

MANHATTAN HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
CHANUKAH 5783 - 2022



Chanukah

Tamar Eberstark, 12th Grade



RABBI MOSHE YANOFSKY *zt"l*

BY MRS. TSIVIA YANOFSKY

My father-in-law, Rabbi Moshe Yanofsky *zt"l*, the larger-than-life personality and longtime principal and educator, was *niftar* this past Thursday, 15 *Kislev*. Astonishingly, he reached the status of “*gevuros*” — he was 80 years old. Astounding, if one contemplates the myriad illnesses that ravaged his body, some of which he battled for decades.

Rabbi Yanofsky, who began his career at the age of 25 as girls’ principal of Bais Yaakov at the behest of Rebbetzin Kaplan, and concluded his glorious career upon retirement at the age of 68, was a rare breed of educator. As his student, I had the unique vantage point of observing him in the classroom, the arena he dominated with wit, skill, and genuine devotion for his thousands of *talmidos*. Although math was not my forte, I was irresistibly drawn to his calculus class. Exposed to his creativity and pedagogical genius, a seed was planted in fertile soil — teaching is a joy and a pleasure to be savored.

Although since his passing many of the accolades that are pouring in refer to him as a humble giant, towering personality, quintessential *baal chesed*, and legendary principal, I believe that the title “teacher” resonated with him the most.

Born in Brownsville, Brooklyn, to Chaim Tzvi and Miriam Yanofsky, he and his sister Chani were referred to as miracle children, as their mother was older. His birth was truly both a miracle and a blessing for the thousands of people whose lives he impacted. Prophetically, his parents called him Moshe, perhaps sensing that he would shoulder the responsibility for his brethren selflessly and with trademark humility.

His beginnings were humble — his father was a simple tailor, barely able to eke out a living. He spent a short time in pub-

lic school, until the benevolent Alex Fruchthandler fortuitously sponsored his education at Yeshiva Chaim Berlin. Fortuitously,

that is, for generations of *bnos Yisroel*. Later on, he became a *talmid muvhak* of Rav Yaakov Moshe Shirkin, insisting on remaining

in his *shiur* for three consecutive years. How his eyes would gleam when recounting those magical years in Rav Shirkin’s *shiur*! Many a time, he confided in me that he incorporated his *rebbe*’s methodologies in his own classroom. His *rebbe*’s passion endeared him for a lifetime of *chinuch*. He also merited developing a close relationship with the *rosh yeshiva*, Rav Yitzchok Hutner. “Rav Moshe is a *pikeyach*” — an apt description from Rav Hutner that was relished for a lifetime and oft repeated by family members.

As a teenager, he spent his summers at Zucker’s hotel, in an effort to supplement his parents’ meager funds. He spent the next six decades waxing eloquent about these summers, nostalgically recalling the interactions he enjoyed with Rav Moshe Feinstein, Rav Aharon Kotler, Rav Leizer Silver, Rav Tuvia Goldstein, Rav Avigdor Miller, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky, and Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman. He considered this a most coveted and honored position, serving the *gedolim* of yesteryear. He would regale children, grandchildren, and students with anecdotes that spoke volumes about his *kavod rabbonon*. His narratives were laced with respect and sprinkled with good humor and human interest.

At the age of 21, he married his life’s companion and partner, Sharon Sinensky. Rabbi Sinensky, a *talmid* of Rav Shabsi Yogel and a celebrated *lamdan*, saw extraordinary strengths and abilities in the engaging and determined young man. Throughout his life, my father-in-law would acknowledge that marrying his wife was the best decision he had ever made. Together, they embarked on a life’s odyssey that would span decades and enrich countless lives.

As a relatively young man, my father-



in-law, a brilliant mathematician, was offered several lucrative positions which he declined, a decision that greatly affected the landscape of *chinuch habonos* in America. At the age of 23, he began teaching Bais Yaakov students and subsequently became a youthful college professor at Kingsborough, so that he would not have to tax the Bais Yaakov for a more substantial salary. He would juggle both of these positions for many years, a veritable powerhouse of an educator.

After many years of working closely with Rabbi and Rebbetzin Kaplan in Bais Yaakov, in 1986 he decided to open his own high school. His mission statement was to create a grand edifice where each student would emerge a star and where all talents and aptitudes would be cultivated. With his characteristic humility, he elected to take a partner the legendary Rabbi Yehuda Oelbaum. Machon Bais Yaakov pulsated with Mr. Yanofsky's (he shrugged off the "rabbi" title) heart, which throbbed with *ahavas Yisroel*. Students fondly recall their principal on *Shabbatons*, manning the kitchen and encouraging his students to join in the cooking. His intention was to provide them with a *Shabbaton* experience that would linger for all the *Shabbosos* of their lives.

His wife, a force to be reckoned with in her own right, was always at his side, staunchly supporting his every endeavor. Certainly, those years of building required forbearance on the part of my mother-in-law, as he would go to such drastic extremes as to mortgage his own home in establishing his fledgling school.

A major component of Mr. Yanofsky's version of *chinuch habonos* was the magic of the *Shabbaton*, a phenomenon that literally transformed a generation of high school students. Penina Horowitz, a graduate of 2002, related at the *shivah* house that she recently shared photos of a Machon *Shabbaton* with her children, connecting them to a halcyon time in her life. She had looked forward all year to the *Shabbaton*, and it added a tremendous dimension to her school experience. "We just loved the *Shabbaton*, and I still remember Mr. Yanofsky when he underscored the power of *Racheim* in *Birkas Hamazon*. Every time I *bentch*, I see his face in my mind. This past *Shabbos*, I looked through my yearbook, and characteristically, there were no photos of this master *mechanech*. We loved him and felt so connected to him all the years."

Years ago, my father-in-law sent his young wife, accompanied by the children, to Camp Morris, to set up for the *Shabbaton*. Following her husband's directives, she went to a nearby farm to purchase three cases of eggs with 36 dozen per case. When she arrived at Camp Morris, she entered the kitchen, determined to soft-boil some eggs for her hungry brood. The eggs refused to allow themselves to be peeled, and aghast at the thought of three cases of difficult eggs, she called the farmer. The farmer duly informed her that the eggs were fresh — only aged eggs were peel-worthy — and he advised her to lay the eggs out in the sun where they would age appropriately. Students clambering off the bus that Friday were



Speaking at a Yeshivas Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin function. Rav Aharon Schechter is at right.



With Rav Nossan Tzvi Finkel.



With his son, Rav Eliyohu Yanofsky.

greeted with the sight of hundreds of eggs lying in the sun. Such was the devotion of my beloved mother-in-law. The subsequent lesson that was shared by her proud husband would inform generations of students about the power of a wife's dedication to her husband's ideals.

As Rav Aharon Kahn mentioned at the *levayah*, a central theme of Rabbi Yanofsky's life was *achrayus* — responsibility. As a principal, he keenly felt responsible for his faculty, providing them with subsidized foodstuffs before *Pesach* and refusing to take a paycheck before ensuring their remuneration. His legendary commitment to his students was not confined to their four years under his tutelage. A successful matchmaker, he and his wife were responsible for over 100 *shidduchim*, a staggering amount for any individual, let alone a busy principal. This incredible feat was a byproduct of his persistence and the ambition he had for his students. His efforts were blessed with a hefty dose of *siyatta dishmaya*.

In today's climate of *shidduch* incentivization, it is difficult to fathom a principal who encouraged his students to give him token acknowledgment and save their money for their own needs. His pride and joy in their accomplishments were akin to the feelings of a parent. For many years to come, he would provide wise counsel and support, carrying them in his heart. And throughout the years, as he invested herculean efforts, his wife stood faithfully at his side, raising her children. "Mr." Yanofsky took a meager salary from the school, yet devoted his life and energies to develop rich and enduring educational models for *chinuch*.

The Yanofsky family fulfilled the dictum of *Chazal* that one's home be widely open to the public. The spectrum of their guest list spanned luminaries such as Rav Aharon Chodosh who was hosted in their home with his *rebbetzin* whenever he came to America, as well as the downtrodden and most needy members of the community.

I vividly recall my sister-in-law's wedding day. The saintly Ribnitzer Rebbe would be arriving, in fulfillment of a promise made many years before. As the van (with the *rebbe*) approached, eager family members stood in line, clamoring for an opportunity to see the *rebbe*. My father-in-law intervened and firmly insisted that a disabled student stand first in line.

Chagrined but proud, we understood the implication: All his students were his daughters. His home was a haven for students and their families who experienced *shalom bayis*, financial, or health difficulties. A student whose sibling died in the middle of the night called Mr. Yanofsky. "I was unsure whom to call, and Mr. Yanofsky's face rose unbidden. I felt that he could deal with the difficult situation. I called him and without hesitation he came over to help us."

He had no sense of privacy or entitlement. He forswore vacations and never stopped to smell the roses, erecting a Taj Mahal of *chesed*, an outgrowth of 80 years of building and accomplishment. The many hours, days, weeks, months, and years of his life that he devoted to the *klal* bore eloquent testimony to his love for his fellow Jew and his huge

capacity for giving. The modalities included *Shabbatons*, fundraising, classes, personally serving lunch in the school's cafeteria, *shidduchim*, counsel, providing wardrobes for needy students and brides, supporting faculty members, and so much more, but the underlying principles remained constant: love them and care for their needs.

An alumna who today is a well-respected literature teacher vividly recalls that one day, a generally law-abiding student walked into school with sneakers, in contravention of school rules. Discerning that this particular young lady must be violating school rules for a reason, he gently inquired. She ruefully confessed that she had worn out her shoes and could not afford another pair. Before long, she walked out of his office, gratefully clutching an envelope with an ample sum of money to purchase shoes and other wardrobe staples — “Mr. Yanofsky saw beyond the sole to the soul.”

The last few years were difficult. Wan, enfeebled, and battle-scarred from surgery, he would often look at me pleadingly and say, “Tsvivie, you remember the real me.”

Rabbi Moshe Yanofsky is survived by his devoted wife and helpmate, Mrs. Sharon Yanofsky, and his children, Rabbi Shimon Yanofsky, Dr. Noson Yanofsky, Rabbi Meir Leib Yanofsky, and Mrs. Golda Baila Feigenbaum. He was tragically predeceased by his eldest son, Rav Eliyohu Yanofsky, a brilliant *talmid chochom* and *menahel* and a giant in his own right, who was the acknowledged leader of the Yanofsky clan. Rabbi Moshe mourned the death of his son until the day he died, although nary a word of complaint left his lips.

Today, I am a principal, and while my panoply of exposures over the years includes many esteemed *mechanchim* and *mechanchos*, my lighthouse is “Mr. Yanofsky.” It is his unwavering belief and optimism in the power of *chinuch* and students that animates my career and informs many of my decisions.

Above all, it is his expansive heart that continues to beat in countless numbers of *mechanchos* that dot the landscape of our nation. Our best expression of gratitude is living up to the ideals of *chinuch* and pure *chesed* that he embodied. In an era that touts faculty and student empowerment, we can look back fondly to a consummate educator that believed in all of us, teachers and students. With good cheer and zest for living, he encouraged us and prodded us to become our best selves.

Recently, Blimi Frank, a former Machon student, reached out to her fellow alumnae and requested of them to send her their memorable reflections of a principal who lingered on in their minds and in their hearts. They heard that Mr. Yanofsky was hospitalized and they were hoping that these communications would restore the familiar smile to the beloved face. I spoke with Blimi during *shivah* and she shared the following: “It was absolutely worth the effort. When I connected with Mrs. Yanofsky, she invited me to visit her husband. I was the last student, parent, and teacher (a unique fusion and status) to enjoy a visit with an iconic educator, our Mr. Yanofsky. I will treasure

that experience for a lifetime.”

To quote but a few of the excerpts:

“You taught us that if you have self-respect, you will be respected by all. You

our *Yiddishkeit* and worldview tremendously. Only now that I am a school leader myself do I recognize that he spoke the language of truth with courage, clarity, and



With Rav Dovid Schustal.



With Rav Yisroel Neuman.

treated us like adults, when we were in fact shy, insecure adolescents. And for those who didn't have self-respect, you tried so hard to give them something about which to respect themselves. I always made sure to be prepared for your classes, mostly because I loved what and how you taught, and the fantastic energy with which you taught it.

“In 2011, with a family of six children, I graduated as an RN from Ocean County College. Since then, I have been working in the field of Clinical Reimbursement in Skilled Nursing Facilities. Remember, I always loved my numbers! The *Ribono Shel Olam* has a job for everyone, and for me the synthesis of my nursing knowledge and my love of math allows me to feel productive daily. You would *shep nachas* from my ‘aha’ moments! *Boruch Hashem*, today I oversee 15 high-level RNs in eight nursing homes and continue to crunch my numbers every day.”

