

CONGREGATION AGUDATH JACOB

December Kislev/Tevet 5776
Rabbi: Ben-Zion Lanxner
Phone: 254-772-1451
Fax: 254-772-2471
Cajassistant@grandecom.net

www.agudath-waco.org
President: Abbye Silver
Office Admin: Amanda Henson
Editor: Ilsa Burns

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From the Desk of Rabbi Ben-Zion Lanxner

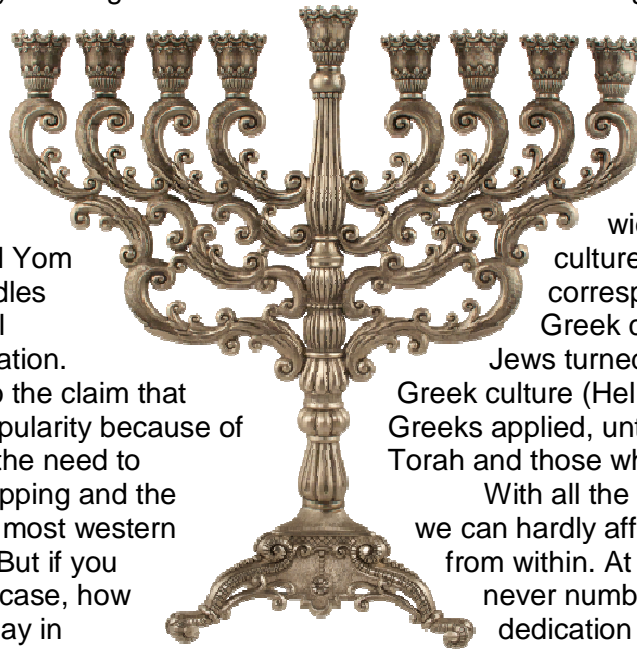
How relevant is Chanukah in the 21st century in Waco, Texas?

Chanukah has truly become, without a doubt, one of the most popular holidays among the Jewish people. It has become a national, cultural, and symbolic holiday, even for those whose level of religious observance is almost nonexistent. Along with celebrating Passover, and observing Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, lighting Chanukah candles has become an almost minimal requirement of Jewish identification.

There is certainly some truth to the claim that Chanukah has gained such popularity because of its proximity to Christmas and the need to compensate for Christmas shopping and the holiday atmosphere present in most western countries where Jews reside. But if you believe that this is actually the case, how do you explain the fact that today in Israel, where there is no competition with Christmas, the importance of this holiday is so great; everyone can admire the many Candelabras (Chanukiot) displayed on window sills, as it is a Mitzvah of *Pirsuma de Nissah*, of advertising the miracles.

When the leaders and Sages of that time experienced the Jews' victory over the Greeks, it was crystal clear to them that G-d had intervened to save His Torah and His people from spiritual extinction. They did not have to see "fire coming down from heaven" to know that their victory could have occurred only with G-d's help. This conviction led to the establishment of a new holiday instituted by the people of Israel. With all the incredible occurrences in Jewish history, only two religious holidays have been added to the calendar by the Rabbis – Purim and Chanukah. It has been said that the holiday of Chanukah symbolizes, among other things, the power of renewal. Being the last of the holidays in chronological order, the lesson is clear: the Torah is not a closed book and the Oral Tradition

is an ongoing and vibrant enterprise meant to keep Judaism alive and growing.



When studying this particular period in our history, we see that the Maccabees had to contend as much with the problem of assimilation as they did with Greek oppression. The widespread allure of Western

culture and its impact on Judaism today corresponds very much to the draw that Greek culture had in its day. The more Jews turned away from Judaism to embrace Greek culture (Hellenism), the more pressure the Greeks applied, until they declared all-out war on the Torah and those who followed it.

