



Beth Am COMMENTATOR

MIAMI, FLORIDA

DECEMBER 14, 1973

Chanukah Is Here!

Light First Candle Wed. Eve, Dec. 19

Families should light the first Chanukah candle at sundown (with the entire family present, including dad) on Wednesday evening, December 19. The "shamus" is lit first, then the first candle (only). Appropriate blessings are to be found elsewhere in the COMMENTATOR (page 2).

In many families, where there are small children, a gift is presented on each night of the holiday after the candle lighting. Major gifts are given only on the first and last nights.

Families are encouraged to make potato latkes on the first night. They're great with apple sauce or sour cream.

Rabbi Baumgard suggests that the young people be invited to help in preparing the latkes and in decorating the house. String up lines of little Stars of David, Menorahs, Dreidles, etc. Use your imagination. Have fun and give fun!

Brotherhood Brunch Sunday December 16

9:30 a.m. — Youth Lounge
Rabbi Herbert Baumgard, Speaker
Subject: Jewish Chautauqua Society

Chanukah Service, Friday, Dec. 21 Adult Choral Concert; Candle Lite Service

Chanukah begins Wednesday evening, December 19, at sundown. On Friday eve, December 21, at 8:30 p.m., the Temple will hold its annual Chanukah Festival. This features an original Musical Narration, written by Rabbi Baumgard and sung by the Adult Choir, under the direction of Selma Baumgard. The choir will sing from the pulpit.

BRING CANDLE

Members are asked to bring a Chanukah (dripless) candle for each person in attendance. The candles will be lit in our inspiring Chanukah Candle-lite Ceremony. The bottom of the candle should be wrapped in tin foil.

The musical program will blend together the original heroic deeds of the Maccabees in 167 BCE and the modern Maccabees, the Israeli army.

On Stage Revue For Sisterhood Brunch

It's a live, on stage, all-girl revue scheduled for Sisterhood's Wednesday, December 12, brunch, 10:00 a.m., in the Temple Social Hall.

Treat yourself, bring a friend to see the premiere of "Lights-Camera-Social Action!" Sisterhood's top talent will sing, dance, perform creative theater in this costumed, leotarded social action extravaganza.

You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll join in the spirit of Tzedekah.

Carol Hankin and Beverly Marks are the co-chairmen of the Social Action Committee. They are also the authors, choreographers, directors, and producers of this star-studded show. Millie Draizar is the pianist. Poldi Orlando will do an interpretive dance. Come see who's hoofing it—you'll be surprised.

Tapes and slides of the Russian Jewish family adopted by Sisterhood will be shown by Cynthia Lewis. Carolyn Wallach and Vickey Cohen are speaking on the first Tay Sachs Testing Center in Dade County.

Advance reservations are requested for this one performance only show. RSVP by December 7 and be eligible for a special prize. Call Gerri Legow, 235-0423; Florence Birchansky, 226-4299; Miriam Shaffer, 271-5342; Temple office, 667-5587. Call now. This is a must on your theater list!

Cost of the brunch is \$2.50. Toddler sitting is \$1. Three choice gift items will be raffled.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14
8:30 p.m.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Stephen Dubov
Cantorial Soloist

RABBI BAUMGARD

'Maccabees-Old And New'

Israel's Search For Peace



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15
11:15 a.m.

TORAH SERVICE



FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

Let's Celebrate Chanukah

The word Chanukah means "Dedication." At this season of the year (the 25th day of Kislev), the Temple in Jerusalem was rededicated to the service of God after years of desecration at the hands of Hellenized Syrians (and some Hellenized Jews). About 167 BCE, a group of Jews, long oppressed by the Jewish aristocracy which had allied itself with the occupying power, revolted not only against the alien power in its midst, but also against their own quizzing priests and leaders. The revolt was led by an aged priest, Mattathias, and his sons, the Maccabees. The most famous of the sons is Judah, who seemed particularly successful in arousing the people.

The Syrians, who held a great empire to the northeast, were ruled by Antiochus IV, who chose for himself the name Epiphanes ("God made manifest"). The Syrians were not Arabs. The Arabs conquered this region in the seventh and eighth centuries A.D.-C.E. Antiochus wished all his vassal peoples to worship him. He decreed that the Jews should not be permitted to study their Torah or to use their forms of Jewish worship. The new restrictions brought about the revolt. It was a battle for religious freedom.

The military battle is of interest. The Syrians had a well-trained army with modern weapons. The Judeans were few in number with almost no weapons. The Syrians divided their camp in the hope of surrounding the Judeans, but the Judeans, who had heard of the plan, attacked first one section of the Syrians, and, then, the other, defeating both of them. The victory was complete enough to permit the capture of the Temple by the Maccabees, although independence actually did not come for many years.

