



Our 30th Year

December 6, 1985
Volume 11, Issue 42

FAMILY WORSHIP SERVICE, Friday, December 6, 1985, 7:30 p.m.

Rabbi Herbert M. Baumgard
"HOW A FEW BRAVE PEOPLE DEFEATED A BRAVE ARMY"

CONGREGATIONAL TORAH SERVICE
Saturday, December 7th, 11:15 a.m.

Torah Portion: Vayeshev, Gen. 37:1-40:23

Beth Am Commentator

5950 North Kendall Drive, Miami, Florida 33156
Affiliated with U.A.H.C.

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CHANUKAH LATKE PARTY AND ISRAELI DANCING

Wed., December 11
8:00 pm - Youth Lounge

Latkes by Gourmet Caterers
Dance Instructors: Shira Baumgard & Yusi Yanich
\$2 Admission for Latkes
For All Members of Temple Beth Am

The Chanukah Story

The Chanukah story concerns historic events which took place in Judea around 167 BCE. The Emperor of the Eastern Green Empire (Antiochus Epiphanes) considered himself to be divine and ordered that a statue of himself as Zeus, the main Greek God, be placed in the Temple in Jerusalem. A priestly family known as the Hasmoneans led a Jewish revolt against the well armed army of the Empire and succeeded in the battle. The pagan symbols were thrown out of the Temple and the Ancient Jewish symbols were used once again. Chanukah means dedication. The Temple was re-dedicated to the service of the true God on the 25th of the month of Kislev (now the first night of Chanukah).

The revolt started in a town named Modin where the code slogan was identified by the word Maccabee. These are the first letters of the key prayer Mi Camocha Ba Elim (Who is Like unto You, Oh Lord). The dreidle, or toy top, which is used in a friendly gambling game during Chanukah has on it four letters, Nes, Gadol, Hayah, Sham, which means a great miracle happened there (i.e., in Modin). When you spin N-nun (Yiddish - "nichts" - you get nothing), and you lose your turn; G-gimmel ("ganz" - you get the pot); H-hay ("halb" - you get half the pot); Sh-shin (Shteil - you put in another share).

During the main battle between the Empire forces and the poorly armed Judeans, the Empire used elephants as battering rams and as wagon carriers. An elephant, then, as a Chanukah symbol, signifies the conquest of the powerful by the underdog.

When The Maccabees, i.e., the victorious Judeans, recaptured the Temple, they had no holy oil for the Eternal Light (Ner Tamid), yet somehow the light burned for eight days (hence eight candles). Finding no Menorah, they took seven candle spears which they had captured and put candles on their ends to form a temporary Menorah (the Menorahs in our Temple are based on this legend).

The Haftarah or prophetic portion read on the Sabbath of Chanukah is from the prophet Zechariah, who taught in the name of God, "not by military power, nor by violence, but by My spirit, saith the Lord". This teaching is inscribed on the face of the Beth Am ark.

Chanukah teaches: never despair, you can win against what seems to be overwhelming forces; God desires that we humans accomplish our purposes peacefully and does not grant the ultimate victory to those who live by the sword.

Chanukah Begins - Saturday, December 7th Candlelight Services, Fri. Dec. 13th - 8:00 p.m.

The first Chanukah candle will be lit on Saturday evening, Dec. 7th. The holiday will continue for eight days, terminating at sundown on Dec. 15th. The Young People's Choir will present our Annual Chanukah Music Festival on Friday, Dec. 13th, at which time our Annual Candlelight Service will be held at 8:00 p.m. sharp. (Note time of service.)

Each person should bring a Chanukah candle wrapped in foil so it does not drip. Candles may be purchased now at the Judaica Shop along with menorahs and other Chanukah gifts. Don Bennett will direct the Youth Choir.

How to Observe Chanukah in the Home

Our Rabbis teach that it is important to observe Chanukah in a rich and varied manner. Here are some helpful hints.

1) **Decorate your home** with holiday symbols. Purchase, compose or draw menorahs, dreidles, candles, Eternal Lights, Temple, elephants. Hang them on streamers, glue them on banners, place them on cardboard backing and put on a door (the refrigerator, for example). One family we knew constructed a beautiful temple, complete with columns, and electrified it with interior lights shining through the columns.