With all the enemies pitted against us today, we can hardly afford the devastation of our people from within. At its peak, the Maccabee warriors never numbered over 8,000 men, yet in their dedication to waging an incessant war to drive the enemy from the land against overwhelming odds, they succeeded, thus assuring Jewish spiritual survival. In fact, the root of the word *Chanukah* means "to dedicate" or 'educate.' Today, we need an army of dedicated Jewish educators who are able to make Jewish history, culture, and religion come alive and be personally relevant and meaningful to each individual Jew as well as to the entire world.

This claim leads us directly to the meaning and symbolism of the Chanukah lights themselves. After recapturing Jerusalem, the Maccabees turned their attention to renewing the service in the Holy Temple, which had been desecrated by the Greeks and turned into a place to worship idols. As soon as the Maccabees finished their work, they realized that no oil fitting to light the menorah could be found and only after a lengthy search was a *kad katan*, one little cruse of oil, with the seal of the High Priest, located. Miraculously, the oil, enough for only one day, burned for eight days until more oil could be

prepared for the Temple service. It is this tradition which forms the basis of our custom to light candles during Chanukah, and it is through this ritual that we celebrate all the miracles that occurred.

When Mattathias stood up in Modi'in and declared: "All who are zealous for God's law, follow me," he symbolically "lit" the first light of Chanukah. If one stands in a pitch black cave and lights even one match, he has already transformed that absolute darkness, for even a little light can dispel a lot of darkness. This truth is reflected in the fact that Chanukah comes during the time of year when the nights are the longest. It is then that we need the light the most.

The miracle of the oil at Chanukah represents more than a singular occurrence; it is instead a continually recurring force in Jewish history. The blessing we say each night as we light the candles: "who made miracles for our Fathers in those days, in our time, means that these miracles are happening or waiting to happen *now*."

Although the Temple was desecrated and vandalized, there still remained one little cruse of oil, undefiled and pure. This represents the phenomenon that no matter how great the persecution or despair, or how far assimilation spreads in the Jewish people as a whole, or in an individual Jew, still there remains in that *Pintele Yid*, in every Jewish heart, one drop of pure, undefiled oil, only waiting to be lit. This reality can explain the truly miraculous survival of the Jews for 4,000 years, despite continuous attempts to eradicate us from the world, and snuff out our light. The oil symbolizes renewal, hope, hidden strength and determination. It stands ready and waiting to be used when things seem the hardest.

The phenomenon of mass immigration to Israel from Russia in the 1990's, of the Ethiopian community returning to Israel and the general return to Yiddishkeit by assimilated Jews in western countries and by many secular Israelis, are all but examples of this hidden light, which can never be extinguished.

The war against the Greeks was more than a physical war. It was, in fact, a battle of opposing world views. The Greeks symbolized the glorification of the physical, the worship of logic and science, and above all, the descent into hedonism. Not that Greek or today's western civilization is without merit or positive qualities, but as a whole, it is very different from the Jewish religious, cultural and world view. The lights of Chanukah have come to represent the fight for freedom, but this fight is based on the spiritual light and truth as expressed in our tradition. When compared to the power of nuclear energy – what is a little candle? But we know that it is the eternity of the soul rooted in G-d that is the strength and the secret of Jewish survival, as it says in

Proverbs 20:27, *Ner Elo-him Nishmat Ha'adam*, "The candle of G-d is the soul of man".

When adding a new candle on each night of Chanukah, , we are affirming our faith in the righteousness of our cause and the hope revealed in the words of our prophets. Isaiah revealed that our mission is to be *Or Lagoyim*, "a light to the nations" and prophesied about a world of peace, love and harmony (Isaiah 49:6). This, too, is the message of Chanukah – to never forget either that vision of our prophets or our responsibility to try in even the smallest of ways to bring light to others and the world.

It is interesting to note that from one candle, a thousand more can be lit, without diminishing the original flame. Each individual can be a lighthouse in a world of stormy seas.

Israel's strength and purpose is not to be a nation like all other nations. Especially after 2,000 years of exile, we must concentrate on creating a unique society. The world needs to look to us for something different and new.

