

The Shul
at the Lubavitch Center
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December 12, 2015

Miketz — Rosh Chodesh Tevet

30 Kislev, 5776

Listen to the Flames

If we look closely at the details of Chanukah - the menorah, the history, the number of flames - they can reveal the nature of our soul.

As the sun sets and the shadows of night descend, we kindle the menorah creating light in the darkness. Listen carefully to the flames and they will tell you a story, a story that will empower you to live a more profound meaningful life, enabling you to rise up toward challenge and overcome difficulty. Sit near the flames and study them quietly.

"The flame of G-d is the soul of a person," says the Torah. As flames warm and illuminate their environment, so too you can use your soul to infuse life with warmth and light. Unlike other physical entities that are drawn earthward, the dancing flames flicker upward defying gravity. Likewise your soul, not satisfied with mere physical comforts, aspires up toward something beyond.

Chanukah isn't just about lighting up our own lives. By placing the menorah in the window of your home or at your doorpost, you allow the light to radiate into the dark street, illuminating your surroundings. Chanukah reminds us of our ability and responsibility to effect the world and prompts us to shine light into the lives of others with daily acts of goodness and kindness. Just as a flame lights another without diminishing itself, so too by sharing yourself you become enhanced rather than diminished. Every day we must increase illumination of ourselves and our environment; each day adding another good deed, lighting an additional flame.

Chanukah tells yet a deeper story, a story that penetrates the darker shadows of our lives. The menorah shines a tunnel back through time to the aftermath of a great victory in which a small band of Jews defeated the might of the Greek Empire. In amongst the debris of the desecrated Temple the Maccabees searched ceaselessly until they found a single sealed cruse of oil that miraculously burnt for eight days. When you are defiled, when your inner Temple has been desecrated and there is no oil to be found, you have the power to reach deeper inside and discover light. The soul always remains intact like a "pilot light." When you light your menorah under such difficult circumstances, creating light in the darkest moment, that light can never be extinguished. The light that has dealt with challenge, that has transformed pain into growth, is a light that transcends nature and transforms darkness into light.

This power to transform darkness must come from a place beyond the conventional. We therefore light eight candles, the mystical number of transcendence and infinity, one beyond the number seven that represents the natural cycle. In order to pierce darkness with light, you can't just rely on the natural, you need to reach a deeper resource which is the eighth dimension.

These elements of Chanukah - the eight flickering flames, the miracle of the oil, the light shining into the dark street - beckon us to connect to the power of our soul. Our soul rises like a flame toward that which transcends itself, not only repelling darkness as is the nature of all light, but transforming the darkness into light.

(by Rabbi Simon Jacobson from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)

Miketz

The lesson of Parshas Miketz is clear and simple - that everything that happens to us is dependent upon G-d. When the end came (the Ketz, as in Miketz), when it was time for Joseph to be removed from prison, they rushed him out.

Joseph had to come out immediately - he stayed in not one second longer than he was supposed to.

Look how he arrived in Egypt in the first place: taken by Arabs on camels, Arab traders who normally carry kerosene and the like. Can you imagine what that smelled like? A very noxious mix. But no! The Torah tells us that these traders were carrying spices with a pleasant smell. If Joseph was supposed to go to Egypt, carried by camels, you would think that the bad smell would have to be tossed in. Not with G-d - He gives each person exactly what's appropriate.

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So too the entire story of how Joseph becomes second to Pharaoh. Imagine the scene: a poor Hebrew servant, a prisoner, comes in and provides an interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams. Tell me, was his interpretation so revolutionary or far-fetched? What does seven fat cows coming out of the Nile mean to you? And for this one act, Pharaoh turns to his advisors, and gets everyone to agree that they've never encountered such a brilliant person - and they make him second in command.

It's quite simple: we only get what's coming to us. The lesson is: it's ridiculous to be jealous of someone else. HE scored a touchdown! SHE's beautiful and brilliant! SHE just made a million dollars ... A certain amount of "jealousy of scholars" is appropriate, because all of us can acquire a great deal of education. Perhaps the jealousy will motivate us to study harder. But as for anything else - things that no matter how hard we try, we might never achieve - understand and remember who's in charge. If it's coming to you, you'll get it.