2) **Light the Chanukah candles.** One candle plus "shamash," or attendant, for the first night (Saturday, Dec. 7th), two plus "shamash" for the second night, etc., until eight are lit on the night of the 14th. Many families have **special parties** on the first and last nights.

3) After kindling the lights, **sing the Chanukah songs** (found elsewhere in this "Commentator") and do the Chanukah dance together. Everybody sings and everybody dances. The dance is "ring around the rosy" style to the tune of "Oh Chanukah." The two key songs are "Rock of Ages" and "Oh Chanukah." Of course, more are even better.

4) **Tell the story.** Where young people are present, it is necessary to tell the story in its simple outlines to give a background for the festivity. A brief paragraph or review may be all that is necessary for adults. (See "Story" in this Commentator.)

5) Have a **festive Chanukah dinner.** The usual procedure is to give one present each of the eight nights for children. Presents need not be expensive. The presents are a sort of "dessert" and should not be the main emphasis of the occasion. A main present can be given the first and last nights.

Shamash is the Leader

Light the first candle with the shamash, or attendant, candle. The shamash may be permitted to burn or be put out. The second night, light two candles with the shamash, etc. The first **two** of the blessings are said on **all** nights. The **third** is said **only** on the first night. Sing the songs after the lighting each night. Have fun as a family.

(Continued on Page 3)



FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY

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"). 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 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.

Open Letter From The Prez:

Dear "Anonymous",

HELP! We received the committee form you sent the Temple, signing up for four committees (great!), BUT you forgot to sign your name!

We WANT you -- so, please, let us know who you are!! *Thanks for the interest, Evelyn Goodman, Pres.*

P.S. For anyone else nosy enough to read this 'personal' letter, we want YOU, too. Ask us for the list of committees - 667-6667 (Rhoda or Wendy).

Brotherhood Breakfast Sunday, Dec. 15th Features

Rabbi Rachael Hertzman

First Woman to Serve as a Rabbi in Florida

In the Temple Youth Lounge at 9:30 a.m.

Judaica Treasure "Show and Tell Party" Dec. 12th

Do you have an old family kiddush cup? spice box? candlesticks? Torah cover? megilla scroll? mezzuzah? menorah? prayer book? bible? book of the Talmud?

You may not realize the value of your possession. You are cordially invited to bring one or more things to the Judaica Museum at the Temple on Thursday, Dec. 12th, at 8 p.m. We will have a "Show and Tell Party" and you can tell us your memories associated with your items. Refreshments will be served and you can take your things home again.

Light First candle for Chanukah Sat., Dec. 7th

Chanukah Candlelight Service

Friday, December 13, 1985, 8:00 p.m.

(Note Starting Time for Service)

Chanukah Workshop Slated For December 4th

Temple Beth Am's annual Chanukah Workshop will be held on Wednesday night, December 4th, at 7:30 p.m. in the Social Hall. Under the expert guidance of Rabbi Simon, our gourmet cook, Joan Schwartz, and our musician, Patty Segal. Participants will be able to have an opportunity to learn about the history and customs of Chanukah, as well as attend special workshops which will focus on Chanukah cooking and Chanukah music. In addition, the Judaica Shop will be open so that all participants will be able to do their last minute Chanukah shopping. If you are interested in attending and receiving all materials, the Workshop is free but we do require advance registration, please call Rabbi Simon's office.

The Warner-Arky Caring Program

presents

Suicide, Recognizing the Signs

Wed. Dec. 11th, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Room 28

George McKinney, M.S.M.

Director Crisis Line, Switchboard of Miami

Explore with us today's reality! Stress, tension, depression. What should we be on the lookout for in ourselves, our children, and our friends? Join our expert for this most enlightening discussion.

No reservations necessary - No charge.

B'Nai Mitzvah

Saturday, December 7

11:15 a.m.



Robby, son of
Mr. and Mrs. Donald Graff



Bonnie, daughter of
Mr. and Mrs. Ian Rosenfield