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Shabbat Shalom Weekly

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Rabbi Kalman Packouz Aish HaTorah

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Vayeshev (Genesis 37-40) Happy Hanukkah!

GOOD MORNING! Hanukkah is coming soon -- the first night is Saturday, December 8th. It's a wonderful family holiday. After we light the candles, we sing *Maoz Tzur*, eat jelly donuts, tell stories, have quizzes about Hanukkah -- all in the light of the Hanukkah candles. Memories are made up of a collection of precious moments. Hanukkah can provide you with many wonderful memories! To enjoy the Hanukkah story via a medley of 8 rock song parodies, view Aish.com's "Hanukkah Rock of Ages" video -- [Aish.com/rock](#).

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Q & A: WHAT IS HANUKKAH AND HOW DO WE CELEBRATE IT?

There are two ways which our enemies have historically sought to destroy us. The first is by physical annihilation; the most recent attempt being the Holocaust. The second is through cultural assimilation. Purim is the annual celebration of our physical survival. Hanukkah is the annual celebration of our spiritual survival over the many who would have liked to destroy us through cultural assimilation.

In 140 BCE the Syrian-Greek emperor, Antiochus, set out to destroy Judaism by imposing a ban on three *mitzvot*: The Shabbat, The Sanctifying of

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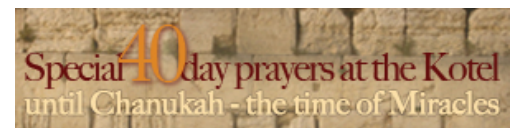
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the New Month (establishing the first day of the month by testimony of witnesses who saw the new moon) and *Brit Mila* (entering the Covenant of Abraham through Torah-ordained circumcision). The **Shabbat** signifies that G-d is the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe and that His Torah is the blueprint of creation, meaning and values. **Sanctifying the New Month** determines the day of the Jewish holidays. Without it there would be chaos. For example, if Succot is the 15th of Tishrei, the day it occurs depends upon which day is declared the first of Tishrei. **Brit Mila** is a sign of our special covenant with the Almighty. All three maintain our cultural integrity and were thus threats to the Greek culture.

Matityahu and his 5 sons, known as the Maccabees, started a revolt and three years later succeeded in evicting the oppressors. The victory was a miracle -- on the scale of Israel defeating the combined super-powers of today. Having regained control of the Temple in Jerusalem, they wanted to immediately rededicate it. They needed ritually pure olive oil to re-light the Menorah in the Temple. Only a single cruse of oil was found; enough to burn for just one day. However, they needed oil for eight days until new ritually pure olive oil could be produced. A miracle occurred and the oil burned for eight days.

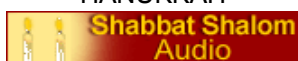
Therefore, we light Hanukkah candles (or better yet, lamps with olive oil) for eight days. One the first day, two the second and so forth. The first candle is placed to the far right of the menorah with each additional night's candle being placed to the immediate left. One says three blessings the first night (two blessings each subsequent night) and then lights the candles, starting with the furthest candle to the left. The menorah should have all candles in a straight line and at the same height. Ashkenazi tradition has each person of the household lighting his own menorah. Sefardi tradition has just one menorah lit per family. The blessings can be found on the back of the Hanukkah candle box or in a *Siddur*, prayer book. The candles may be lit inside the home. It is preferable to light where passersby in the street can see them -- to publicize the miracle of Hanukkah. In Israel, people light outside in special glass boxes built for a menorah or little glasses with olive oil and wicks.

The tradition to eat *latkes*, potato pancakes, is in memory of the miracle of the oil (*latkes* are fried in oil). In Israel, the tradition is to eat *sufganiot*, deep-fried jelly donuts. The traditional game of Hanukkah uses a *dreidel*, a four-sided top with the Hebrew letters *Nun, Gimmel, Hey, Shin* (the first letters of "Nes Gadol Haya Sham -- A Great Miracle Happened There." In Israel, the last letter is a *Pay* -- for "here.") In times of persecution when learning Torah was forbidden, Jews would learn anyway. When the soldiers would investigate, they would pull out the *dreidel* and pretend that they were gambling. **The rules for playing dreidel:** *Nun* -- no one wins; *Gimmel* -- spinner takes the pot; *Hey* -- spinner get half the pot; *Shin/Pay* -- spinner matches the pot!

Here's a question to think about: If enough oil was found to burn in the Temple menorah for one day and the oil lasted for eight days, then the miracle was really only for the seven additional days of lighting. Why then do we celebrate Hanukkah for eight days and not seven?

For more on Hanukkah, including animated instructions on how to light the candles, go to: aish.com/hanukah .

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HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS
CONTINUE TO SURVIVE?

Torah Portion of the Week

VaYeshev

This week's portion includes four stories: **1) The selling of Yosef** (Joseph) as a slave by his brothers -- which eventually positioned Yosef to be second in command in Egypt and enabled him to save the known world from famine **2) The indiscretion of Yehuda** (Judah) with Tamar (Tamar) ... **3) The attempted seduction** of Yosef by Potifar's wife, which ends with her framing Yosef and having him imprisoned **4) Yosef interprets the dreams** of his fellow prisoners, the wine steward (who was reinstated and forgot to put in a good word for Yosef) and the baker (who was hanged).

* * *

Dvar Torah

based on *Growth Through Torah* by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin

The Torah states:

"And Yosef was brought down to Egypt" (Genesis 39:1).

Anyone viewing the scene of Yosef being brought down to Egypt as a slave would have considered it a major tragedy: He was sold by his brothers as a slave and taken far away from his father and homeland. However, in reality this is the first step to his eventual accession as second in command to Pharaoh with complete control over the Egyptian economy.

Anyone viewing the scene of Yakov, Yosef's father, coming to Egypt would have considered it a very positive one: Yakov is reuniting with his favorite son who is now a powerful ruler, after years of separation; he has every expectation that he will be treated with all the honors of royalty.

What is the reality? Yakov's going to Egypt is the first stage in the exile and enslavement of the Children of Israel.

No human being has the omniscience to know the final consequences of any situation. Therefore, when a situation seems to be extremely negative, do not despair. This could lead to wonderful things for you. Conversely, when things seem to be going extremely well, do not become complacent and arrogant. One never knows what the future will bring.

CANDLE LIGHTING - December 7

(or go to <http://www.aish.com/sh/c/>)

Jerusalem 3:55

Guatemala 5:14 - Hong Kong 5:21 - Honolulu 5:31

J'Burg 6:33 - London 3:33 - Los Angeles 4:26

Melbourne 8:14- Mexico City 5:39 Toronto 4:23

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Torah Reading: Vayeshev

(Genesis 37-40)

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QUOTE OF THE WEEK:

**We learn from history that
we do not learn from history
-- Georg W.F. Hegel**

COURAGE

Courage is doing the right thing
even though you are scared
Courage is accepting the challenge
though it's easier to give up
Courage is mustering the strength to stand up
when it's easier to fall down
Courage is feeling happy and alive
when it's easier to feel sorry for yourself

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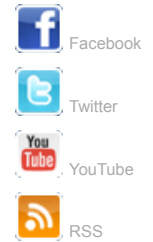
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