(by Rabbi Yaakov Menken from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

This Day in Jewish History – 1 Tevet

Esther made Queen (362 BCE): "And Esther was taken to King Achashverosh, to his palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tevet, in the seventh year of his reign. And the king loved Esther more than all the women, and she won his favor and kindness more than all the virgins; he placed the royal crown on her head and made her queen in Vashti's stead" (Book of Esther 2:16-17). This set the stage for the miracle of Purim six years later, on the 13th and 14th of Adar of the year 3405 from creation (356 BCE).

Community Information of Interest

The Last Years of the Old Order: Israel and the Jews 1962-1966. Lecture by Rabbi Dovid Katz.
December 12: "Secret-Service and Secret Diplomacy: Israel's Unconventional System of Foreign Relations 1962-66, Part I. This lecture will begin at 8:00 p.m. and be held at the Congregation Shomrei Emunah.

December 12: The Role of the IDF in Combatting Antisemitism in Europe & the US" by Seargant Benjamin Anthony. This talk will be given at the Congregation Shomrei Emunah at 3:30 p.m.

Chaim and Esty Kahn are sponsoring a Kiddush after davening this Shabbat in memory of the **yahrzeit** of Chaim's father
R' Nachman ben R' Meir, on this Sunday – the 1st of Tevet.
 May his neshama have an aliyah!



Yahrzeits This Week:

Chaim Kahn	1 Tevet - Saturday night/Sunday	for father	R' Nachman ben R' Meir
Deborah Eisenberg	1 Tevet - Saturday night/Sunday	for mother	Sheva bas Rav Chaim Elazar
Rebetzin Rochelle Kaplan	3 Tevet - Monday night/Tuesday	for father	Rav Peretz ben Yehoshua
Eugene Fischer	5 Tevet - Wednesday night/Thursday	for mother	Chanah bas Rav Aryeh

Davening and Shiurim Schedule

Friday, 12/11 – 29 Kislev

Shacharit – 6:45 a.m.
 Parshat HaShavua Shiur – 7:45 a.m.
 Sixth Chanukah Candle – 4:23 p.m.
 Candles – 4:25 p.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv – 4:25 p.m.

Shabbat – Rosh Chodesh Tevet, 12/12 – 30 Kislev

Shacharit – 8:40 a.m.
 Sof Z'man Kriat Shema – 9:34 a.m.
 Berachot Gemara Shiur – 3:45 p.m.
 Minchah & Seudah Shilishit – 4:15 p.m.
 Ma'ariv – 5:27 p.m.
 Seventh Chanukah Candle – after 5:28 p.m.

Sunday – Rosh Chodesh Tevet, 12/13 – 1 Tevet

Shacharit – 8:00 a.m.
 Shulchan Aruch Shiur – 8:45 a.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv – 4:25 p.m.
 Eighth Chanukah Candle – at night

Monday, 12/14 – 2 Tevet

Shacharit – 6:45 a.m.
 Parshat HaShavua Shiur – 7:45 a.m.
 Ma'ariv – 8:50 p.m.

Tuesday, 12/15 – 3 Tevet

Shacharit – 7:00 a.m.
 Parshat HaShavua Shiur – 7:45 a.m.
 Ma'ariv – 8:50 p.m.

Wednesday, 12/16 – 4 Tevet

Shacharit – 7:00 a.m.
 Parshat HaShavua Shiur – 7:45 a.m.
 Ma'ariv – 8:50 p.m.

Thursday, 12/17 – 5 Tevet

Shacharit – 6:50 a.m.
 Parshat HaShavua Shiur – 8:45 a.m.
 Ma'ariv – 8:50 p.m.
 Tanya Shiur – 9:00 p.m.

Friday, 12/18 – 6 Tevet

Shacharit – 7:00 a.m.
 Parshat HaShavua Shiur – 7:45 a.m.
 Candles – 4:27 p.m.
 Minchah / Ma'ariv – 4:30 p.m.