As awesome as the task of our sacred mission may be, we ' true to our destiny, as without a doubt we are, as we deliver almost on a daily basis, new inventions in almost every field of opportunities as medical, technological, agricultural or pharmaceutical. Have you noticed how many **Nobel Prize winners Israel has produced in only this last generation?**

The eight nights of Chanukah represents the victory of the eternal over the temporal, the spiritual over the material. The number 'eight' symbolizes the covenant between G-d and his people, connecting Chanukah to the practice of circumcision and entering the covenant on the eighth day.

All together during Chanukah we light 36 candles, representing the 36 hidden righteous people in every generation, (**the Lamed Vavniks**, in *Gematria*, *Lamed =30 and Vav = 6, together 36*) whose deeds uphold the whole world. Each Jew, when activating his or her own hidden light, has the ability to uphold the world, adding a new spark of hope and clarity in the darkness.

The teachings of Chanukah are as radiant and penetrating as light itself and are certainly not confined to one holiday or custom. The fight for freedom and independence, the protection of our sacred beliefs and its universal message are the teachings the Maccabees have handed us. May we be true to the task entrusted to us.

Chag Urim Sameach.

Rabbi Ben-Zion Lanxner

December Service Schedule

Friday, December 4

Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 p.m.
Candle Lighting 5:07 p.m.

Saturday, December 5

Shacharit 9:30 a.m.
Shabbat Ends 6:04 p.m.

Friday, December 11

Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 p.m.
Candle Lighting 5:08 p.m.

Saturday, December 12

Shacharit 9:30 a.m.
Shabbat Ends 6:06 p.m.

Friday, December 18

Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 p.m.
Candle Lighting 5:10 p.m.

Saturday, December 19

Shacharit 9:30 a.m.
Shabbat Ends 6:08 p.m.

Friday, December 25

Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 p.m.
Candle Lighting 5:14 p.m.

Saturday, December 26

Shacharit 9:30 a.m.
Shabbat Ends 6:12 p.m.

Special Donations

LEONARD & ELYSSE ENGLANDER
STEVE & LILIA SCHWARZ
DEBORAH HERSH.

Office Closed

The Office will be closed Friday,
December 25 & Thursday, December
31 & January 1.

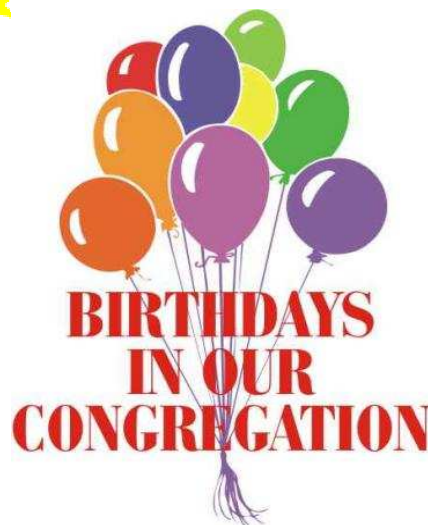
Cemetery Restoration Fund
Justin Lynn



FOOD FROM THE FAITHFUL

WE WILL BRING CEREALS & PASTAS ON AN ON-GOING
BASIS. PLEASE BRING PACKAGES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR
AND SUSAN SILVER WILL SEE THAT THEY ARE DELIVERED
TO CARITAS

December 1
Harry Harelik
December 3
David Jortner
December 4
Shauna Bubis Bauer
December 6
Emily Rogers
Joshua Fuller
December 7
Gloria Yoder



December 11
Rachael Rosen
December 12
Ida Harris
December 21
Paul Farmer
December 22
Max Schwarz
December 28
Maura Jortner
December 29
Genie Zacharias



Get Well Soon

Jake Bauer
Deborah Hersh
Stanley & Florence Hersh
Abbye Silver
Stanley & Florence Hersh

