

CONGREGATION

שמחת הלב

SIMCHAT

HaLEV

WELCOMING, SPIRITUAL,
INFUSED WITH TRADITION

דברי השבוע

D'verei HaShavua

Words of the Week

December 15, 2008

Hebrew School Update

Open: Monday 12/22
Tuesday 12/23

Closed: Wed 12/24-Sun 1/4

Re-open: Monday 1/5/09

CHANUKAH SERVICE

Sunday, December 21st

7:00 pm Sharp

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

Jersey and Toy Drive

We will be collecting new, unwrapped toys, and jerseys during the month of December.

As the holiday season approaches, and you begin your holiday shopping pick up something extra to put a smile on the face of a child who is less fortunate.

First Annual Simchat HaLev Cookbook

Please submit your family recipes either by email to Jenn@SimchatHaLev.org or complete the recipe collection sheet. To order copies of the cookbook complete the cookbook order form today and send it in with your child.

The Story of Chanukah

Long, long ago, the Jewish people prayed in the Temple in Jerusalem. Jews came from all over the land of Israel to worship there. They celebrated Shabbat and festivals with friends and family, and they offered sacrifices to G-D there. During that time, over 2,000 years ago, the land of Israel was ruled by the Syrians. The Syrians followed the Greek way. Many Jews also followed the Greek ways, but there was one thing they would not do. They would not worship Greek gods. They remained faithful to G-D.

The Syrian ruler, Antiochus commanded that the Jews cease the study of Torah, the celebration of Jewish holy days and festivals, and they were not permitted to observe Shabbat. He further demanded that all the Jews of Israel must worship Greek gods. Anyone who doesn't obey this order would be put to death.

Antiochus and his soldiers put Greek idols in the Temple, tore down the stone altar, put out the Ner Tamid (Eternal Light), and took the Temple away from the Jews.

In a small town, not far from Jerusalem lived Jewish priest names Mattathias. He had faith in G-D. Mattathias was very brave and not afraid of the Syrians. Mattathias declared, "I will not bow down to Greek idols, all who are for G-D follow me!" Mattathias and his five sons hid in the mountains. Other Jews joined them and soon they had a small army. Judah, one of Mattathias' sons became the leader of this small army which became known as the Maccabees.

Antiochus and his Syrian army laughed at the Maccabees' tiny army. But the Maccabees were smart. They knew the land well and knew the best places to hide and the best places to fight. Their faith in G-D made them brave.

The Maccabees fought the huge Syrian army for three long years. Finally the Maccabees drove Antiochus' soldiers out of Jerusalem. At last the Jews took back the Temple.

Imagine how happy the Jews were to take the Temple back! They destroyed the Greek idols, cleaned the Temple, rebuilt the altar and re-lit the Eternal Light. The Eternal Light was an oil lamp that burned day and night. Judah found only one jar of oil which would last for just one day. Judah lit the Eternal Light and the oil burned brightly for eight days.

Jews from all over Israel came to the Temple. They brought offerings and sang songs of thanks to G-D. This celebration was called Chanukah, which means "Dedication." The Jewish people rejoiced that they could worship G-D once again in the Temple.

Today we remember this miracle by lighting the Chanukah menorah called the Chanukkiah. There are nine candles, eight for the eight nights the oil lasted and one special candle to light all of the others. This special candle is called the Shamash. Shamash means helper. As you face the Chanukkiah place the first candle on the right. The shamash always lights the newest candle first.

Chanukah Blessings

Blessing the candles

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק
נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה.

Baruch ata Adonai, Elohenu melech ha-olam asher kideshanu bih-mitzvotav, ve-tzivanu lih-hadlik ner shel Chanukah.

Blessed are you, Adonai our G-d, Source of All, who makes us holy with mitzvot, and commands us to kindle the Chanukah lights.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם
בְּזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

Baruch ata Adonai, Elohenu melech ha-olam she-asa nisim la-avotenu bayamim ha-hem ba-zeman ha-zeh.

Blessed are you, Adonai our G-d, Source of All, Who did wondrous things for our people long ago at this time of year.

Additional Blessing for the 1st Night only

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ, וְקִיָּמָנוּ, וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

Baruch ata Adonai, Elohenu melech ha-olam she-hecheyanu, vih-kiyemanu, vih-higiyanu la-zeman ha-zeh.

Blessed are you, Adonai our G-d, Source of All, Who has given us life, sustained us, and brought us to this joyous season.



Dreidel is a spinning top game that has been played for generations on Chanukah.

The dreidel has four sides: נ (Nun), ג (Gimel), ה (Hey), ש (Shin), and is usually played with coins, chips, or gelt (chocolate coins). Collectively, these letters are interpreted as, **Nes Gadol haya sham**. "A great miracle happened there".

In Israel, one letter on the dreidel are different. The shin has been replaced with a pei, transforming the Hebrew phrase into Nun, Gimel, Hey, Po. **Nes gadol haya po**. "A great miracle happened here."

How do we play?