“Despite the fact that Mr. Yanofsky was our General Studies Principal, he influenced

warmth. Perhaps that is why he succeeded in making such a lasting impact on me. Mr. Yanofsky, you held us to very high standards and we greatly desired to meet your expectations for dignity and refinement.” (*Estee Friedman-Stefansky, 1994*)

“I also really appreciated the way you went to bat for your students, always trying to *redt shidduchim* well after we graduated. I was dating someone for a while, probably at least five years after graduating, and Mr. Yanofsky heard that I was dumped, with no warning. I remember my mother speaking with Mr. Yanofsky and his fury and his assurance that he wouldn't let that guy go out with any more of ‘his girls’ ever again — he wouldn't let a guy treat us like that!” (*Michal*)

“It was either 1994 or 1995, and we were in Mrs. Fleisher's computer class. Most of the class was goofing around. You walked in, and I don't recall everything you said but one phrase stuck. You said with such gusto, ‘Computers are the wave of the future!’ I'm

not sure if anyone else in my 1996 alumni class remembers this incident, but I went on to become a high school IT instructor, web developer, project manager and currently a data engineer and lead analyst at Credit Suisse. It is because of you, who provided Machon girls with the possibility of a career in computer science, that I am where I am today — still enjoying a career in data analytics and programming. I'm extremely grateful to you, and I tell this story to young and old alike about my favorite principal, Mr. Yanofsky.” (*Aviva Klugmann Spitzer*)

“Here is a very abridged update on my life, and hopefully a *nachas* report: *Boruch Hashem*, I am *zoche* to be a full-time mommy. The experience I had in the Machon play helped develop my musical abilities, and I write lyrics for different *frum* composers (mainly Boruch Levine and Simcha Leiner) and for different organizations and institutions (the Mir, Yeshivas Darchei Torah in Far Rockaway, Cleveland Bikur Cholim, etc.). I try to use my ability to inspire people and bring *nachas* to Hashem. I wrote a song for Rabbi Dovid Newman's V'haarev Na program, which was viewed over 1.7 million times and has helped expand his incredible Gemara program throughout the world. Any of my *zechusim* and my children's *zechusim* are YOUR *zechusim*, Mr. Yanofsky. I hope that all of this brings you tremendous *nachas*.” (*Ruchie Torgow, 2000*)

“You are in the hearts, minds, and prayers of your dear Machon alumni. There are thousands of us, but only one Mr. Yanofsky whom we always speak of with a smile.” (*Dassy Waldman, 2007*)

“My name is now Mrs. Streicher and my daughter attends Manhattan High School for Girls, so I feel like I'm back with the Yanofskys! Mr. Yanofsky, your smile is something that greeted me every day for four years of high school! You were the voice of reason at Bais Yaakov, always so practical, so warm and loving, and always with the best jokes!” (*Devoiry Pollack Streicher, GO president, 1985*)

“He said what needed to be said, chastising us when necessary; but we always knew in our heart of hearts that he loved us.” (*A grateful alumna*)

“Mrs. Yanofsky, thank you for being the amazing *eizer kenegdo* to our special principal and allowing him to be there for us.” (*Batsheva Flagler*)

I thank you, Batsheva. I must confess that this was my favorite submission. As a former student and daughter-in-law, I can bear eloquent testimony that this expression of gratitude is richly deserved.

A grandchild shared a very telling story with me, that I feel encapsulates the sentiments of many of his former *talmidos*, hailing back to the Bais Yaakov days and reaching to the present. Amid the hustle and bustle of *Purim*, back in the day, when Mr. Yanofsky was principal at Machon, one visitor turned to the grandchild and said, “You don't know me, but your grandfather saved my life. I can never repay him.”

I echo that sentiment, as do thousands of other *talmidos*.

Yeht zichro boruch.



Gail Greenwald, 11th Grade

IN TRIBUTE TO BOBBY a"h

A Precious Diamond

The past five months have been so challenging for my family and me. Yet, while seeing my grandmother as we had never seen her before, was difficult, it was always a big inspiration to visit Bobby. Her face, which was visibly pained, would brighten up whenever she saw me, and I would hear her say that it's all from HaShem. But, I don't want to focus on the past five months, I want to talk about the amazing life my Bobby lived.

I can't think of one word to perfectly describe the way my Bobby lived life. She gave me advice, helped me study, and put family first no matter what. She always believed in HaShem when things got tough, and encouraged me to do the same.

Bobby was an individual who not only inspired family and close friends, but used all of her *kochos* to help others. She gave a weekly *Parsha shiur* to over 100 women, *l'iluy nishmas* her father, Shlomo Scharf, a"h.

I was recently scrolling through the stream of texts which passed between Bobby and me, and I noticed this one: "Hi Bobby I have a big test tomorrow and I'm a little nervous. Can you please daven for me?" That was pretty typical of our communications; I would turn to her for help or advice or just some extra *tefilos and chizuk*.



My grandmother suffered from many medical ailments throughout her life but somehow, she still had an incredible connection with HaShem. Whether it was *Tehillim* or everyday davening, it was always wonderful to watch and partake in her spiritual moments.

While Bobby was unwell, I had the privilege of reciting *berachos* with her. One day I opened the *siddur* and tried to figure out how to place it so that Bobby could see the words. I needn't have worried, because she knew every word by heart, even in her difficult times. That is something that will forever be for me a model of deep connection to the *קרן הברכה*.

My Bobby was the smartest person I knew, in so many different areas. I could ask her any question related to *Tanach*, and know surely that by the end of the day she would find an answer. She was so learned that she could open up any *mefarsh* and clearly and succinctly explain his thoughts to me. That is something that I now miss so much.

Throughout the months leading up to my bas mitzva I went to Bobby's house every Monday night, we would do homework and have dinner together and then we would conclude the visit learning about Rochel Emainu. During this time we formed a list of different traits that Rochel Emainu embodied. As my bas mitzva approached and we were finishing up our learning, I so clearly remember Bobby telling me that I possess the capability to work on myself to have every trait on the list especially now that I





was a bas mitzva. This special time with my Bobby was not only an incredible weekly experience for me, but it also a time for Bobby to demonstrate to me that she was someone who really believed in me and my potential completely.

My Bobby was really my number one fan and always supported me unconditionally. If I was doing something incorrectly, Bobby would tell me in the most loving way how I could make it right, without making me feel badly about myself.

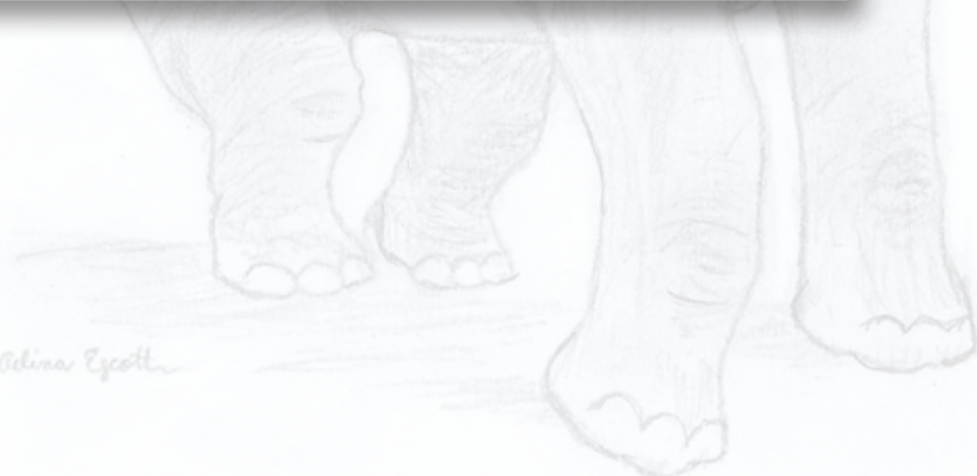
There are endless things to learn from my Bobby *a"h* and over time I know I will discover more. She was a true role model for me and many others and I will forever remember her that way. Bobby, I hope you are looking down at your family, beaming with *nachas*, as we continue your outstanding legacy.

☺ Rachel Diamond



Aliya Levin, 9th Grade

aliya '22



Adina Escott

Bobby Schlafrig: A Tribute



Growing up, my grandmother was privileged to live with her grandmother. My mother had the same good fortune, and lived with hers. And I had the *zechus* of living right next door to my Bobby, Devorah Chana Schlafrig *a"h*. She passed away two weeks ago on a Friday night, which is said to be a *segulah* for holy people to go straight to *Gan Eden*. I cannot think of anyone more deserving of that gift.

Bobby epitomized *emunah* and *bitachon*. *Bitachon*, absolute trust in Hashem, can defy nature. That concept, which is formulated in the *Sha'ar Habitachon*, was taught to me by Rebbetzin Twersky זר"ד. It was modeled for me, day in and day out, by my grandmother. Throughout her challenging life, her mantra, no matter what, was "*Hodu La'Shem ki tov ki l'olam chasdo*". Thank Hashem for He is good, His kindness endures forever. Her conviction that

He would guide her through her struggles, and that whatever He did was for the best, was rewarded with *nissim*. She survived the war in Europe, was saved from a major car accident, and recovered from the serious medical ailments for which she was hospitalized, countless times. Including coming home fifteen minutes before *Pesach* after a grueling bout with Covid.

Bobby's positivity was remarkable when you consider the events of her life. She grew up in Lancut, Poland and moved from place to place in Europe; France, Ukraine, and Siberia. Despite the ravages of war and losing two brothers along the way, she never lost hope. The importance of remaining hopeful was, she believed, the most important lesson her father had taught her, and one that she lived by. She was truly a fighter even after being told that she had only one year left to live, which turned into four. She pushed through one crisis after another, yet continued to play tennis well into her eighties.

In addition to the optimism which Bobby tried to impart to her family, there was her trademark goodness. She truly cared about everyone and wanted the best for them. This was such a natural part of her character, that she could not understand why anyone would be selfish. Once, a woman who was visiting tasted one of Bobby's cakes. Impressed, she asked for the recipe. My grandmother ran to write it down for her, and the guest expressed surprise. She was used to *balabustas* who hesitated to share their recipes, or even



worse, left out ingredients so they wouldn't turn out as good! My grandmother was shocked. What greater joy could there be than to have someone benefit from something you have? I was often the recipient of this generosity. So many times Bobby excitedly gave me a juicy fruit she had bought for herself; apparently, it was more delicious to watch me savor it than to eat it herself.

When I think of Bobby, my mind swims with many precious moments that filled my childhood. Each reminds me of a *midah* she embodied or a lesson that she taught. For example, there was the Friday afternoon when I wanted to ask her something, but she had just begun to light candles. It seemed to me that she poured out her heart forever in the glow of the lights. I now understand that as I waited impatiently for her attention, it was wholly focused on me, among all of her descendants.

יהי זכרה ברוך

🕊️ Ayelet Herskovitz

Adina Eycoth

Rashi Bell, 11th Grade





Shana Feder, 12th Grade

Adina Eycoth

We Are All Unique

The upcoming *chag* is about the rebuilding and rededication of the *mizbe'ach*—hence its name, “Chanukah,” as in “*chanukas ha-mizbe'ach*” —the dedication of the *mizbe'ach*. *Mizb'chos* were traditionally constructed from natural stone from the ground, untouched by iron tools. This was very different from the construction method we see in other building projects mentioned in Tanach, which used handcrafted brick. For example, in the case of the builders of Migdal Bavel, the *pasuk* specifically mentions וַתְּהִי לָהֶם לֵהֶם הַלְבְּנָה לְאֲבָן¹ — “they used brick in place of stone.”

What is the significance of stone as opposed to brick?

Every stone is different and uniquely contributes to the whole structure. On the other hand, bricks are exactly the same, identical rectangles formed from clay. Throughout Tanach, we see instances wherein stones represent Bnei Yisrael, such as the stones of Yehoshua's *mizbe'ach* in the Yarden—וַיְהִימוּ לָכֶם אִישׁ² וַיִּקַּח אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁתֵּי אֲבָנִים אֶחָד מֵעַל־שִׁכְמוֹ לְמִסְפַּר שְׁבַטֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל³—and of Eliyahu's *mizbe'ach* on Har HaCarmel - עָשְׂרָה אֲבָנִים כְּמִסְפַּר שְׁבַטֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל⁴. This is because the *mizbe'ach* represents the way we see the members of Klal Yisrael. The special nature of our nation is that we each have an important role to play in our community; we are all unique, like the stones of the *mizbe'ach*. In contrast, authoritarian societies like that of Migdal Bavel saw their people as bricks, in that they were all the same and merely a means to an end. As the Midrash tells us, if a man fell off the tower and died, no one even stopped working to look at him, but if someone dropped a tool, everyone wept over having to replace it.⁴ The important thing in their eyes was not the contribution of every individual, but rather the completion of the building. It is not so in Klal Yisrael.

