

CEREMONY & CELEBRATION FAMILY EDITION

Based on the teachings and writings of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks זצ"ל



CHANUKAH • CANDLE 7



A Chanukah Message for the Seventh Night

THE LIGHT OF THE SPIRIT NEVER DIES

THERE IS an interesting question the commentators ask about Chanukah.

For eight days we light lights, and each night we make the blessing over miracles: *she-asah nissim la-avotenu*. But what was the miracle of the first night? The light that should have lasted one day lasted eight. But that means there was something miraculous about days two to eight; nothing miraculous about the first day.

Perhaps the miracle was this: That the Maccabees found one cruse of oil with its seal intact, undefiled. There was no reason to suppose that anything would have survived the systematic desecration the Greeks and their supporters did to the Beit Hamikdash. Yet the Maccabees searched and found that one cruse.

Why did they search? Because they had faith that from the worst tragedy, something would

survive. The miracle of the first night was that of faith itself, the faith that something would remain with which to begin again.

So it has always been in Jewish history. There were times when any other people would have given up in despair: after the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash, or the massacres of the Crusades, or the Spanish Expulsion, or the pogroms, or the Shoah. But somehow, Jews did not merely sit and weep. They gathered what remained, rebuilt our people, and lit a light like no other in history, a light that tells us, and the world, of the power of the human spirit to overcome every tragedy and refuse to accept defeat.

From the days of Moshe and the bush that burned and was not consumed, to the days of the Maccabees and the single cruse of oil, Judaism has been humanity's *ner tamid*, the everlasting light that no power on earth can extinguish.



Points to Ponder

- 1 What did the Maccabees have faith in?
- 2 Why do you think Rabbi Sacks describes faith itself as a miracle?
- 3 Do you think having faith today is also a miracle?





From the Thought of Rabbi Sacks



WHEN I stand today in Jerusalem, or in a Jewish school, or see a Jewish couple under the wedding canopy, or see parents at the Shabbat table blessing their children, there are times when I am overcome with tears, not in sadness nor in joy, but in awe at this people who came face to face with the Angel of Death and refused to give it a final victory.

The Jewish people lives, and still bears witness to the living God.

Radical Then, Radical Now (p. 184)

Points to Ponder

1 What is it about Jerusalem, a Jewish school, a Jewish wedding or a Jewish family around their Shabbat table that caused Rabbi Sacks to feel awe?

2 How does this quote expand on the ideas found in *The Light of the Spirit Never Dies* (previous page)?

Chanukah for the Young (and Young at Heart!)

It Once Happened...

IN THE DAYS when the Greeks had defiled the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, an elderly and respected Kohen by the name of Mattityahu lived with his five sons in a town called Modi'in, near Jerusalem.

One day, the officers of Antiochus arrived in Modi'in and built an altar in the marketplace, demanding that Mattityahu offer sacrifices to the Greek gods.

Mattityahu replied to them, "I, my sons and my brothers will always remain loyal to the covenant that our God made with our ancestors! We will not obey the king's orders, or stray from our religion one inch!"

At this moment, a Hellenised Jew approached the altar to sacrifice to the Greek gods. Mattityahu was filled with righteous outrage, so he reached for his sword and killed him. Then, together with his sons, he also killed the King's officers, and destroyed the altar which they had built.

Knowing that Antiochus would be furious when he heard, and would send troops to kill them all, he fled to the hills of Judaea, followed by his sons, and calling out: "Whoever is for God and His Torah follow me!" And so began the Hasmonean revolt against Antiochus and the Greeks.



Point to Ponder

Do you think Mattityahu's response was extreme? Is there a precedent for it in the Torah?

Chanukah Challenge!

Wordsearch

1. Latkes
2. Sevivon
3. Mattityahu
4. Yehudah
5. Modi'in
6. Maccabees
7. Oil
8. Antiochus

M	A	M	F	Y	S	U	W	M	N
A	R	O	P	E	E	U	B	A	Y
C	W	D	L	H	V	Y	S	T	Y
C	I	I	A	U	I	I	I	T	A
A	R	I	T	D	V	D	N	I	T
B	A	N	K	A	O	Z	J	T	L
E	R	R	E	H	N	S	O	Y	R
E	O	Q	S	Y	R	Q	H	A	U
S	Q	O	I	L	I	W	R	H	S
I	A	N	T	I	O	C	H	U	S

FUN FACT!

