



Family Parsha Sheet

Chanukah 5780

Chanukah in a nutshell

REMEMBERING LIGHT

During the time of the 2nd Temple, the Holy Land was ruled by cruel Greeks. They robbed the Jews of their property, and set up idols in the Beit HaMikdash. No one could stand up against them, till Mattityahu and his sons rose up and drove them from the land. The Chanukah lights remind us of the great miracle that a small band of Jews defeated the mighty Greek armies.

FIGHTING FOR LIGHT: The Greeks were philosophers. They accepted the Torah as a book of wisdom, but not as something holy that connects us to Hashem. In the end, they made Torah learning illegal, and outlawed Mitzvot like Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh, Brit Milah, and the holiness of Jewish marriage. The Maccabees risked their lives to keep Torah alive! That's why they won!

THE MIRACLE OF LIGHT: An even greater miracle than defeating the Greek armies was the miracle of the oil. The Greeks had made all the oil in the Beit HaMikdash impure. Miraculously, the Maccabees found one jar that had been overlooked. But it only had enough oil for one day. So great was their love of G-d, that they lit it anyway! Hashem made another miracle, and the oil burned for eight days! Everyone could see that the Shechinah dwelt with the Jews.

JOYOUS LIGHT!: With tremendous joy, the Jews cleansed the Beit HaMikdash and began to serve Hashem once again! Nowadays, we have to draw on that joy, because the darkness has grown very great! That's why we make Chanukah parties, with dreidels, latkes, and Chanukah gelt. Joy has the power to overcome any negative thing, and break any evil decree!

ADDING LIGHT!: Every day of Chanukah we add another candle till all eight candles of the Menorah are ablaze. By adding a candle every night for 8 days, we charge ourselves up with light, so that we will constantly be adding in Torah and Mitzvot (which are compared to light), throughout all the days of the year to come.

HOLY LIGHT!: The light of the Chanukah candles is holy, like the light of the Menorah in the Beit HaMikdash. We are careful not to use it for any purpose — our Mitzvah is just to look at the candles and listen to the story that they tell **FILLING THE WORLD WITH LIGHT!**

The miracle of Chanukah occurred in a dark time when there were wicked decrees against the Jews. But the Maccabees had courage and never lost hope. Their mesirut nefesh (self sacrifice) turned the darkness into light! Today too, our mesirut nefesh for Torah and Mitzvot will light up the world and bring Moshiach Now!

Source: (Chabad.org)



#1 Which hand is best to light the menorah with?

#2 How much Hanukkah gelt did the skunk get?

#3 What's the best Hanukkah gift for the person who has everything?

#4 What's the difference between Hanukkah and a dragon?

ANSWERS BELOW

#1 Neither, it's best to light it with a candle.
#2 One cent.
#3 A burglar alarm.
#4 One lasts for eight nights, the other sometimes ate knights.



WHAT TYPE OF HOUSE WEIGHS THE LEAST?

Next week the answer will be revealed.

Do you know the answer? Email Dr. Jones (parsha@asjds.org) with the subject "riddle" by Monday at 12pm after break. All students who get the right answer will be entered into a raffle each week.

Last week's riddle: What holds up the moon? Answer: *Moonbeams*



Story: The Package Deal

Beads of sweat rolled off of Gary's face as he strained his body to the max. "Okay, push it, push it, Gary. Yeah, you did it, man! You pressed a hundred pounds!"

He and his buddy, Rob, had been trying to make the best use of their winter break by working out every day in the local gym. The long, cold winter usually meant a lot of time indoors and it was hard to exercise. So when the gym in town advertised a special two-week winter break package deal, the guys jumped at the chance to pump some iron.

Gary was good and hungry after the early morning workout, and didn't know what was taking Rob so long to get changed and head back to his place for breakfast. Finally Gary's patience ran out. He went back into the locker room and got his answer. Rob was standing in front of the mirror flexing his muscles.

"Hey, let's get going, Rob! If you spend any more time in front of that mirror, it's going to crack," he laughed.

Rob blushed for a second and then said, "What's the problem? Don't you want to see how big your muscles look too? After all, isn't this the whole point of doing that record-breaking bench-press of yours?"

"That's not what I do it for," Gary replied shaking his head. "I didn't spend the last 45 minutes sweating bullets just to be able to stand in front of a mirror and admire myself."

Rob clicked his tongue as he flexed his bicep. "Of course it's not for only us," Rob explained. "All the kids back at school are going to be really impressed too when they see how great we look, and..."

"That's not what I meant. Didn't you pay attention to the Chanukah story we learned about on the last day of school? How the Jewish way is to use our physical strength and good looks for something worthwhile?"

"And what could be more worthwhile than looking good?" quipped Rob. "Anyway, don't be a hypocrite. You work out as much as I do, and if anything your biceps are much bigger than mine."

"That's just the point. It's fine to get physical – but for a purpose. Chanukah teaches us that everything physical, everything we have – including our bodies – are all just packages for our souls. They're tools God gave us to use properly for something really worthwhile, not just to admire."

Rob, who had by now put his arms down and turned from the mirror, looked confused.

Gary went on. "For instance, do you know why I work out? I do it to keep healthy and have more energy to concentrate in school. And I also do it so I can really be some help around the house, like by shoveling out our driveway instead of my dad who had an operation a couple of months ago. The big muscles are just 'the package' that let me do that."