When we say “אֵז אֲנִי מְזַמֵּר בְּשִׁיר מְזֻמָּר חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ” in Ma'oz Tzur, we are of course *davening* for the return of the בית המקדש. However, we are also being *mispalet* for an ideal time when Klal Yisrael will be embodied by the *mizbe'ach*, in that every person will play their specific role and value the roles of others.

🕊️ Serach Soloveichik

1 בראשית יא: ג

2 יהושע ד:ה

3 מלכים א' יח: לא

4 פרקי דרבי אליעזר פרק כ"ד

Turning on the Flame of Judaism

We light candles before Shabbos, before *yom tov*, and most noticeably on Chanukah. Why is that? What is so special about fire that it is such a crucial part of Judaism?

If we look at nature, a flame is the only thing that can give away a part of itself to others yet will never diminish. If you give someone a part of your drink, some of your food, or even some of your money, you will have less for yourself—but a spark can ignite hundreds of additional flames, while the original flame still burns as brightly as before. Chanukah was a time when the Jewish nation was at its lowest level. The *Bais Hamikdash* was destroyed, and we were decimated. How do we recover from such a loss? We turn to the flame. As long as an ember is still alive, it can spread like a wildfire to those around us. We just need one spark to revive our *neshamos*.

Before Shabbos and *yom tov*, we put away our work and go into the day with complete *emunah* in Hashem. We know that even though we are taking off from work, we are not missing out on anything at all. As such, we light candles as a reminder to give ourselves, and those around us, strength. Although we might be stopping our work, we should not lose faith, nor will our flame diminish.

When we light our Chanukah *menorahs*, we are re-affirming our faith in Hashem. We are showing the world that no matter what comes our way, we just need a tiny glow to start a blazing fire. You can hold a candle in any direction, but the flame will always burn straight up towards the heavens. Likewise, we should constantly turn our hearts and prayers to Hashem in *shamayim*. When people step back and take in the awe and glory of thousands of Chanukah *menorahs* being lit simultaneously, it is like a roaring fire—an unstoppable force that can leap across all boundaries and break through all barriers. May we be *zoche* that our *neshamos* should burn bright, and be a shining light unto those around us.

☞ Ruki Schwartz

Adina Eycott



Reggie Klein, 12th Grade

reggie

The Essence of Chanukah

When lighting the Chanukah candles, why do we light eight candles and not seven? Even though the candles remained lit for eight nights, the Jews had enough oil for one night, so it would appear that only seven of those nights were miraculous.

The Maharal challenges this idea, stating that nature is also a miracle. Oil's natural ability to burn is just as miraculous as the obvious miracle of the candles burning without the necessary amount of oil. The Ramban states that a true believer is one who understands that everything in life is a miracle. The grades you receive in school (whether you studied hard or not) or the fact that the sun is shining are both arranged by Hashem, just as open miracles like the splitting of the sea or the miracle of Chanukah are obviously arranged by Hashem. In order to show that we consider nature to be as miraculous as the supernatural, we light eight candles—seven for the extra days the *menorah* stayed lit, and one for the day it burned naturally.

Internalizing this idea is truly a challenge. One would think that the more you do, the more you get. One would think that results are a direct consequence of the effort that we put into something. However, in reality, everything is from Hashem, both the obvious miracles and the ones that we don't consider as obvious. When a person lights Chanukah candles, it is a time to recognize the daily occurrence of miracles that happen regularly "*ba'zeman ha'zeh*."

The Gemara (Talmud Bavli Shabbos 21b-22a) states in the name of Rav Kahana that just as a *sukkah* is *pasul* if it is higher than twenty *amos*, so too the candles of the *menorah* should not be higher than twenty *amos*. In the next line, the Gemara quotes another opinion of Rav Kahana—namely, that when the Torah states that the pit Yosef was thrown into was empty and also that it had no water inside of it (Bereishis 37:24), it actually meant that the pit was only empty of water but that it did have snakes and scorpions within. This seems like a non sequitur, since the discussion in the surrounding lines in the Gemara (both before and after) deal exclusively with laws of *neiros* Chanukah. What is the connection between an empty, scorpion-filled pit and the maximum permitted height of Chanukah candles?

On Chanukah, the Jewish people experienced something openly miraculous. On a daily basis, everything "normal" that we experience is also from Hashem and is also a miracle. In contrast, the Greeks believed in recognizing human achievement and strength; this is well-demonstrated by the Olympics. They glorified only the magnificent and ignored the daily good. If a *menorah* were placed high up, it might confirm this erroneous Greek belief that only something magnificent and extraordinary is worth celebrating, but not something "lowly" and everyday. By placing the *menorah* lower down, we learn to appreciate all the good we experience on a daily level. If we don't appreciate these "everyday" miracles and experiences, then our version of the *mitzvah* is as empty as Yosef's pit.

If one recognizes that Hashem is in charge of the obvious and the less obvious miracles, then it makes perfect sense for the holiday to have eight days instead of seven days. Let us all get to the heart of what the true message of Chanukah is all about. Hashem wants us to recognize that His hand is in all that goes on in our lives. Happy Chanukah.

Adina Egoth

🌸 Lizzie Boczko
Source: Rabbi Moshe Tuvia Lieff

הנרות
האלו
קודש
הם

נר שבת

נר חנוכה

Mr. Stephen Klein, zt"l, Mekadesh Hashabbos

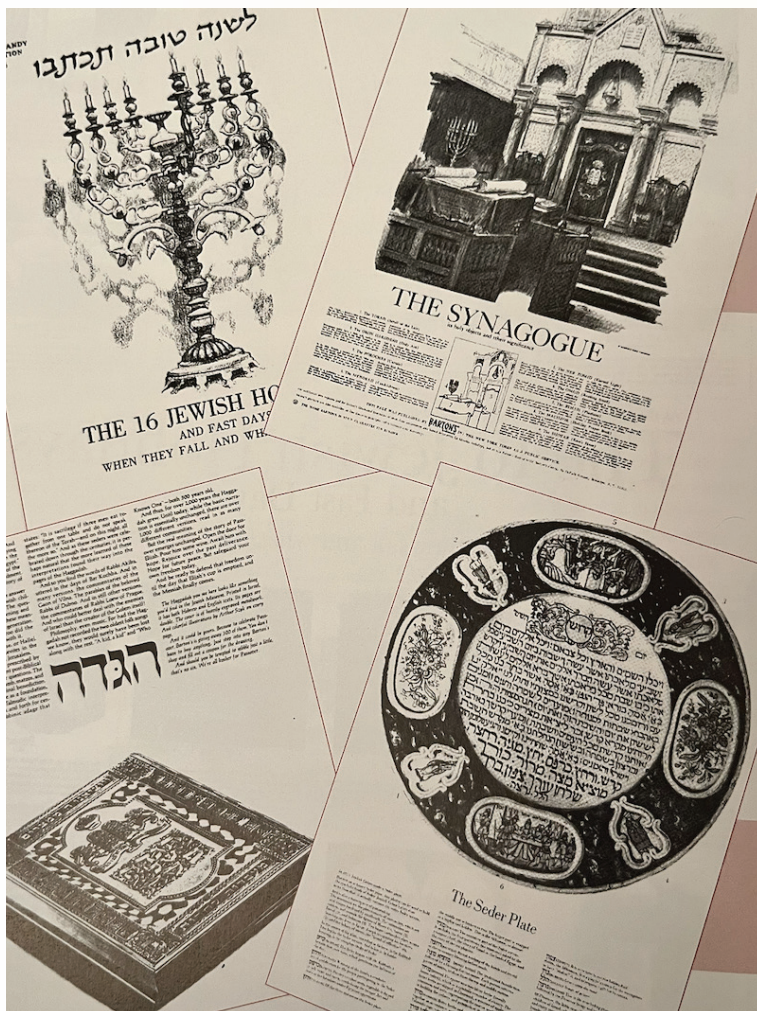


Every *Shabbos*, for thousands of years, Jews recite the *berachah* 'Mekadesh haShabbos,' in praise of Hashem, Who sanctifies the *Shabbos*. And every *Shabbos*, for thousands of years, there are extraordinary Jews who go to great lengths to do the same. My great-grandfather, Mr. Stephen Klein, was such a Jew. He arrived on U.S. shores in 1938 and one year later opened the first Barton's Bonbonniere shop, styled after the Viennese chocolate company owned by his family before the war. The chocolate was of the finest caliber and strictly kosher, and the store was closed on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*, both rarities at that time. It wasn't long before Barton's brand was widely recognized for its outstanding quality; by 1950, the company had achieved icon status, and by 1978 it had expanded to include 3000 stores within the country. Every one of the retail stores was closed on *Shabbos* and *Yomtov*. This, in and of itself, would have made my great-grandfather a *mekadesh haShabbos* of legendary proportions. Yet he was driven to do more, to educate the public, and most importantly, unaffiliated Jews, about the Judaism he knew and loved. Among his many creative educational undertakings were advertisements he placed in newspapers around the country - including the New York Times - announcing the time for Sabbath candle lighting. Those ads were run in the 1940s and '50s.



Half a century later, in the mid-1990's, a Jewish advertising executive had the same idea. For five years, a small advertisement appeared at the bottom of the front page of The New York Times each Friday, reminding Jewish women to light candles and stip-





ulating the time to do so. And then, in the year 2000, there was an unforgettable moment of Jewish pride. The New York Times printed a futuristic front page for January 1, 2100, and, unbelievably, the candle lighting announcement was right there at the bottom! When asked why he had included it, the Catholic production manager explained that while it is generally impossible to predict the future, there is no doubt that in the next millennium, Jewish women will still be lighting candles just before sunset on Friday.

A few years ago, a widely-read Jewish newspaper published an article recalling that prediction. I was startled to read that the philanthropist who underwrote the 1990's weekly advertisement was Mr. Stephen Klein. My great-grandfather had passed away long before that! It was no doubt written in error.

Or was it? While it is incorrect to say that he designed or funded the 1990's *Hadlakas Haneiros* newspaper notices, might it not be true that his front-page announcements decades earlier had broadened the

Jewish American horizon and made such an endeavor possible? The world's awareness of *Klal Yisrael's* dedication to *Shabbos* in general, and *licht-bentchen* in particular, can be attributed in no small measure to those *original* ads, conceived of and implemented by my truly great, great-grandfather. It is humbling, yet fills me with pride, all at the same time.

🕊️ Reggie Klein

As we usher in *Shabbos Chanukah* each year, we are engulfed in an aura of light. The *neiros Shabbos* burn brightly in their regular weekly spot, while the *Chanukah* candles flickering joyfully near the window. Inevitably, we recall the dictum of Rav Huna, הַרְגִּיל בְּנֵר הַיַּיִן לִיָּה בְּנִים תִּלְמִידֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים, one who is accustomed to kindle lights will have scholarly sons. Rashi connects this assertion to the words of Shlomo *Hamelech*, כִּי נֵר, מִצֵּה וְתוֹרָה אֹר, and explains that the flames of both *Shabbos* and *Chanukah*, which represent the parents' devotion to *mitzvos*, will yield an afterglow of children dedicated to the study of Torah. Inspired by this commonality between *Shabbos* and *Chanukah*, we asked MHS students to reflect on how their appreciation of *Shabbos* has intensified with time, and on the meaning which the *Shabbos* candles hold for them.

How did your appreciation of *Shabbos* get stronger as you grew older?

My appreciation for *Shabbos* grew as my connection with Hashem got stronger.

☞ Rabbi Gelley

What used to be 'just another *Shabbos* to rest and not have school' when I was younger...

turned into magical moments... It took a while to cultivate this... There is a certain aura that comes to each home on *Shabbos* and I think we all feel it differently at every stage and age. Connecting to this very soft 'feeling' is a place to start. In those moments I enjoy taking out a *siddur*, choosing a *pasuk* from any of the *Shabbos tefilos* that I associate with a song, and singing that song. I think about the words and my attachment to *Shabbos* is strengthened.

☞ Mrs. Alpert

As a teenager I thought of *Shabbos* as a day to relax because there was not much else to do, but as I got older and had more responsibilities my whole perspective changed. *Shabbos* became a day that forced you to stop working and disconnect from homework, studying or teaching. If not for *Shabbos*, I don't think I would ever stop looking at my phone.

