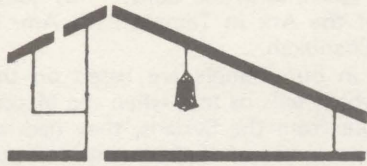


NOVEMBER 21, 1975
MIAMI, FLORIDA



Beth Am COMMENTATOR

Chanukah Starts Next Week!

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"). 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.

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

(Continued on Page 2)

Parent-Child Dinner November 26

Has A Chanukah Touch

This wonderful evening will take on added significance because just three days later Chanukah begins. Brotherhood will take even greater steps to see that the gifts to the children who attend merit the occasion, that the food is even better than before, and the entertainment is excellent. And we must mention again, there will be valuable prizes given away, with the top prize being a bicycle.

Other than at the Oneg Shabbat after Friday night services, when can parents and their children spend a social evening together at the Temple as they will on Wednesday, November 26, beginning at 6:00 p.m., in our Social Hall? And the cost is less than going to the movies--\$1.75 per adult and \$1.25 for children.

Because of space limitations, the Temple (667-5587) will stop taking reservations when the magic number of 300 is reached. So, when you read this announcement, grab your telephone and make your reservations as soon as possible.

Camp Scholarships Available At Temple

Our Temple believes most strongly in the worth of the camping movement in Reform Judaism. Participation during the summer season is an excellent way for children to enjoy themselves in unique surroundings, and to deepen their sense of Jewish identification. It is to this end that we urge all youngsters to take advantage of Camp Coleman, as well as special programs offered at the NFTY camp in Warwick, New York and elsewhere. Camp enrollment is going very fast, so register now.

Because we want to see as many children as possible have this kind of experience, our Temple annually awards scholarships to worthy youngsters. We would hope that the cost of these camping programs would not be a barrier to those who truly desire it. Applications for scholarships are available in the Temple office.

Much of the success of Camp Coleman can be attributed to Rabbi Baumgard who has been involved for many years in promoting its worth and participating in program development. Rabbi Cook also was involved with Camp Coleman, and directed another one of the UAHC camps. Speak to either one for more information about these exciting opportunities.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21
8:30 p.m.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Henry LeClair
Cantorial Soloist

RABBI BAUMGARD
The No. 1 Best Seller of All Time
A Book Review



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22
9:15 and 11:15 a.m.

TORAH SERVICE



FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

A Moment Of Renewal

(Part Three)

THE RITUAL OF CHANGE

The Rabbis have said that on the Sabbath we are asked to rehearse "The World to Come - Ha-olam Ha-bah." We are asked to practice how it will be on that day "when the Messiah comes," when there will be peace and justice in the world.

We are concerned, then, on the Sabbath, with trying to achieve a real change in our lives. You are urged to ask forgiveness from those whom you have wronged during the week. You are asked to forgive those who seek forgiveness. You are asked to withdraw from your pursuit of security, from your business labors. On the Sabbath, you don't do the things you do on other days. You don't go shopping, you don't cook, you don't clean house, you don't engage in commercial transactions, nor do you engage in a recreational program which is itself a new kind of stress. You are to avoid stress on the Sabbath. You are to dream of "the world to come," the better world, and you are to try to live it on this day.

The first step in the ritual of change, then, is TURNING ASIDE FROM ONE'S REGULAR PURSUITS. Unless one is able to accomplish this, one is not in the position to direct oneself towards the positive aspects of the Sabbath. To help us make this shift, our tradition supplies several ceremonies. We must understand that a ceremony has no power in itself. It has meaning only if we bring something to it. What we bring to it depends on the depth of our resolve and our sensitivity.

A) The candle-lighting (discussed several weeks ago in this column) is one of the rituals which help us to redirect our minds. We are urged to think here of our family, of our loved ones. The mood is one of forgiveness and love. We form a tight circle around the lights. We embrace. We say words of affection. If your loved ones are not at home, then this is the time for you to be thinking of them. Since they can be lighting the candles wherever they are and at the same time (sundown), you can each be lighting and thinking of each other at the very same moment. Make this arrangement with your children as a bond forever. Let the arrival of the Sabbath be the moment when love flows between us and when we think about each other. It must then be a quiet moment. We cannot be concerned about other things. It must not be done perfunctorily. There must be what the Hasidim call "kavanah," intention.

In our occupation with the routine of the week, we sometimes overlook those we love most, our spouse or our children. We may have argued about a small matter and never completely resolved it. The candle-lighting is the time to bring the family together.

B) The kiddush provides us with a second opportunity for turning off the thoughts that occupy our minds throughout the rest of the week. As we raise the cup of wine, we should think of our people. This is the ritual which asks us to link ourselves to those who were enslaved by Pharaoh, to those who died in concentration camps, to the Israelis, and to non-Jews who are oppressed around the world today. We are asked to think of suffering and redemption, of the escape from slavery, of the victory over oppressors, of the hope that is always present because God's power is ever with us. The past and the future are blended together in this symbol. Drink the wine and be reminded of whom you are, as a Jew. Drink the wine and think of what you have to do, as a Jew. (Copies of our suggested ritual are available at the office.)

(Continued at bottom of adjacent column)

CHANUKAH STARTS NEXT WEEK

(Continued from Page 1)

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.

B'nai Mitzvah

Saturday, November 22

9:15 a.m.

11:15 a.m.



Jerome, son of
Mr. and Mrs.
Stanford Miller
Charles, son of
Mrs. Suzanne Sax
(No photo available)



David, son of
Mr. and Mrs.
Martin Hitzig



Amy, daughter of
Mr. and Mrs.
Stanley Stein

C) The Sabbath meal is also a part of the ritual of change which helps us to usher in the spirit of the Shabbat. The challah is present on the table as a symbol of all things that grow from the earth. Through the divinely ordained miracles of nature, the grain that made possible this bread emerges from the planted seed. (The blessing over bread is sung. Read it, if you can't sing.) All present get a slice of bread and taste of it. In some families, all present take a part of the same slice, as a sign of togetherness.

In our affluent world, it is difficult for those of us who are so well-fed to experience the emotion of gratitude. The symbol of the challah, and the blessing over it, is designed to remind us that all we have is but a by-product of God's creation. We are all receivers. If we can remember that, life seems a little less boring and shallow. The Sabbath rituals remind us of our tie to something greater than ourselves. They remind us we are not alone.

D) As a part of the meal, and at a convenient time, the father of the house blesses the children. (See our article, "A Recipe for Young Lovers"). No matter how busy he may have been throughout the week, he is asked now to touch the children and to express his love for them. In the tradition, the sons are blessed, "May God make you as Ephraim and Manasseh," the sons of Joseph. The girls are blessed, "May God make you as Sarah, Rachel, Rebecca, and Leah," the matriarchs of early Jewish history. These traditional blessings need not be used if the father has words of his own which might be more personal, or his individualized words can be added to those of the tradition. The important thing is that the father manifest his affection for the children especially at this time.

In former days, it was assumed the mother was with the children all day, so there was no prepared ritual for her to come close to the children. In today's world, where mother, also, may be away part or all of the day, it is wise for her, too, to participate in the blessing of the children in such a way as she is able.

Some of us are imaginative enough and creative enough to use ritual to dramatic advantage. If one understands that the ritual is only the point of beginning and that we are free to amplify it, he can come to the true meaning of the Sabbath.