Rob wasn't convinced. "That's all great, but I still say when it comes to looking good, it's 'the outside package' that counts."

The guys packed up their stuff and headed back to Gary's place where his mom had set out some bowls of milk and several boxes of cereal for the hungry athletes. Gary picked up a bright, colorful box and began to pour it into Rob's bowl.

"Whoa, I'll take some of that other stuff if you don't mind, it tastes much better."

But to Rob's surprise, Gary hid the second box behind his back and wouldn't pass it to him.

"Hey, c'mon man! Let me have that other cereal."

"What do you want that for?" Gary said with a smile. "It's in such a plain box. This cereal here is in a much nicer looking package, and that's 'what counts,' remember?"

Despite himself, Rob couldn't help laughing – or getting the point either. After breakfast Rob decided to stick around to help Gary shovel out his driveway, and celebrate Chanukah and what it stood for by not just admiring his muscles, but putting them to good use for a worthwhile cause as well. (Source: <https://www.aish.com>)

STORY DISCUSSION

What was Gary trying to tell his friend was the message of Chanukah?

What is more important if you can only choose one? Looking good or acting good?

Must something have a higher ethical purpose to be beautiful or of value?

Does being spiritual mean pulling away from anything physical or superficial, like trying to look good?



Staff D'Var Torah

Taking Action *by Dr. Eliezer Jones*

When I think of Chanukah I am reminded of a story or more likely a tale I was once told.

The tale was told of a crossing guard at a railroad crossing. You see before there were automatic crossing gates at street intersections where trains passed there were crossing guards who would stop traffic. The crossing guard would be in a shack by the railroad crossing 24/7, with the train schedule, a lantern and the task of being on the road, at the crossing, waving a lantern to warn cars that a train was coming through.

One dark and stormy night, even with a crossing guard on duty, a tragic crash occurred. A lawsuit was filed by the driver of the car. Who was at fault in this tragedy? Was it the car? Train? Crossing guard?

As the lawsuit proceeded in court, the judge begins his line of questioning to the crossing guard, "Were you there that night?"

Under oath the crossing guard replies, "Yes."

Continuing with his line of questioning, the judge continues, "Did you have your train schedule?"

To which the crossing guard replies, "Yes."

"Were you standing in the road at the appropriate time waving your lantern?" asks the judge.

"Yes," replies the crossing guard.

The judge rules and finds in favor of the railroad, no damages and they were not liable for the tragedy. Upon leaving the courtroom, a spectator hears the crossing guard say, "Whew, sure am glad they didn't ask whether the lamp was lit."

Chanukah is about taking public and meaningful action. We light the Menorah ideally where others can see it so that the miracle is publicized. It is an action of Jewish pride. It is an action that tells the world who you are, what you stand for and no matter how dark it may be outside you are willing to shine your light. You are not just thinking about it, talking about it or, as the crossing guard in our story, waving an unlit lantern that has no meaning or purpose. You are lighting a Menorah for the whole world to see that you believe in G-d, are proud to be part of the Jewish people and are willing to put yourself out there to make a difference in the world even if it makes you feel vulnerable.

The Droidal: If you have a 3D printer you can print out this fun Android Dreidial.



<https://www.thingiverse.com/thing:37570>



CHANUKAH Q&A

1. How many days is Chanukah?
2. What does Chanukah mean in English?
3. What day does Chanukah start?
4. What is a Dreidel?
5. What is Gelt?
6. Chanukah is called in English the festival of _____?
7. What is the name of the candle used to light the other candles?
8. Who was the Syrian-Greek King who tried to destroy Judaism?
9. On the first night of Chanukah how many blessings are said when lighting the Menorah?
10. In what year did the miracle of Chanukah happen?
11. Why do we light Chanukah lights?
12. The Chanukah candles should burn for at least how long?
13. Dreidal is a yiddish word meaning what?
14. In what order to we light the Chanukah candles?
1. Eight
2. Dedication - because the Jews rededicated the second temple after it was desecrated.
3. the 25th day of the Hebrew month Kislev
4. The dreidel is a four sided top that children play with during Chanukah. Each side has a letter that has special significance.
5. While we have become accustomed to giving gifts on Chanukah, the custom is traditionally to give gelt, gifts of money, to children. Many people still do this in the form of chocolate gelt.
6. Lights
7. Shamash
8. Antiochus Epiphanes IV
9. Three (The two blessings for lighting the Menorah that we say each night and the additional Sheheceyanu blessing said for new and special activities.
10. 165 B.C.E. (Over two thousand years ago!)
11. To remember the miracle of the oil which was only enough for one day lasted eight days when the second Temple was rededicated.
12. At least for 30 minutes after nightfall.
13. It comes from the yiddish word *Drei* which means to spin or turn.
14. On the first night of Chanukah, set one candle to the far right of the menorah. On the following night add a second light to the left of the first one, and then add one light each night of Chanukah—moving from right to left. Each night, light the newest (leftmost) candle first.

Akiba-Schechter Jewish Day School
 5235 S. Cornell Ave., Chicago, IL 60615
 P 773-493-8880 | F 773-493-9377 | admissions@akibaschechter.org

Akiba Schechter Jewish Day School is a partner with the Jewish United Fund in serving our community. ASJDS is also affiliated with the Associated Talmud Torahs (ATT) and receives funding from the Chicago Kehillah Jewish Education Fund.