☞ Ms. Lakritz

As I got older, my weekday life became busier, and packed with so many different activities and commitments...I began to appreciate *Shabbos* more because it allowed me to enjoy time spent with my friends and family without any distractions or stress.

☞ Elky Schwartz

Watching my younger siblings roll into *Shabbos* like it's just another week coming to an end, brings me back to a time when I had little to no connection with the twenty five hours to come. Now I appreciate so much more about the day, and not just the fact that after a long and hard school week I get to rest. *Shabbos* gives me time to connect with family and friends. Maybe catch up on some reading, with some time away from my phone. Or just the opportunity to talk to my sisters. I am also very grateful to my parents for making *Shabbos* extra special by cooking the most delicious foods, and giving very inspirational *divrei Torah*.

☞ Baylie Habib

As I got older I began to realize what the day was really all about. It became a day that was about disconnecting yourself from the outside, secular world, to focus on connecting with Hashem. *Shabbos* comes after a busy and sometimes challenging week, and gives you peace of mind so that you can step out of your usual worries and stress.

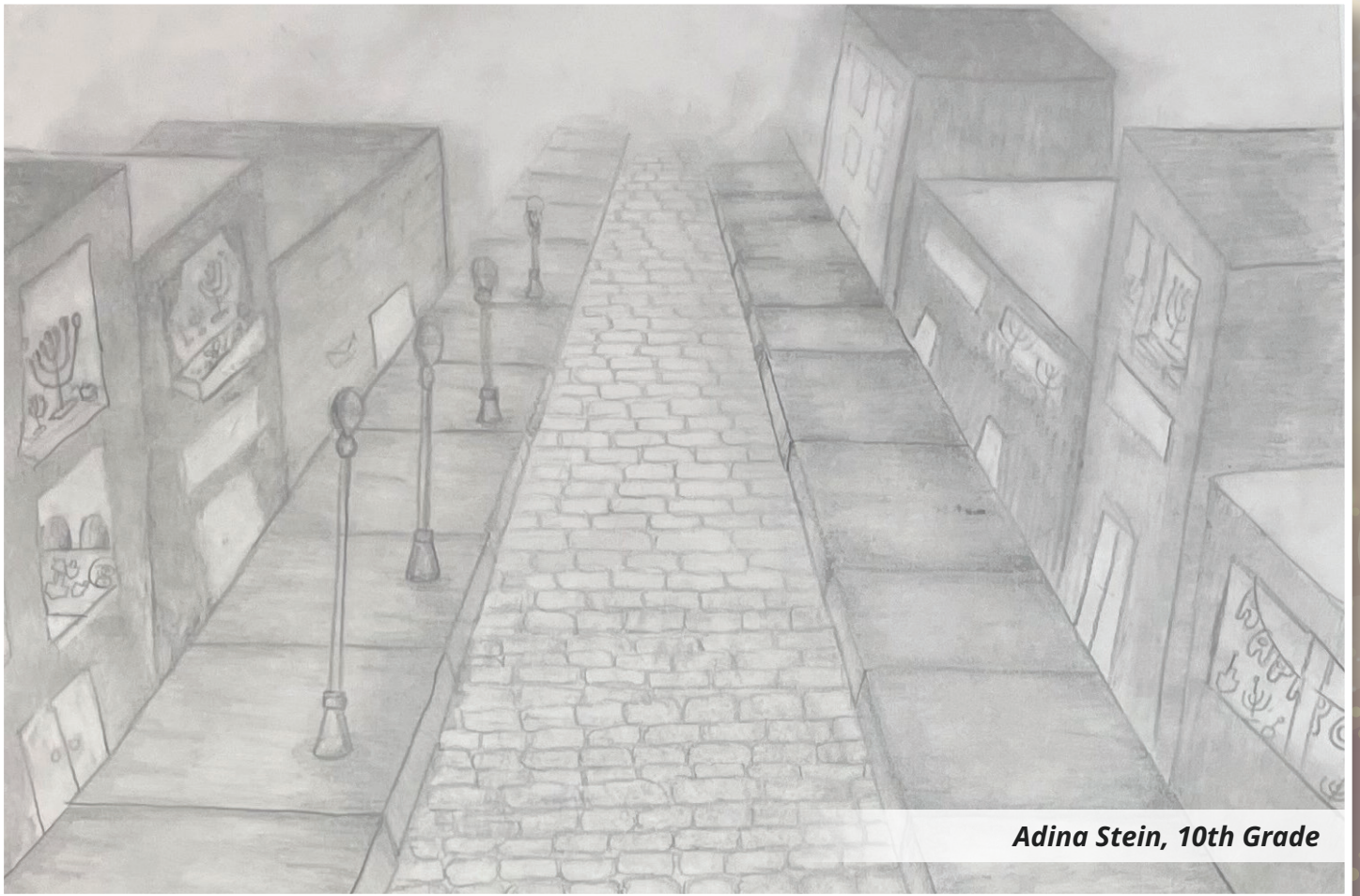
☞ Dassi Hakimi

Because I am a boarding student, I have really started to appreciate *Shabbos*. All week long I look forward to getting a relaxing break from New York, and going home to Connecticut where I am greeted by the smells of *Shabbos*.

☞ Sarala Fingerer

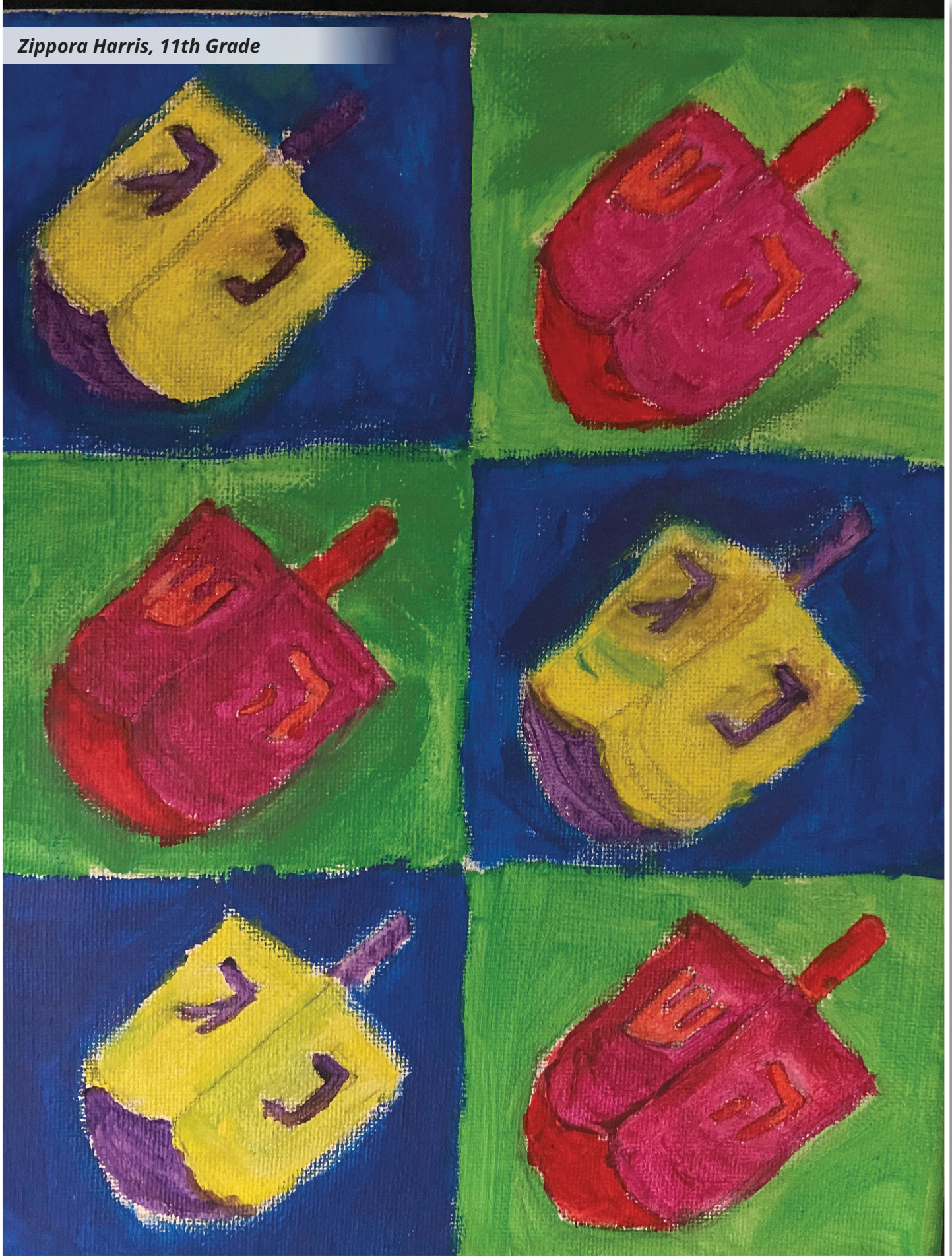
When I was younger, I viewed *Shabbos* as simply the last day of the week. As I got older and had more responsibilities, I began to look forward to *Shabbos* as the day of peace which would grant me quality time with my family. Every day, at the end of *davening*, when I say *Hayom yom ___ b'Shabbos*, I truly feel that I am counting down to the holiest day of the week.

☞ Esther Stein



Adina Stein, 10th Grade

Zippora Harris, 11th Grade



Shabbos was always a nice break from our busy school days, but as I got older, I began to appreciate the dedication that *Klal Yisrael* has always shown to this special day. We give up things that are important to us (for example, sadly, our phones,) to sing *Kabbalas Shabbos*, eat three *seudos*, and spend time thinking about Hashem. Now, I take pride in being part of the amazing nation that is happy to do this.

🕊️ Shani Bron

How does your family make candle-lighting for *Shabbos* a special, meaningful time?

To make the time more meaningful, my children used to gather around during *hadlokas haneiros*, very conscious not to make any noise that might disturb my wife as she davened by the candles.

🕊️ Rabbi Gelley

When we visited my second cousins in Israel, we observed that they lit oil *Shabbos* candles. They explained that the reward for using oil is children who are *talmidei chachamim*. So we started lighting oil candles as well.

🕊️ Chana Schwartz

My grandmother *a"h* used to spend a very long time at the candles, crying. No matter what noise or commotion was happening around her, she was focused, crying to Hashem, thanking Him, davening with her full heart for each individual child, grandchild, and great-grandchild. I was *zochah* to see her lighting almost every week and will never forget the way she connected to Hashem through her *Shabbos* candles - it felt as if He was standing right there in front of her.

🕊️ Yael Herskovitz

Our family gathers around the table as my mother and I both recite *I'hadlik ner shel Shabbos Kodesh*. Ever since I can remember I have been lighting candles alongside my mother, never missing a *Shabbos*. Standing in the glow of the illuminated *neiros* we sing *V'zakeini* and make our way to shul.

🕊️ Esther Kaiman

After my mother lights candles, she names each of our great-grandparents and tells my sister and me how much they love us. In doing so, my mother causes us to remember how our grandparents stood by the candles before us, and that we need to continue their legacy.

🕊️ Danielle Mandelbaum

It is my family's *minhag* to begin lighting *Shabbos* candles at the age of three, so this *mitzvah* is a part of who I am. I remember that from the time we were little my mother would call all the sisters together to light our candles. Every *Shabbos*, I look at all of our *neiros*, and really feel the *Shechinah* of Hashem resting in our home on the holiest day of the week.

🕊️ Ahuva Jacobson

Every Friday night, after my family gathers around the *neiros Shabbos*, a few of our neighbors come over. All of us women join in a *kumzitz* which climaxes with the singing of *Lecha Dodi* and brings warmth to my *Shabbos*.

🕊️ Renée Reichman

What are some practical ways you and your family elevate *Shabbos* and connect to its depth?

The first way I try to make *Shabbos* special is through cooking and baking. Because I enjoy these activities, it puts me in a happy state of mind which then becomes associated with *Shabbos*. And once I've invested time and energy into *Shabbos* preparations, the *Shabbos* experience itself becomes that much more meaningful. Try it - it works amazingly!

The second way I try to elevate *Shabbos* is by connecting, on some level, with the *parshah*. There are countless Torah personalities and resources out there that make *parshah*-learning accessible and meaningful. I have two personal favorites. First, and in a league of his own, is Rashi. Learning *Chumash* with Rashi on *Shabbos* requires an investment of time and effort, but the satisfaction I derive from this study is tremendous. In addition, is the array of online *shiurim* given by Rabbi Breitowitz of *Ohr Somayach*. His words resound in my kitchen every Friday morning and touch me deeply.