We eat oily (and yummy!) food like potato latkes and sufganiyot (doughnuts) to remember the miracle of the cruse of oil that should have only lasted one night but burned for 8 whole days and nights!

Educational Companion to the Questions

THE LIGHT OF THE SPIRIT NEVER DIES

1. The Maccabees had faith in God, and in their mission. They had hope that they would be able to defeat the Greeks, and re-institute the Temple service and sovereignty in Jerusalem. They demonstrated this by searching for the purified oil despite the improbability of finding any. The very act of searching for the oil amongst the destruction in the Beit Hamikdash demonstrated their faith in the future.
2. Despair is a natural response to tragedy and adversity. The Maccabees had every reason to despair. Their deep faith in themselves, in the future, and in God, was heroic and inspiring, and according to Rabbi Sacks it was miraculous because it was also so unlikely and took deep courage.
3. There are many reasons to despair in the face of the adversity we are facing today. Having faith in the future is always miraculous, but at the same time, it is something we can aspire to.

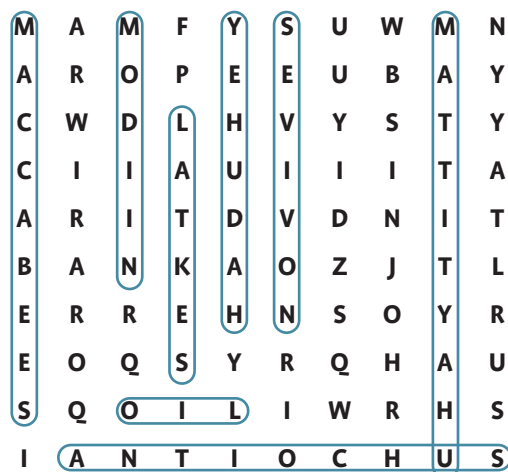
FROM THE THOUGHT OF RABBI SACKS

1. These things represent the courage of Jewish faith in the future. That we have returned to Jerusalem and it is now thriving, after thousands of years of exile and desolation, is reason to be in awe of the Jewish people. Jews building a brighter future by getting married, and educating their children in their homes and in schools, left Rabbi Sacks feeling in awe of their Jewish courage and faith.
2. The faith in the future represented by these things is the same faith and courage seen in the Chanukah story, both when the Maccabees, against the odds, fought against a far superior army, and when they searched for pure oil in Jerusalem. They, too, demonstrated courage and faith in the future.

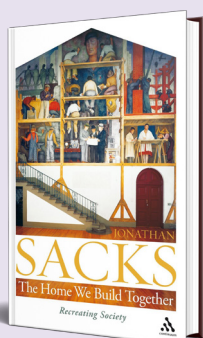
IT ONCE HAPPENED...

When the core values of your very existence are threatened, extreme measures are called for. Mattityahu was a spiritual leader at this time, and had to make a stand to save Judaism and the Jewish people. His role-model in the Torah was Pinchas who made a similar stand in the face of immorality.

CHANUKAH WORDSEARCH



THIS FAMILY EDITION HAS BEEN GENEROUSLY AND ANONYMOUSLY SPONSORED



Just as the Chanukah lights illuminate our homes, Rabbi Sacks זצ"ל lit up the world by inspiring us and others with his timely and timeless insights. Chanukah reminds each one of us to be a light in the wider world. Every night of Chanukah we will be highlighting one book where Rabbi Sacks articulated his deep insights into Judaism, morality, sociology, theology, and much much more, guiding us all to live a life of Judaism engaged with the world.

Tonight's book is **The Home We Build Together: Recreating Society**, a sage warning of the dangers of multiculturalism which offers of an unusual religious defence of liberal democracy and the nation state, making the the case for 'integrated diversity' within a framework of shared political values.