Before beginning, each player starts with 10 or 15 coins, and then each player puts one in the pot. Before spinning the dreidel each player deposits a fixed proportion of the amount received into a "kupah" or kitty. One of the players spins the dreidel. The dreidel stops and lands with one of the symbols facing up and the appropriate action is taken:

- Nun - *nischt* - "nothing" - the next player spins
- Gimel - *gantz* - "all" - the player takes the entire pot
- Hey - *halb* - "half" - the player takes half of the pot, rounding up if there is an odd number
- Shin - *shtetl* - "put in" - the player puts one or two in the pot

Chanukah Gelt

Everyone likes presents. On Chanukah we give gifts to our family and friends. It is not only important to receive gifts but to give gifts as well. Maybe you can celebrate the holiday by giving some gelt to the poor. This way you can give it to those who need it most. Chanukah is a time for celebration. We celebrate the victory of the Maccabees for eight days. For eight days we celebrate the time when our ancestors took back the Temple. For eight days we celebrate the first time in history that a people fought to keep their religion. For eight days we remember how to make the lights of Jewish living shine brightly in our homes and in our lives.

Thank an Israeli Soldier Today !

Israeli soldiers need to feel the support of Israelis and Jews throughout the world. A care package and thank you note go a long way to give soldiers pride and strengthen motivation.

Visit <http://www.thankisraelisoldiers.org>

Don't forget to check out the updated pictures and video on our website!

www.SimchatHaLev.org

HARRISON'S CORNER

By: Harrison Termotto, Teaching Assistant

For most families in our congregation, Chanukah is a time to gather as a family and exchange gifts. In this time of joyous celebration, families often forget the meaning of Chanukah and the traditions that accompany it. This means that many forget to light the menorah and say the Chanukah blessings. Chanukah may not be a major Jewish holiday but it is still important to light the menorah and observe the holiday. Chanukah is to celebrate the miracles that occurred long ago. It is not only to celebrate the miracle that a one day supply of oil to keep the light above the torah lit lasted eight days, but also to celebrate the miracle that the Maccabees overcame impossible odds and defeated the Greek army. Although the traditions of Chanukah have been overshadowed by the American customs of exchanging gifts it is important to remember what the holiday is really about.

Rabbi's Words

**The world is full of
wonders and miracles...**

Go to www.SimchatHaLev.org

**Click on Rabbi's Words
To find out what Rabbi Jay thinks!**

Modern Hebrew Words

White	Lah-van	לָבָן
Black	Shah-chor	שָׁחוֹר
Pink	Vah-rode	וָרֹד
Purple	Sah-gole	סָגֹל
Gray	Ah-fore	אֶפֶר

We Pray for Healing ... Refuah Shlema

Please pray for:
Harold Schutzman
Duane Renner

In the event of illness, Rabbi Jay will pray on behalf of the one who is ill. Hospital and home visits can be arranged. If you would like to add a name to our Mi Shebeirach list or would like Rabbi Jay to pray or visit, please call the synagogue or email Jenn@SimchatHaLev.org. In an emergency call Rabbi Jay immediately. He is available 24 hours a day (including Shabbat) on his cell 516.297.7744.

Parashat HaShavua – Torah Story of the Week

VaYeshev

The parshah VaYeshev begins the concluding drama of the book of Genesis, the story of Joseph and his 11 brothers, their estrangement and reunion. Jacob is now settled in Canaan with all his family around him. Jacob presents Joseph, his favorite son with a special gift, a coat of many colors. Joseph's brothers are jealous and not happy with his high and mighty attitude so they plot to kill him. But Reuben, Joseph's older brother steps in and convinces the others to sell Joseph into slavery instead. They grab Joseph, throw him into a pit, and then sell him to a passing caravan en route to Egypt. The brothers tell their father that his beloved Joseph was attacked by a wild animal and they present him with the bloody coat as proof.

The Joseph narrative is then interrupted by the story of Jacob's son Judah, who is experiencing some problems of his own. His son has died, leaving his wife Tamar a childless widow. Following the tradition, Judah instructs his next son to father a child for Tamar, but the next son perishes childless as well. Having already lost two sons, Judah refuses to give his youngest son to Tamar to provide her with a child. Tamar then decides to take matters into her own hands. She dresses like a prostitute, seduces Judah to sleep with her, and she becomes pregnant. Judah is outraged when he finds out what she has done. In the end, Tamar explains, she is forgiven, and gives birth to twins.

Joseph ends up in Egypt, serving in the home of Potiphar, the King's chief steward, and he quickly makes his way up the ranks of the servants to head up Potiphar's household. Potiphar's wife notices Joseph, and tries to seduce him. When he refuses her advances, she has him thrown into prison, where he puts his skills as a dream interpreter to good use. He ends up interpreting the dreams of Pharaoh's servants, which eventually brings him to the attention of Pharaoh himself. Stay tuned.

The stories in our Torah are so filled with drama. If we change the names, the details slightly but keep the generalities, the metaphors and story could take place today in our community. Favoritism, estrangement, reunion, jealousy, pain, deceit, seduction and lust. What can we learn from this? How can we be different? During the darkest time of the year, let's bring light into the community; let's think about our words and our actions. Let's be gentle with others, reach out to others, and be fair and honest. And, in these economic times, let us, our children, family and friends not be lured and seduced by advertisers and others into spending excessively on material things. Instead, let us celebrate Chanukah with love, fun, food, family and friends. Amen.

***In Mourning –
There is Remembrance***

In the event of death, call Rabbi Jay immediately.
He is available 24 hours a day (including Shabbat)
on his cell 516.297.7744.

If you are observing a Yahrzeit let us know.
We will include it in our weekly newsletter.

We Remember
Max Colnick

Never Miss An Event

**Check Out
Our New
Website
Calendar**

www.SimchatHaLev.org

***Thank you Holy One of
Blessing..***

Share your family's joy with your congregational family. If you would like to share your good news, birthdays, anniversaries, please call the synagogue or email Jenn@SimchatHaLev.org with good news.

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