🕊️ Mrs. Sara Tendler

At every *Shabbos* meal we go through and sing every *zemer* in the *bentcher*, from the front to the back. While we sing the songs my children like to dance and it elevates my whole family's *Shabbos* and makes them happy.

🕊️ *Mrs. Rosensweig*

In my family we try to make the *Shabbos* atmosphere enhance as much of our week as possible. Our table is set on Wednesday or Thursday night so that already then there is an anticipation for *Shabbos*, anytime someone passes the dining room and sees the table set, they are instantly reminded that *Shabbos* is coming. Additionally, at our *Shabbos* table my father is very makpid that no matter what there is always at least one dvar Torah and zemiros at our table which totally uplifts our *Shabbos* and enables us to connect to the deeply to *Shabbos* and its beauty.

🕊️ *Elky Schwartz*

Every Friday night, my father teaches us one of the *lamed tes melachos* in an exciting way so that instead of having pointless conversations we are learning about *Shabbos*.

🕊️ *Ruki Schwartz*

One way my family and I elevate our *Shabbos* is that we decided to learn a hilchos *shabbos* book at our *shabbos* meal.

🕊️ *Miriam Landau*

As I've grown older and have been swamped into the rush of the week, when *Shabbos* comes in, the rush is replaced with a tranquility that I appreciate tremendously. As I say Lecha Dodi, I close my eyes and thank Hashem for the week that has passed, and Daven for the coming week ahead. This reflection can only be done with the calmness that *Shabbos* brings.

🕊️ *Frieda Bamberger*

One thing my family does to elevate *shabbos* is discussing the parsha. We usually go around retelling the ideas we learnt in school about the parsha, than we have parsha question jeopardy. It may get commptive at times because we are all trying to answer the questions, it is all for the sake of torah and *shabbos*. Also, our *shabbos* meals are always filled with zemiros and singing.

🕊️ *Mikaella Inzlicht*

My family and I go to shul pretty regularly and make it a part of our *Shabbos* to hear קריאת התורה and daven with the קהל.

🕊️ *Esther Kaiman*

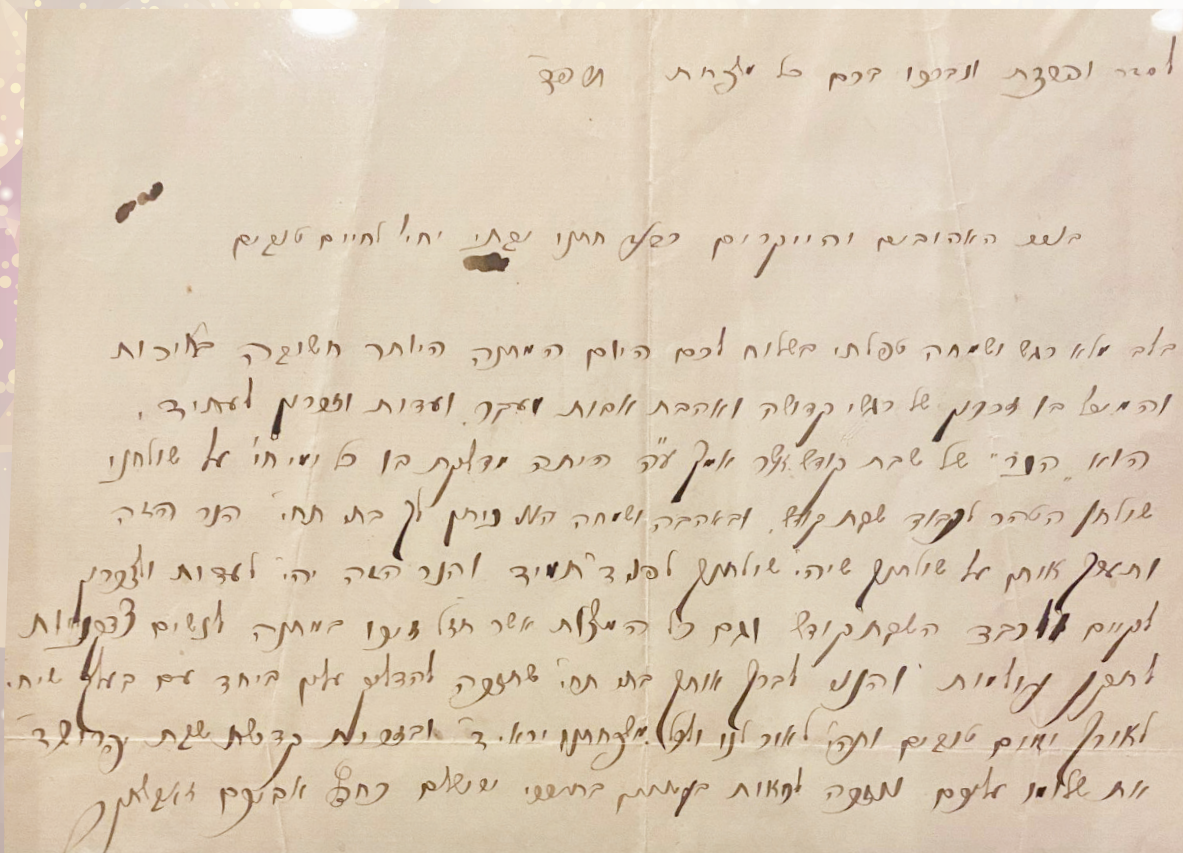
Suri Weiner, 9th Grade

הנרות
הללו...


A Leichter and a Letter

If I close my eyes I am able to conjure up snapshots of perhaps a dozen heartwarming vignettes from my childhood. Ranking high among them is the picture of my 'Bubby from Bronx' *a'h*, holding a match, and standing on her tiptoes as she stretched to reach the highest candle on the vintage seven-branched silver candelabra which she lit every *Erev Shabbos*. Bubby was a giant woman who was small in stature, yet she insisted on using long tapers instead of the regular size Shabbos candles everyone else used. It always puzzled me that she lit all seven, as my father was her only child. But I was a little girl and did not know then what I learned much later.

My grandparents, both of whom were raised in ardently pious and scholarly *Yerushalmi* homes at the start of the twentieth century, were married in the Holy City in 1919. Shortly after the wedding, my grandfather decided (for reasons which are fiercely debated but



will never be confirmed,) to emigrate to America. He traveled alone, because his bride could not come to terms with leaving *Eretz Yisrael*, but ultimately she joined him in New York City. The letters the young couple received from home were filled with loving but firm fatherly advice (from each of their fathers,) imploring them to remain true to the traditions in which they had been nurtured. The fear that their children might succumb to the lure of American life and culture, and fall off the path of their ancestors, is palpable in every word of their correspondences.

I own one, and only one, of those letters. As the eldest grandchild, I inherited the candelabra. My brother, who safeguards and catalogues every family document that comes to light, gave me the finely scripted note that accompanied the candlestick when it was sent across the ocean in the mid-1920's. In it, my great-grandfather, R' Zev Wolf Shachor zt"l, speaks of the joy he feels in presenting his youngest daughter, my Bubby, with the *ner shel Shabbos* that her mother kindled every week. He beseeches her to remember forever the sanctity of the table upon which it stood, and to build a home which is similarly sacred.

Bubby did her father proud. She lit every one of those candles just as her mother had. Her progeny, those who knew her, and those who did not have the privilege, have all been shaped by her unyielding commitment to the spiritual standards of her forebears. And while I wish I could place *my Shabbos* candles in her *leichter*, I dare not do so because its joints are so delicate and appear to be hanging by a thread. But every Friday afternoon, as I recite the *berachah* on my own *ner shel Shabbos*, I look up at the yellowing letter which now hangs on my dining room wall, and find inspiration in my *Elter-Zeide's* words:

הנהר הזה יהיה לעדות ולזכרון לקיים ולכבד השבת קודש וגם כל המצוות אשר חז"ל זיכו במתנה לנשים צדקניות לתקן עולמות

And may this candelabra serve as a testament and a reminder to observe and honor the holy *Shabbos*, as well as all the *mitzvos* which our sages entrusted as a gift to righteous women so that they might elevate the world.

Mighty words, and a glorious legacy of light.

🕊️ Peshi Neuburger

Special Feature: Shabbos Chanukah



All of *Chanukah* was special, but *Shabbos Chanukah* was like the top of the mountain, the highest peak. I didn't think I could enjoy it more until...my oldest daughter got married. The *Shabbos* after *Sheva Brachos* was *Shabbos Chanukah* and the new couple came to be with us. During the Friday night *Seudah*, my (then new) son-in-law said: Do you want to hear the *zemer* לכתוב שבת חנוכה written by the *עזרא* אבן that my father learned in the home of Rav Belsky זצ"ל? I had never heard the *zemer* before and certainly not the *nusach* of Rav Belsky. Chaim proceeded to explain to us that since his father grew up in a more secluded part of Massachusetts where there was not a *Yeshiva Gedolah*, his mother arranged for him to dorm in *Yeshiva Torah V'daas* and he was so fortunate to become a *ben bayis* in the home of Rav Belsky and was there very often for *Shabbos*. For a few years Chaim's father was זונה to hear Rav Belsky and his family sing לכתוב שבת חנוכה every *Shabbos Chanukah* and when he married, this *nigun* became a very special favorite in his own home. Chaim taught it to us and of course we sing it every year (at every *Seudah*!). I have no doubt that this *nigun* will continue to be passed along and cherished, and I see with my own eyes how the love of *Shabbos* can continue to be stretched and enjoyed more and more as time goes by!!

☞ Reb. Fink

זמר נאה לשבת חנוכה

האי האי בית כור תמכור תחכור
תשכור בית כור לצורך שבת חנכה

אכלו משמנים וסולת רבוכה
תורים ורגי יונה שבת וחנכה

הקולות יחדלון מנסוך המים
בבית היין נלון בכל יום פעמים

האי האי בית כור תמכור תחכור
תשכור בית כור לצורך שבת חנכה

האי האי בית כור תמכור תחכור
תשכור בית כור לצורך שבת חנכה

ברבורים אבוסים בשפודים צלויים
וקליל לאישים אחד מן המנוים

מקולות מים רבים תצלנה אדניכם
וכל משרת דם ענבים לא ימוש מפיכם

האי האי בית כור תמכור תחכור
תשכור בית כור לצורך שבת חנכה

האי האי בית כור תמכור תחכור
תשכור בית כור לצורך שבת חנכה

רה וטוב ושמן צלי אש ומצות
ענו ואמרו אמן ואכלו בדיצות



Sarala Fingerer, 10th Grade

The Secret of Silence

There is a famous *drasha* which says that Chanukah was a battle of *ruchnius*, while Purim was a battle of *gashmius*.

Rav Yaakov Bergman explains the battle of *ruchnius* is heavily tied to the *midah* of *shtikah*, which we see throughout the events in Sefer Bereishis. When Yaakov Avinu was living in the house of Lavan, the *medrash* says that Lavan hated Yaakov so much he wanted to kill him. Yaakov's complete *emunah* in Hashem, and his *midah* of *shtikah*, prevented this from happening. Specifically, when Yaakov wanted to leave the house of Lavan, Lavan tried to make the process as hard as possible so that Yaakov would stay and continue to add to his wealth. Lavan made an agreement with Yaakov that he would reward him with sheep if he continued to work for him. When the time came to pay Yaakov, Lavan kept on switching around which sheep he agreed to give. In the end, Yaakov was still left with much wealth. This was due to the fact that Yaakov remained silent and obedient when faced with anything Lavan asked of him.

Later on, when Yaakov met up with Esav, Esav wanted to join their two families together. This was obviously a terrible idea for many reasons. One reason is that the family of Esav would be a bad influence on Yaakov's family. Yaakov prevented this whole situation with the *midah* of *shtikah*. Rabbi Bergman explains that the *midah* of *shtikah* doesn't necessarily mean not speaking at all; it means speaking the minimum amount necessary to take care of a predicament.

In the story of Chanukah, the Jews failed to utilize this *midah* and instead assimilated with the Yevanim. We see something similar with Yosef Hatzadik. The *medrash* explains that Yosef had a feminine *midah* of chattiness while Dinah had a masculine *midah* to go out into town. This was due to the *tefilos* of Leah Imeinu. When Leah was pregnant with Dinah, she saw through *ru'ach ha'kodesh* that her child would be a boy. She realized that it would bring a lot of embarrassment and pain to Rachel, her sister, since it would mean Rachel would end up with fewer sons than the maidservants (as they already knew that the wives of Yaakov would have a total of twelve sons). Leah prayed that her own child would be a girl, so Rachel would be able to have another son. Leah gave birth to a daughter, Dinah, but Dinah retained the masculine *midah* of going out to town. Rachel gave birth to a boy, Yosef, but he retained the feminine *midah* of chattiness.

