

1. WELCOME: SHALOM friends and welcome to His-Israel's first livestream event on our FB Page.

Today my aim is for us to take a deeper look at the 1st festival of Hanukkah! And hopefully, find ways to prepare our hearts to receive all that our Father in Heaven - Avinu Sh'b'Shamaim - would delight in giving us at this special time.

What is interesting this year is that the 1st night of Hanukkah falls on Christmas Eve! Doesn't often happen!

In this discussion I don't want to get into the pros and cons of the celebration of Christmas, which has become quite heated in some circles. To be honest, though, there is no way the shepherds would have had their sheep out on the Judean hills at this season...it's freezing! Many scholars hold to the possibility that this was the time of his conception, which is the time the sheep conceive here too and many lambs are born in Spring at the time of Passover! Then, Jesus's birth would have occurred around the time of the Fall Feasts, in particular the Feast of Tabernacles - neat, He 'tabernacled among us in a temporary fragile tent!

Suffice it to say that, whatever the date was of Messiah's birth... the 'manger' is now empty, as are the cross and the tomb, and we now can look forward with expectation to seeing the Clouds of Glory and the establishing of His throne in his holy city of Jerusalem. Amen?

Seriously, whatever one's practice is I am confident of one thing, that God sees the heart! If we want to please Him in what we do, and we do it with love and sincerity, it will bring joy to His heart. God has listed His appointed times in the Bible and as I mentioned in a conversation with Alana (are you with us Alana?) what truly pleases Him are His anointed times. Whether it's a major festival or not, when He blesses us with His Presence then our spirits are filled with joy and He is delighted!

We don't have time today to go into the historic background or ways to celebrate of Hanukkah so please go to the website - just click on one of the posts below - or log in to [His-Israel.com](http://His-Israel.com) - and look under the title ANNUAL FESTIVALS in the banner of the Home Page. You will find Hanukkah in the drop down menu.

There you will find a wealth of information. Also here on the H-I FB Page you will find the beautiful DIY HANUKKAH post with wonderful illustrations and loads of fun ways to celebrate with your family and/or friends. Including Hanukkah stories to listen to and to read. Stories and songs are a special part of Hanukkah - please share them with your children!

2. Let's get started! The central theme of Hanukkah is **LIGHT**. "OHR" in Hebrew.

Interestingly, the 25th word in the Hebrew Bible is ohr! This is the element that connects the two holidays - or holy days - of Hannukkah and the birth of Messiah.

It's a **unique** light. It is connected with the light that God spoke into being in the very beginning on the **first day**. He spoke His creative Word, which is light. This light is called **Ohr Ganuz** meaning the mysterious, supernatural, concealed light. It's is not the natural light of the sun, moon and stars, because we see that those are only created on the **4th day**! This is why, we don't **use** the Hanukkah candles - just like the Shabbat and other

festival candles - for anything else, like reading, because we only need to look at them - **to see their light** and remember the hidden light of Messiah, the **Ohr Ganuz**.

Also, Hannukah candles are, whenever possible, to be placed in a window or outside the door. Why? The point is not only to enjoy them ourselves but to share them with those who are still outside. By putting the lights in the window or by the door it's as if we are saying, "All of you who are walking in the streets of the world in darkness, please come to Yerushalaim, the holy city of God. Come back to what is holy and beautiful, back to the light of His Word and Kingdom. Then our feet can all dance in joy and unity. Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach said once... "It is clear to me on Chanukkah that all the hatred in the world is because they never tasted the light of the Holy of Holies."

That was the point with Yeshua haMashiach, the light of the Word made flesh.

3. Let's consider the **Word of God** for a minute - His Word was given to His redeemed people at Sinai. The Sages of Israel say that when He thundered the 10 Words they echoed out in 70 languages! Why? Even there, there was the understanding that His Kingdom Redemptive plan would include those from the 70 nations who had ears to hear and hearts to receive. There He transmitted His full Torah or teaching to Moses.

Then, when the fulness of time came God sent forth the gift of His Word again...this time in His son and Messiah Jesus/Yeshua. The apostle to the nations, Paul, tells us in 2 Corinthians 4:6:

*"For God Who said: "Light shall shine out of darkness" is the One who has shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Messiah!"*

If you want to come into deeper knowledge of our Father, who is in Heaven, Avinu Sh'B'Shamaim, look into the face of Messiah. Yeshua always looked to the Father for everything. He said, "Of my own accord I do nothing - I only came to do the will of my Father!" Certainly his face must have clearly reflected the light and beauty and holiness of the Father. God is revealed and reflected in His Word!

Through Jesus the Messiah the light of truth and the knowledge of God would shine forth to the four corners of the earth! Now the light is returning to its Source and God wants His glory to shine again from His Land and His city Jerusalem!

