

THE LIGHTS OF HANUKKAH - 3 DECEMBER 2017

WELCOME: SHALOM friends

The central theme of Hanukkah is LIGHT. "OHR" in Hebrew. Interestingly, the 25th word in the Hebrew Bible is ohr!

Light is the element that connects all the holy festivals - reflected every week in the Shabbat and the Havdalah candles. We light the most lights at Hanukkah, during the darkest time of the year in Israel.

The festival lights are meant to reflect a unique light. They are connected with the light of God's Presence and the creative, illuminating Word that He spoke into being, in the very beginning, on the first day. This mysterious light is called *Ohr Ganuz* meaning the supernatural, and now concealed light. In Rabbinic literature this light is called *Ohr Mashiach* - the anointed light - the light of Messiah! It 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*.

We place the Hannukah candles, whenever possible, in a window or even outside the door. Why? The point is not only to enjoy them ourselves but to share them with those who are still outside.

Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach said: 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.

He added: "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 mission of Messiah Yeshua, *Yeshua haMashiach*. He was the Word incarnate - made flesh, and God sent him to be the light of the World. To illuminate the world with the Light of His truth.

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. The presence of God is revealed and reflected in His Word!

Through Jesus the Messiah, in a wonderful breakthrough of universal redemption, the light of truth and the knowledge of God would shine forth to the four corners of the earth! Now, in our time, the light is returning to its Source and God wants His Word and His glory to go forth and shine again from His Land and His city Jerusalem in preparation for the time when Yeshua will return as *Mashiach ben David* - Messiah the son of David, and be enthroned in Jerusalem as King of kings.

There is an important connection with Hanukkah and Jerusalem, and the whole Land of Israel. It is the only festival that took place in the Land - Pesach - Egypt; Shavuot - Sinai; Tabernacles - the wilderness; Purim - Persia!

At the heart of the story of Hanukkah is the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem - the House of God, and the return of His Presence to it. The Hebrew word Hanukkah means dedication! When you light the lights of the *hanukkiah*, 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 in spirit and standing together in Jerusalem.

In Psalm 27, David proclaims: Firstly - the LORD is my Light and my Salvation whom shall I fear? And then in verse 4:

One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to **gaze upon the beauty of the LORD** and to inquire in his temple.

I will finish with a question ...HOW do we SEE GOD?

The first place in the Bible we find with this connection of light and fire being seen is when **Moses** saw God's Presence in the **burning bush** - that was fire of the *Ohr Ganuz* - the creative, holy fire of God that burns and shines but does not consume destructively.

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

What represented His 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 in some churches is meant to represent this light.

We know from the historical story of the Maccabees the there were the two miracles - one was the military victory of a small group led by a family of priests - Mattitياهو 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 Sabbaths, they 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.

[**You can find the story - and more about Hanukkah and how to celebrate on the His-Israel website under Festivals.](#)

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 - the *ohr ganuz!*

Let's take a look at the **hanukkiah!**

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. Not counting the Shammash, we light 36 candles on the 8 nights. 18 = chai / life x 2! The lights unite the life of the spirit to one's outward physical life, bringing harmony and balance to our souls.

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?

Children love Hanukkah...they truly take delight in the light of the candles. Their pure, young spirits respond to them in wonder somehow.

As we gaze at them too, may the light of the candles light the fire of our hearts and dreams again and return our godly vision so that we'll be able to see with pure, childlike, Hanukkah eyes! May we really be able to see one another again in the light of God's love, the light in which everyone looks beautiful!

When a person is wounded and hurt and scarred, and someone looks at them with so much love and compassion, it helps to heal the scars!

True love and 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 truly 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 will grow and shine for His glory!

God wants us all to be lovely shining lights. Even a little light dispels much darkness!

As Yeshua tells us in Matthew 5:16,

"In the same way [as a lamp that is raised on a stand], let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."