Yosef allowed his *midah* of chattiness to take over. For example, when Yosef was living with his brothers, he talked too much, causing his brothers to form hatred towards him, which eventually led to them selling him. Later on, when Yosef encountered the wife of Potifar, Yosef could have refused her request by saying three simple words: "*ani ish Ivri.*" Instead, Yosef gave a whole different, longer explanation which allowed the *Yetzer Hara* to creep in and almost influenced him to do the *chet*. Yosef was able to do complete *teshuvah* for this later by remaining silent when he first met his brothers and only revealing his true identity at the proper time.

HaRav HaGa'on Shalom Spitz explains that if we perfect the *midah* of *shtikah*, it will help bring *Mashiach*. In order to do so, we must separate ourselves from the *chukos hagoyim* and make sure the *Yetzer Hara* can't influence us to do *chata'im*— unlike the Jews in the time of Chanukah who were influenced to act like the Greeks.

✍️ Naama Ben Ami

Searching with Light

When we think about Chanukah, one of the first things to come to mind is light, since lighting the *menorah* is the central *mitzvah* of Chanukah. Another *mitzvah* which involves light is *bedikas chametz*. The Gemara (*Pesachim* 7b) says that one should use candlelight to search for the *chametz*, citing the *pasuk* Mishlei 20:27, which associates candles with searching. Mishlei 20:27 states: “נר ה' נשמת אדם חפש כל חדר” — “Man’s soul is Hashem’s lamp, which searches all the innermost parts.” Rav Pincus suggests that just as we use *neiros* to search for *chametz* before Pesach, the *neiros* of Chanukah are also supposed to involve searching for something.

What are we supposed to be searching for on *Chanukah*?

The *seforim hakedoshim* describe Chanukah as the *yontif* of the *Torah She-ba'al Peh*. The entire battle of the *Yevonim* was that they were trying to make Klal Yisroel forget the Torah. Therefore, the light of Chanukah should be used for introspection; we should ask ourselves: “Do I appreciate Torah enough; do I respect *talmidei chachamim* as much as I should? Today, we are still spiritually fighting the *Yevonim* of the outside world who are trying to make us forget our Torah. Chanukah is specifically a time to strengthen our appreciation for Torah. Just as the negative influence of the *Yevonim* is still around today, so too the positive influence of the *Chashmonaim*, who were willing to sacrifice everything for Torah, still lingers today. On Chanukah, we should strive to increase our appreciation and love for Torah—then we may receive the help we need for *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* to make us successful.

— Miriam Landau

Adapted from Rabbi Moshe Kormornick



Shira Nordlicht, 9th Grade

Building our Avodas Hashem in Gulos

Many ponder upon the question 'In what way should I expand my עבודת השם in this day and age when Mashiach is bound to come?'

One who analyzes the Greeks' decree may notice that their method of destroying the Jewish nation contradicts the other nations who have attempted to end עם ישראל before them. The Greeks didn't ask to destroy the temple like the Romans but rather to condemn the Shmanim. During the Greek era, the Jews weren't forced to disobey the three ועבור ואל יהרג sins, they only violated Rosh Chodesh and Shabbat, two of the main signifiers of our Jewish identity. Although the Roman regime seemed more brutal, the Greek regime threatened the very entity of the Jewish soul, which is the greatest Nisaion. When one indicates his threats and struggles, he knows where to set his boundaries, and how to confront his challenge, but when his personality is changed, and his goals silent, the consequences are inevitable. And as mentioned in דברי הימים, that in the days of the יוונים, the Jewish nation was split to many sects, some believed that the Greeks tried to enhance the Jewish nation by the ways of the modern world, other believed that the Greeks wanted to assimilate. But the חשמונאים knew that the Greeks were a threat to Judaism, and that their only goal was to destroy our heritage. This battle is prevalent to this day which is why we light a Chanukiah to commemorate the פך שמן which remained pure rather than the victory of the physical battle.

Nowadays, we must remember the miracle of the חשמונאים and pray that their Zchut will stand with us and pray that we will never lose our Emuna. This battle for identity can be found in Yosef's story, who went through the greatest challenges of confusion. At first, Yosef loves his brothers and shared with them his happy dream, as a result they began to hate him and couldn't speak with him peacefully, then when Yaakov told Yosef to check on his brothers, the Shvatim abused him and sold him despite the promise שלוחי מצווה אינם ניזוקים. Yosef then becomes מוסר נפש in Potiphar's house and was consequently sent to prison. All of Yosef's nisionot were connected by one good deed leading to the next misfortune. But Yosef never lost his faith and trust in HaShem, he never surrendered to his sense of confusion and sadness.

In a generation in which עקבתא דמשיחא's description of חז"ל is more dominant than ever, we must utilize the power of Chanukah and gaze at the nerot to obtain the capability to endure our religion in the hardest of times.

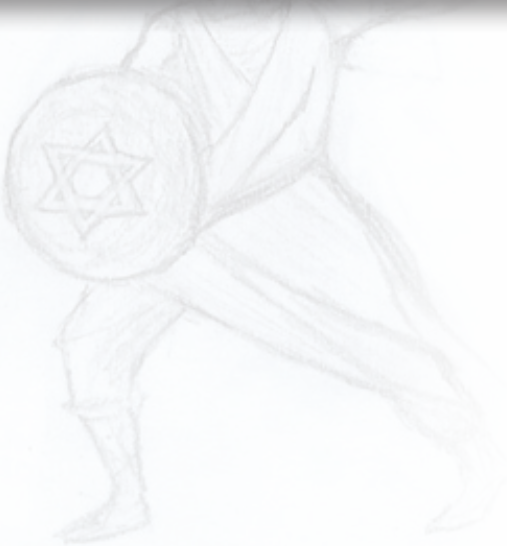
🕊️ *Judith Pinto*

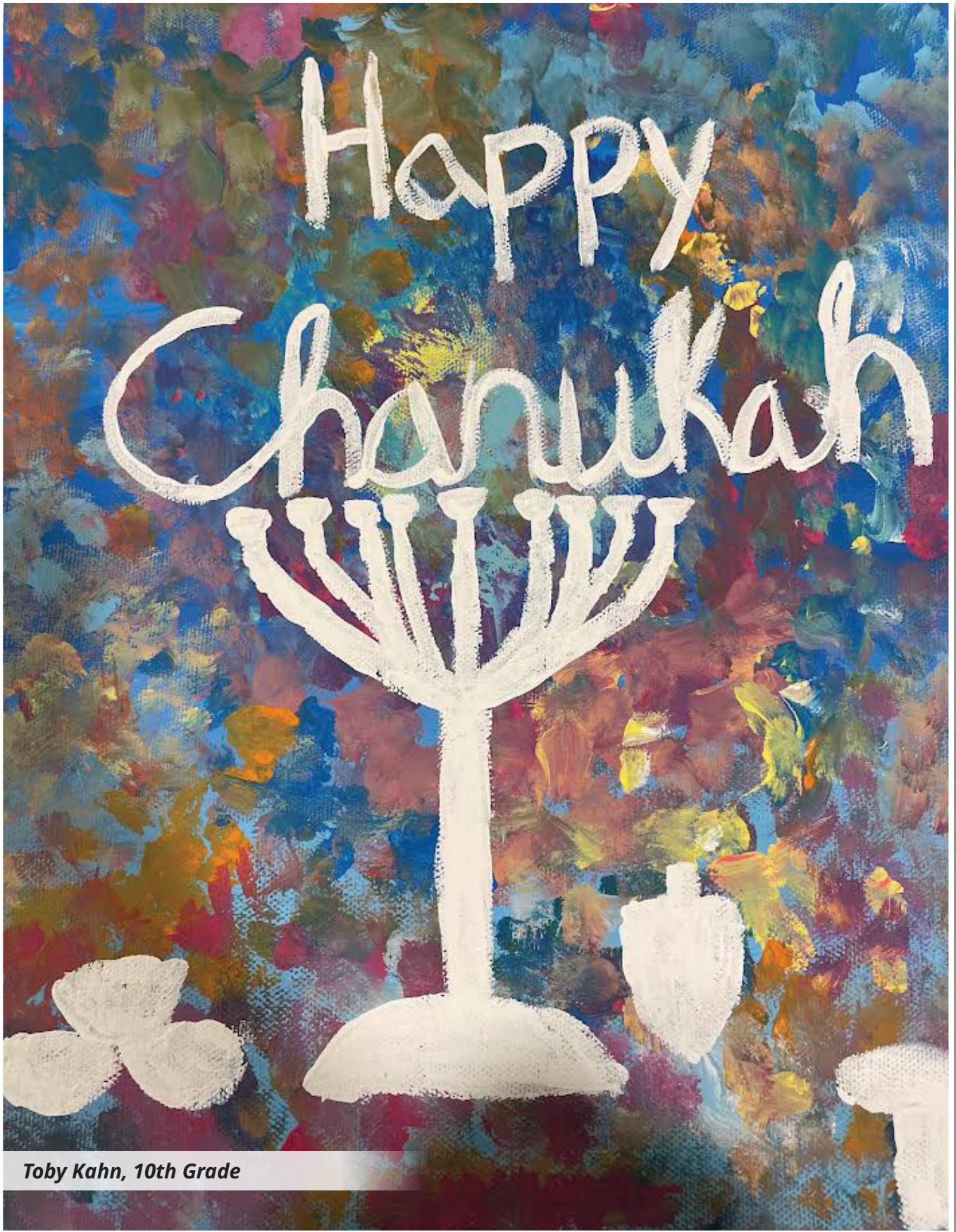
*This Dvar Torah is excerpted from my father,
Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto's Chanukah book, תאיר נרי.*

Adina Egoth



Basya Saperstein, 11th Grade





Toby Kahn, 10th Grade

Light up the Lives!

There is a debate between Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel about the proper way to light the *menorah*. Beis Shammai says that on the first night we light eight candles, and on each subsequent night we decrease the number of candles by one, until the last night when we light but one candle. Beis Hillel disagrees and says that we start with one candle on the first night and add a candle every night, until the eighth night when the whole *menorah* is lit. (Talmud Bavli, Shabbos 21b)

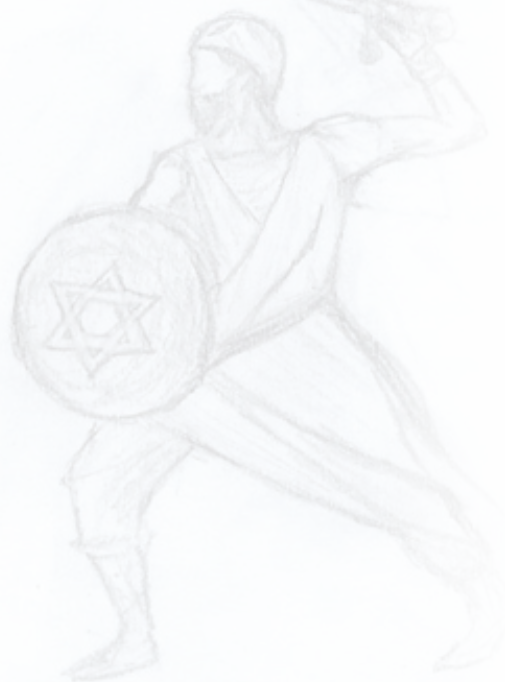
Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler, in *Michtav Me'Eliyahu*, explains the underpinnings of the argument as follows: If one were to ask themselves—"What is the most exciting night of Chanukah?"—the answer would undoubtedly be, "the first night, of course!" That is when the holiday is new and exciting and fresh. However, in truth, the last night should be the most exciting, because optimally we should be absorbing more of the spirit, beauty, and light of Chanukah each day. Hence, Beis Hillel advocates lighting one light on the first night, two on the second night, etc., to reflect how we should be feeling—how we should be accruing more holiness and light every day so that by the last night we radiate holiness, as marked by the complete *menorah* kindled before us. In other words, Beis Hillel is optimistic, reminding a person day by day how they should—and really could—be feeling: holier every day.

Beis Shammai, on the other hand, are realists; they believe that one should face the truth of one's inner feelings and in that way will be able to deal with them constructively. Hence, on the first night, Beis Shammai instructs us to light all of the candles as an accurate reflection of our excitement on the first night of Chanukah. On the second night, we should go down by one candle to demonstrate vividly how the excitement is waning from night to night, until on the last night there is just one candle left.