Talmudic legend has it that when the Maccabees came to rededicate the Temple, there was no oil for the "Ner Tamid," the Eternal Light; yet, it burned for eight days while additional oil was being obtained. For that reason, we kindle eight candles at this season, one on the first day, two on the second, etc. The "Shamash" is the candle which "attends" the lighting of the others. It is lit first every night.

Had there been no Chanukah, there would have been no Christmas! Christianity arose out of the Jewish community. That community would not have been in existence if the Maccabees had not defeated the Syrian attempt to crush Judaism. It is interesting to note that the Christians imitated Chanukah in selecting the 25th day of the month as the day of their holiday, and they also made their holiday into a holiday of lights. The two holidays are opposed in that Chanukah teaches that the Jews should not worship any man who presumes to be God (Jesus may not have so regarded himself).

In the Book of the Prophet Zechariah, there is a reference to the Menorah and to the teaching "not by might nor by military might, but by My spirit, saith the Lord." This quote is inscribed on the face of the Ark in Temple Beth Am. It is part of the teaching of Chanukah.

Further, the Menorahs in our Temple are based on the second Chanukah legend which tells us that when the Maccabees recaptured the Temple from the Syrians, they had no Menorahs, so they took the spears of their enemy and put candles on their ends. The spear is the military symbol. The candle is the spiritual symbol, giving light even while it is self-consumed. Our Menorahs are spears with holes in them through which the light shines, overcoming the spear. They are, therefore, peace symbols.

CHANUKAH BEGINS AT SUNDOWN, WEDNESDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 19, AND CONTINUES FOR EIGHT DAYS.

OBSERVANCE

There are five ways in which Chanukah is observed in the home. First, lighting of the Candles. Second, gifts. Many Jewish families give the children a gift on each night of Chanukah, after the candles are lit. Third, food. Chanukah has its own favorite foods, such as potato latkes and nuts. Fourth, songs. There are many extremely beautiful Chanukah songs which should be sung after the candle lighting. These are obtainable on records at the Temple Judaica Shop and in a special booklet distributed by the Religious School. Fifth, stories and games. The game, Dreidle (spin the top), is an essential feature of the Chanukah observance. There are many beautiful stories published in special Chanukah Story Books, which may be purchased at the gift shop. Make certain to come with your family to the Adult Chanukah Service, Friday evening, December 21, at 8:30 p.m.

Chanukah Blessings

1. Bah-rooch Ah-tah Ah-doh-nai, Eh-loh-hay-noo Meh-lech Hah-oh-lam; Ah-sheer kid'-shah-noo b'mitz-voh-tahv, V'tzi-vah-noo l'hahd-leek nair Shel Chah-noo-kah.

We thank You, O Lord, King of the Universe, Who has asked us to make ourselves better people by lighting the Chanukah lights.

2. Bah-rooch Ah-tah Ah-doh-nai, Eh-loh-hay-noo Meh-lech Hah-oh-lahm; Sheh-ah-sah nih-seem lah-voh-tay-noo; Bah-yah-meem-hah-haym, Bah-z'-mahn hah-zeh.

We thank You, O Lord, our God, for helping us to perform miracles at this season long ago.

3. (First night only)

Bah-rooch Ah-tah Ah-doh-nai, Eh-loh-hay-noo Meh-lech Hah-oh-lahm; Sheh-heh-cheh-yah-noo v'kih-y'-mah-noo, V'hih-gih-yah-noo lah-z'-mahn hah-zeh. Ah-men.

We thank you for health and life and for the privilege of celebrating this Holiday. Amen.

Rock Of Ages

Rock of Ages, let our song
Praise Thy saving power;
Thou, amidst the raging foes,
Wast our shelt'ring tower.
Furious, they assailed us,
But Thine Arm availed us,
And Thy Word
Broke their sword
When our own strength failed us.

Bearers of the higher goal
Whether free or battered
Fan the embers of the flame
Where ye may be scattered
Yours the message cheering
That the time is nearing
Which will see
All men free
Tyrants disappearing.

O Chanukah, O Chanukah

O Chanukah, O Chanukah, a festival of joy;
A holiday, a jolly day for ev'ry girl and boy.
Spin the whirling dreidel all week long;
Eat the sizzling latkes, sing a happy song.
And while we are singing,
The candles are burning low;
One for each night, they shed a sweet light,
To remind us of days long ago;
One for each night, they shed a sweet light,
To remind us of days long ago.

(REPEAT WHOLE VERSE)