BTW - an important connection with Hanukkah and Jerusalem, and the whole Land of Israel. Only festival that took place in the Land - Pesach - Egypt; Shavuot - Sinai; Tabernacles - the wilderness; Purim - Persia! Also, the heart of the story is the rededicating of the House of God and the return of His Presence to it. Hanukkah means dedication! When you light the lights of the hanukkia, wherever you may be, it is as if you are a priest lighting the menorah in the Holy Place in God's House in Jerusalem. As we light we are all united and standing together in Jerusalem.

God is busy, in our generations, with restoring His Land and His people to the Land and making it blossom again. His light is returning more and more strongly just like the growing lights of Hanukkah.

4. Finally the question ...**HOW do we SEE GOD?**

In connection with light and fire...Moses saw His Presence in the burning bush - that was fire of the **Ohr Ganuz** - the creative, holy fire of God that does not consume destructively.

There He spoke to Moses, knowing that he was calling him to be the conveyor of the light of His Word to His people.

What represented that Word in God's House? First the Tabernacle, the *Mishkan* in the wilderness and then the Holy Temple, the *Mikdash* in Jerusalem?

Yes, the **MENORAH!** The beautiful solid gold seven-branched lamp stand which the priest would light every morning and evening so that it would be continually burning as a constant sign of the Presence of God . The *Ner Tamid* - or eternal flame - seen in synagogues and I believe some churches.

We know from the historical story of the Maccabees there were the **two miracles** - one was the **military victory** of a small group led by a family of priests - Mattityahu and his son Judah and his brothers - who overcame the greatest army of the time, the Greco-Romans, whose leader Antiochus the Emperor defiled the Temple by slaughtering a pig on the altar and setting up a huge idol in the Holy Place. The Jews were forbidden to honor the New Moons and Shabbat, were not allowed to circumcise their children and had to bow down to the Greek idol!

The Maccabees rose up against them and miraculously overcame them. The first thing they did was to cleanse and rededicate the Temple to God.

The second miracle happened at their **dedication** of the Temple after they had found only one sealed jar of unpolluted oil - enough for one day. It would take a week to prepare fresh oil but they couldn't wait to restore the Presence of God to His Home so they lit it in faith. It burned for the entire 8 days! It was the fire that doesn't consume - ohr ganuz!

The miracle of the oil that burned for 8 days and nights, reminds us that we can and must do our best with whatever God has given us... but, at the end of the day, we cannot do it alone and in our own strength.

The 7 lights of the menorah reflect the 7 Hebrew words spoken by the prophet Zechariah (Ch 4:6) *Lo b'chayil u'lo v'choach ki im b'ruchi*. "Not by might nor by power but by My Spirit" says the Lord. Followed by vision of two olive trees one on each side of the menorah. Forms a hanukkiah!

Read Chapter 8.

Love **TRUTH** (His Word), **PEACE** (His Presence), and **PRAY** - according to His will!

Knowing that we can let go and trust His help, comfort, encouragement and strength, gives us the realization that no matter what challenges, trials and hardships come our way, we can continue to shine His Presence and truth because it's not dependent on our natural ability but on the power of His Presence with us. His Spirit of love, power and grace!

## 5. LOOK AT THE HANNUKKIA

The central candle is called the SHAMMASH... the one that represents the Ohr Ganuz , the Light of Mashiach - the Servant Candle - the one that lights all the others. Raised up and set apart...

**Matthew 5:14 - 16** God wants us all to be lovely shining lights.

In his book '*The Soul of Hanukkah*' **Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach** shares about how the festival of Hanukkah is a healing for the **EYES!** For how we see God. How we look at things - Do we see things from God's eternal perspective - in accord with His Word? And how we see others. Can we see them as He sees them?

Carlebach points out how **children** love Hanukkah...they mill around and truly take delight in the light of the candles - their still our spirits respond to them in wonder somehow. He tells about how one year his little 3 year old nephew would not stop crying after the 8th day was over and the candles weren't lit anymore. He was heartbroken. He wanted to do it all over again. His spirit was longing for the day that the Hanukkah lights, like the lights of Shabbat - the Ohs Ganuz - will go on forever! Children have great vision and dreams... Often people lose their vision and become dead and cold inside. The light of the candles can light the fire of our dreams again and return our vision so that we'll be able to see with Hanukkah eyes!

In the special light of the candles everyone looks beautiful! Even a rebellious child or a person who has sunk very far from God, into lights of Hanukkah, in the light of Messiah, he or she looks so beautiful - because it shines through all the darkness with the light of God's love and lights up the spirit of the person. This is our big chance to really see one another again.

When someone is wounded and hurt and scarred, all it takes is for someone to look at them with so much love and compassion and it heals the scars! True holiness shines and warms and comforts like a fire but it does not burn or diminish anything or anyone. You know when you meet a true holy person, shining with the light and love of God, because you feel safe in their presence and free to be just who you are. They are not out to judge or change or diminish you...they just want the little flame of your spirit to ignite with all the joy and beauty God breathed into you so that you will become the beautiful person you were created to be and to grow and shine for His glory!