This debate does not just pertain to Chanukah, but to *chinuch* as well. Is it better to teach things in a positive light, even if the student is not at that level yet, or is it preferable to show the weakness of the human condition and build the person up through criticism?

We rule like Beis Hillel, not only in the method of lighting the *menorah*, but also in the method of kindling Jewish souls. We do not believe in pushing down the student and reminding her of her faults and deficiencies. Instead, we should build her up and we show her day by day, step by step, how greatness can be developed, nurtured, and illuminated.

☞ Golda Bamberger



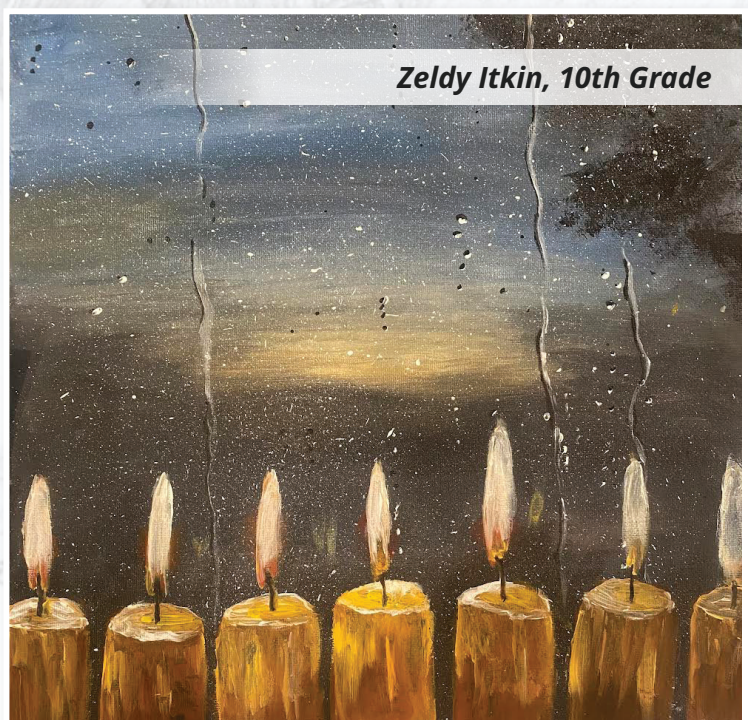
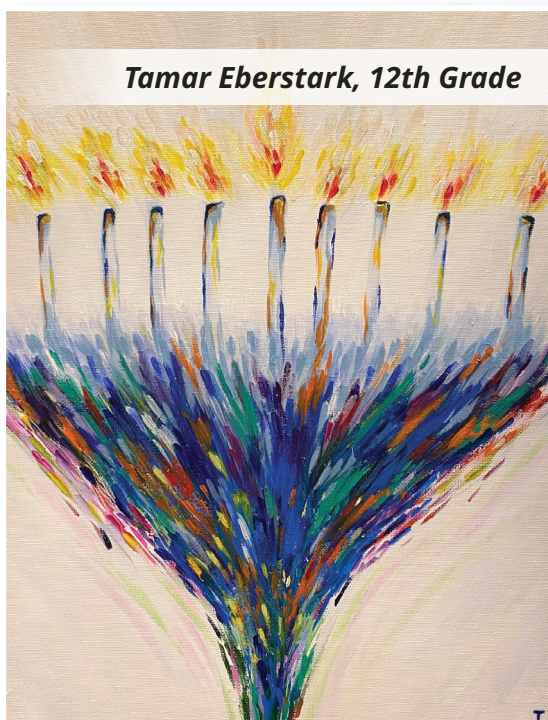
A Look into Al Hanisim

On Chanukah, the entire Jewish world lights the *menorah* as we celebrate the *neis* of the oil lasting for eight nights. The *tefillah* of *Al Hanisim* speaks about the strength of Hashem and how the *Chashmonaim* were victorious over the *Yevanim*. However, only at the end of this *tefillah* do we speak about the lighting of the *menorah*. If there is such little emphasis on the *neis* of the *menorah* in this *tefillah*, then why is lighting the *menorah* such a central part of how we celebrate Chanukah?

This question can be answered with the following *mashal*; a father randomly buys his daughter a present, and the daughter is so thankful. An hour later, he buys his daughter another present. The daughter is overwhelmed with joy and happiness at this expression of her father's love. She says, "A second present? You just got me a present!" The *nimshal* is that when Hashem showed us His wondrous ways through defeating the *Yevanim*, we were forever grateful for this miracle. However, it was after, when Hashem performed the second *neis* of the oil lasting for eight nights, that we truly felt Hashem's unconditional love for us. This is because it was a miracle on top of a miracle, a present on top of a present, and a kiss on top of a kiss. We are so thankful to Hashem for making us victorious over the *Yevanim*. However, when Hashem performed the second miracle of the *menorah*, that's when we felt Hashem's love the most. When we light the *menorah*, we are reminded of how much Hashem loves us.

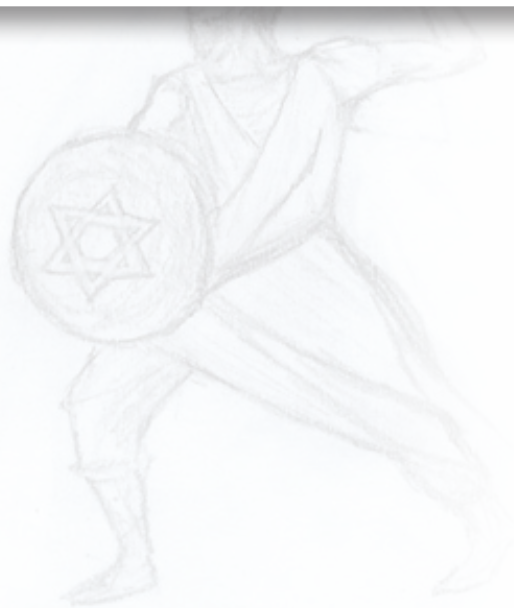
🕯️ Faye Fuchs

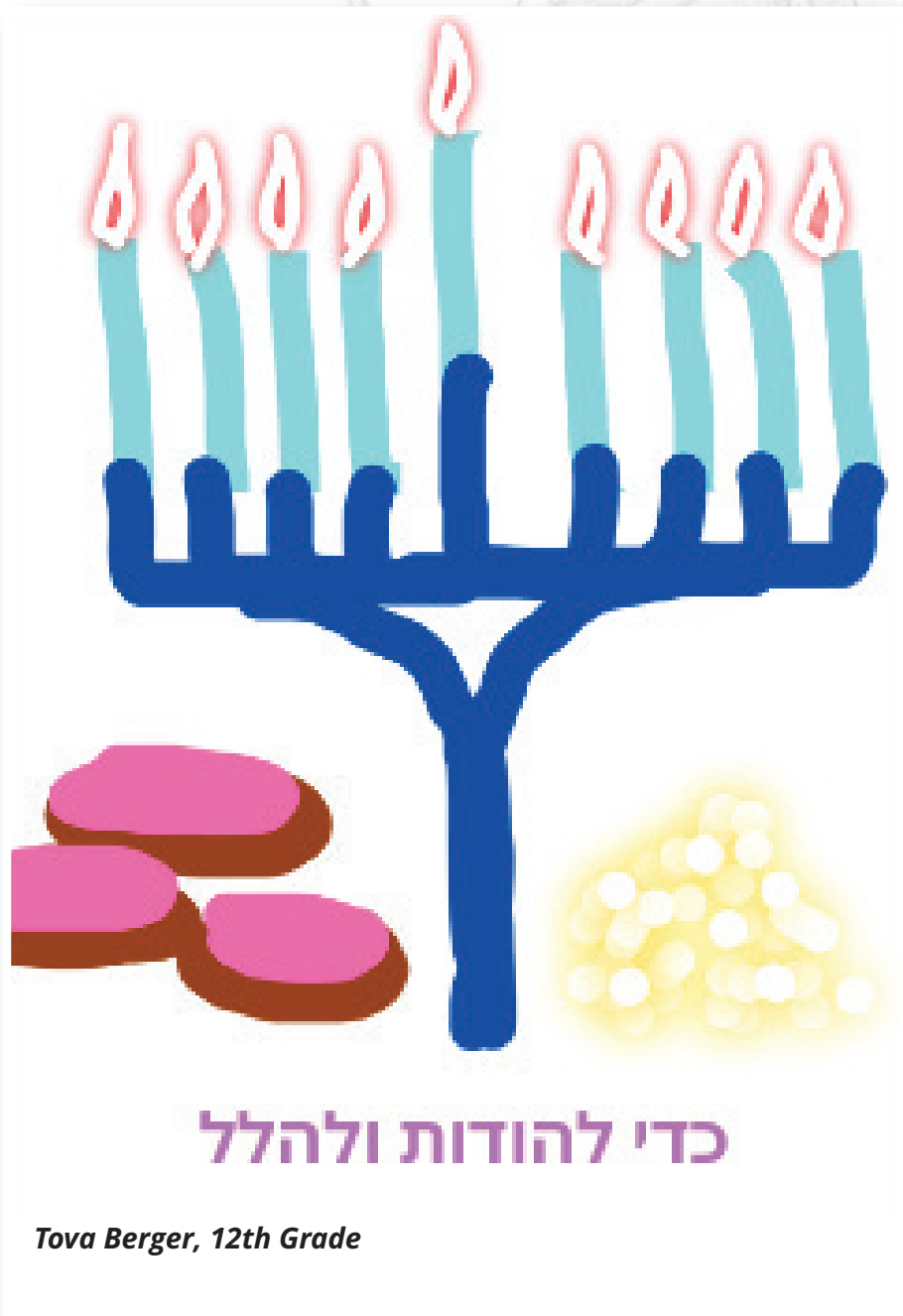
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The Power of the Menorah

When setting up the *menorah*, we place it on the left side of the doorpost. Why do we place it on the left side? Doesn't the right side have more *kedusha*?

The Sfas Emes answers this question in a beautiful way. The right side represents deep-rooted spirituality, while the left side represents searching for spirituality, having yet to find it in one's life. Unfortunately, many people in Klal Yisrael never found a sense of spirituality in their lives. This caused them to stray from their heritage, looking for something other than Hakadosh Baruch Hu to fill them up. Even though people in this scenario may have deviated from the proper course in their behavior in *olam hazeh*, their roots in *olam haba* remain pure and holy.

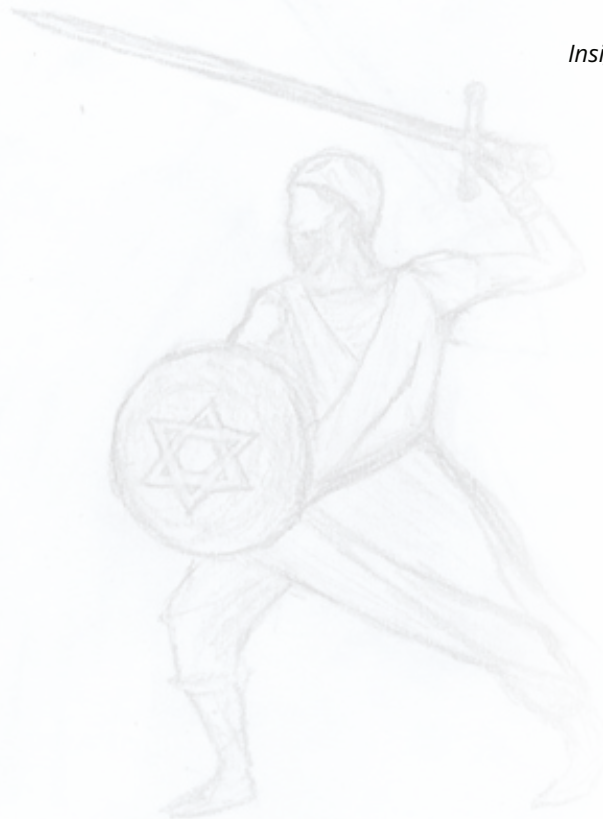
As we know, the kindling of the *menorah* takes place on the left side of the doorpost, opposite the *mezuzah*, which is hung on the right side of the doorpost. The *mitzvah* of *mezuzah* symbolizes the Jewish people who are intimately connected to and immersed in spirituality. On the other hand, the Chanukah candles penetrate the darkness and offer hope for all those who have lost contact with their *kadosh* roots.

