah, as you face it; the additional lights are added subsequently from left to right. The order of ignition is from left to right. The newest addition is lit first.
6. The three blessings for the first night and two on each subsequent are found in the siddur, together with Hanerot Hallalu. The blessings are said after the lighting. Any appropriate songs then follow.
7. It is a custom to avoid work during the first half hour of burning of the menorah (for women).
8. The shamus, the additional light is lit to prevent accidentally using the sanctified lights for secular activity, should be clearly distinguishable from the lights representing the days of Chanukah. A light that goes out before the requisite time period need not be relit as long as the fuel present was sufficient, never on a shabbos.

The Hebrew Free Burial Association

Anyone who has had to take care of a funeral and burial expenses knows how steep an expense that can be these days. There are many elderly Jews that living alone without close relatives. There are many poor Jews, including some from the former Soviet Union. When such people pass from this world their burial is a responsibility that falls on each and everyone of us. Fortunately, the Hebrew Free Burial Society (HFBA) is there to take the burden of the mitzvah from our shoulders. The HFBA serves the entire New York area, carrying out its responsibilities with dignity, according to all halachic requirements. If you have not yet sent your contribution to the HFBA, please do so or give your check to the Rabbi.

SISTERHOOD NEWS

Channah and her seven sons were brave people who gave up their lives, in the Chanukah story, with much suffering. They did it willingly for the sake of Torah and Hashem's honor.

May Hashem have mercy on us and protect us, that we should not have to be tested in such a fashion- not even with a "Sandy".

Let us light the Chanukah menorah and celebrate with joy and happiness.

CONDOLENCES

We were sorry to hear of the passing of Mrs. Dora Pickel, an honored member of the sisterhood. May her daughter, Mrs. Berkowitz and family, know of no more sorrow.

We were also sorry to hear of the passing of Mr. Ruby Hecht, the Shul's longest long time member. May Mrs. Hecht, long-time Sisterhood officer, and family, be comforted along with fellow mourners of Jerusalem.

MAZEL TOV

We wish a double mazel tov to Mrs. Yolanda Bleich
On the birth of a great granddaughter.
And on the wedding of a granddaughter.

WITHIN THE SYNAGOGUE FAMILY

MAZAL TOV

To Mrs. Marlene Anteby on the marriage of her daughter,
Gladys Sophia Silvera to Geoffrey Lawrence Weg.

To Mrs. Yolanda Bleich on the birth of a granddaughter, Ellie Rose Feldman;
also on the marriage of granddaughter Jennifer Shapiro to Henry Barash.

To Mr. & Mrs. Farkas on the birth of grandson Daniel Farkas;
also on the bar mitzvah of grandson , Matthew Rengervitz.

To Mr. & Mrs. Poretsky on the birth of grandson, David Ryan Poretsky.

CONDOLENCES

To Mrs. Berkowitz and family on the loss of her mother, Mrs. Dora Pickel.

To Mrs. Hecht and family on the passing of her husband,
vice president of the synagogue, Mr. Reuben Hecht

Wishing all our friends and families a bright Chanukah and a healthy winter..