The very position of the *menorah* on the left side indicates its capacity to bring hope even to the people who are not necessarily *shomrei Torah u'mitzvos*. Even though the *menorah* is on the left, distant from the roots of the Torah, it still has the capacity to connect *yidden* to their heritage. During the time of the *neis* of Chanukah, Bnei Yisrael were very far removed from Torah and *mitzvos*, but Hashem still fought their battles and they succeeded.

Even in times when we lack clarity, when we are struggling to stay connected to HaShem, Chanukah holds extreme power to unveil the light. During the darkest time of year, Chanukah connects us back to our source and our heritage.

☞ Ariella Paneth

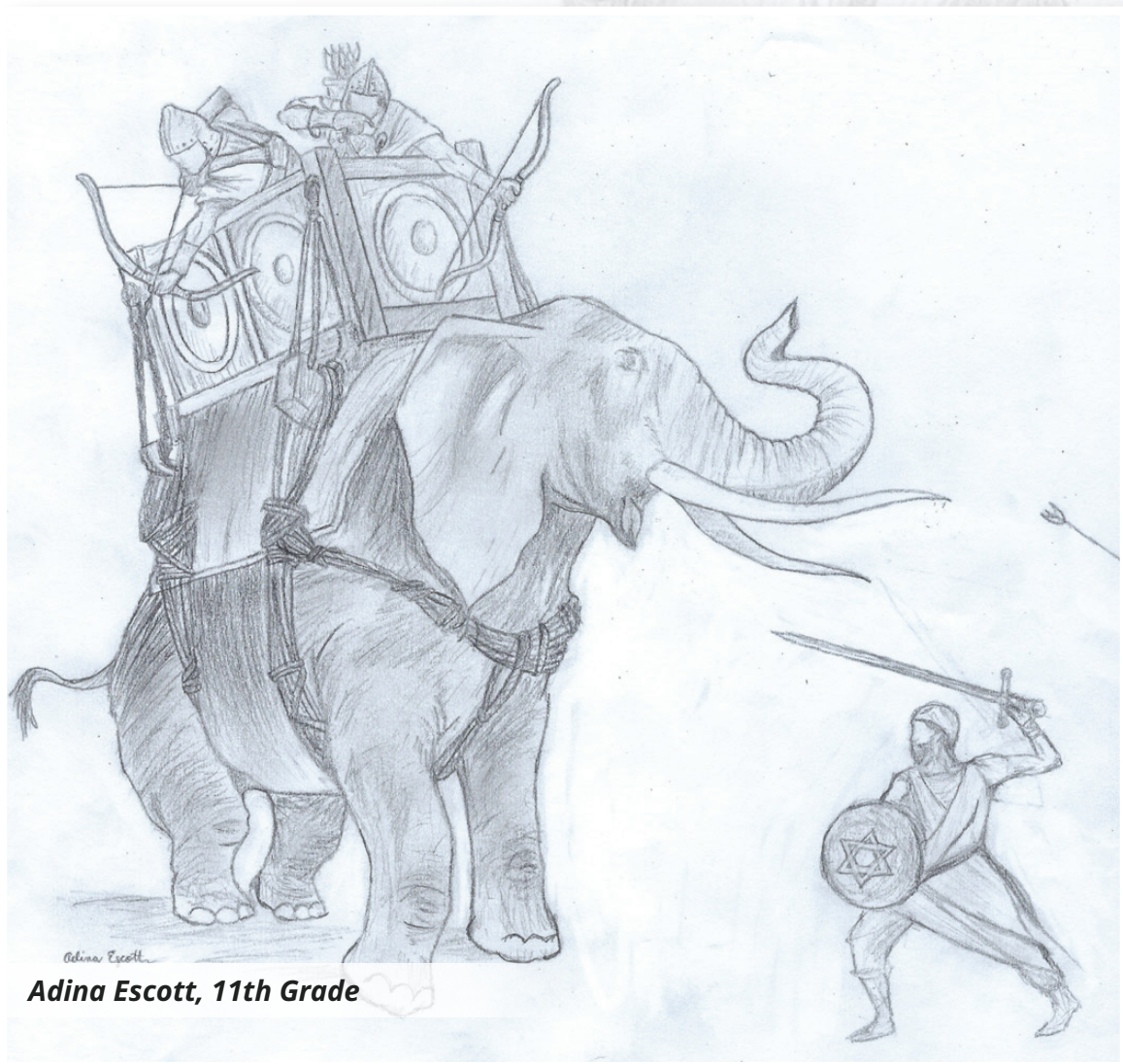
Source: *Days of Joy: Sfas Emes: Ideas and Insights of the Sfas Emes on Chanukah and Purim*



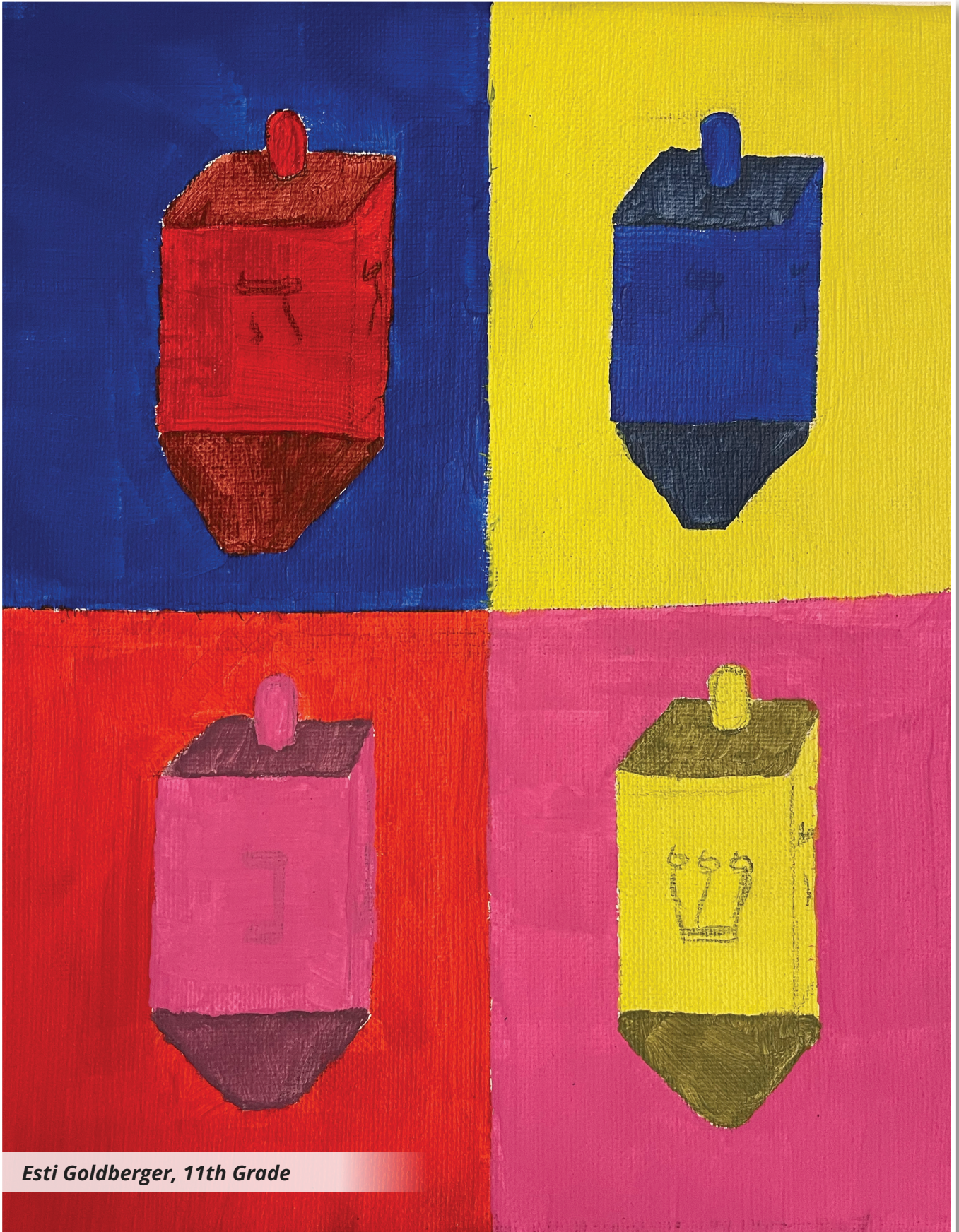
Should Chanukah be Canceled?

Everyone knows the miracles of *Chanukah*. The first miracle was that the *Maccabees* beat the Greeks even though they were few, and the second is that one jug of oil lasted for eight days. However, there was one more miracle that happened that isn't as well known. As Rabbi Lord Jonathon Sacks explains, after the Romans destroyed the second *Beis Hamikdash*, some rabbis were of the opinion that *Chanukah* should no longer be celebrated as it marks the rededication of the *Beis Hamikdash* which was no longer standing. The *Gemara* even says that one town did, in fact, get rid of *Chanukah*. Nevertheless, as we know, the *mitzvah* of *Chanukah* lives on. Why did it prevail? Although the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, the light from it still endures. The light represents the hope that Jews were able to hold onto, in the face of adversity. Hope gave Jews the strength to carry on after the crusades. Hope gave Jews the tenacity to rebuild after the holocaust. Hope allowed Jews to return to *Eretz Yisrael* and build a Jewish state. May the light of the *Chanukah* candles continue to inspire us and bring the final *Geulah*.

☞ Ariella Gold



Adina Escott, 11th Grade



Esti Goldberger, 11th Grade

The Power of Zos Chanukah

The Gemara teaches that *tzadikim* and *resha'im* are both judged on Rosh Hashanah, and their decree is sealed on Rosh Hashanah itself. However, the judgment of *beinonim* is delayed and finally decreed on Yom Kippur. Nevertheless, according to *kabbalah*, the real judgment is only “sent out” on Hoshana Rabah. According to *sifrei Chassidus*, the final judgment is actually not completed until Chanukah. This idea is hinted at in the *pasuk* “בְּיָדֶיךָ אֲדָם וְתִאמָר שׁוּבוּ תֵשֵׁב אָנוּשׁ עַד דְּכָא” — “You return man until דְּכָא, and you said, ‘Return, mortal men!’”(Tehillim 90:3) The word “דְּכָא” is numerically equivalent to 25. Hence, the *pasuk* is hinting that a person can do *teshuvah* and repent until the 25th day of Kislev, which is Chanukah.

Rav Moshe Wolfson reveals an astounding *remez* to this concept which is hinted to in the *parshiyos* read during the *Yomin Nora'im*. These *parshiyos* are found at the end of the Torah: *Nitzavim*, *Vayelech*, and *Ha'azinu*. *Veyelech* contains **thirty** *pesukim*; this represents *tzadikim gemurim* who are judged and sealed for life on Rosh Hashanah, which is **thirty** days after Rosh Chodesh Elul. *Nitzavim* contains **forty** *pesukim*; this is a *remez* to the *beinonim*, whose judgment is sealed on Yom Kippur, **forty** days after Rosh Chodesh Elul. *Ha'azinu* amounts to **fifty-two** *pesukim*. **Fifty-two** days after Rosh Chodesh Elul is Shemini Atzeres, the culmination of judgement, when all the judgements are finally sent out.

The subtotal of all the *pesukim* in *Nitzavim*, *Vayelech*, and *Ha'azinu* is **one hundred twenty-two**. **One hundred twenty-two** days after Rosh Chodesh Elul is *Zos Chanukah*, the last day of Chanukah and the time of the final completion of the *teshuvah* process. Rav Zilber further points out that the *parshah* before *Nitzavim* is *Ki Savo* which contains one hundred twenty-two *pesukim*, thus hinting to this holy day.

According to *halacha*, we are not allowed to utilize the *neiros* of Chanukah for any purpose; we can only look at them—“אין לנו רשות להשתמש בהם, אלא לראותם בלבד”. The last *pasuk* of *Ha'azinu* contains an allusion to this *halacha*. The *pasuk* states, “כִּי מִנְּגִד תִּרְאֶה אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְשָׁמָּה לֹא תָבֹא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ” (Devarim 32:52); Moshe is told that he is only allowed to view Eretz Yisroel but is restricted from entering it. This is somewhat similar to the *halacha* that we can only view the *neiros*, but we are restricted from utilizing them. The very first words of the next *pasuk*, Devarim 33:1, are “*Vzos Ha'beracha*”—“And this is the blessing.” The word “*vzos*” is a *remez* to *Zos Chanukah*. Interestingly, this is in the last *parshah* in the Torah; at the last opportunity, the Torah alludes to the opportunity to do *teshuvah*.

This Chanukah, may we all be *zoche* to *bracha*, *yeshuos* and *nechamos*.

☞ Shirel Rosenblum

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Noa. A

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