Happy Anniversary

December 1
Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Wolf

Mazel Tov

Happy Birthday Harriet Stupak
Carolyn Neuwirth
With Thanks to Amanda
Deborah Hersh

BOARD MEETING

**The next board meeting will be held Wednesday, December 9th at
6:00 p.m.**

In Loving Memory



Jennifer Lanxner
Charles Levy
Carolyn Neuwirth
Jeff & Lea Levin
Melvin Lipsitz
Deborah Hersh
Sarah Rubel
Phyllis Ruttenberg Akmal
Pearl Jacobson
Ronnie & Greg Forrest
Jack Goldberg
Norman & Margie Goldberg

Sarah Rubel
Rina Ruttenberg & Danny
Holland
Nate Koss
Carolyn Neuwirth
Norm & Margie Goldberg
Michael & Marsha Lev
Jeff & Lea Levin
Mel Lipsitz
Phyllis Ruttenberg Akmal
Abbye & Susan Silver
Deborah Hersh



The Gift Shop is Open!!

Be sure to stop and take a look at all of the festive Hanukkah decorations, gift wrap, cards, candles & gift ideas the Gift Shop has to offer! The Gift Shop will be open all day during the Hanukkah Bazaar!

Class Schedule

All Sunday morning classes (Basic Judaism & Hebrew) will resume on Sunday, December 13. Tanya sessions will be held Thursdays at 4:00 p.m. beginning December 10th.

Shabbat Donations

October 31

Stanley & Florence Hersh
Jeff & Lea Levin
Brent & Dianne deMerville
Abbye & Susan Silver
Jerry & Candee Gerson
Steve & Lilia Schwarz

November 7

Stanley & Florence Hersh
Brent & Dianne deMerville
George & Kathleen Keller
Jerry & Candee Gerson
Howard Miller
Steve & Lilia Schwarz

November 14

Brent & Dianne deMerville
Jerry & Candee Gerson
Stanley & Florence Hersh
George & Kathleen Keller
Jeff & Lea Levin
Abbye & Susan Silver
Gloria Yoder
Steve & Lilia Schwarz

November 21

Stanley & Florence Hersh
Brent & Dianne deMerville
Miguel Perez
Jeff & Lea Levin
George & Kathleen Keller
Steve & Lilia Schwarz

**Join us for the
Annual Hanukkah Bazaar!!
Sunday, December 6th
4:00 p.m.**

Please join us for an afternoon full of fun & food at the
Annual Hanukkah Bazaar!



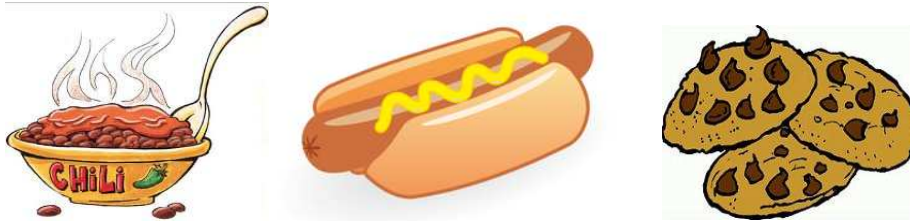
Hotdogs & Bingo!

\$10 per adult (does not include Bingo Cards)
\$5 per child

Schedule

4:00 p.m. – Bingo
Hotdogs & Chili to follow

Please contact the office to make your reservations ASAP



Wrap up your Holiday shopping!
The Gift Shop will be open all day!



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How to Observe the Holiday of Chanukah

The only commandment regarding the holiday of *Chanukah* is to light the *Chanukiah* or *Chanukah menorah*, and "*Pirsum HaNess*" – to "advertise the miracle" by placing the lit *Chanukiah* in a prominent window facing the public. There is, however, a prayer called "*Al Hanissim*" that gets added to the *Amidah* (silent devotional prayer), and to the *Birkat Hamazon* (*grace after meals*) during the eight days of Chanukah which recalls these miracles. It is also a custom in some congregations to recite the *hallel* – the prayers of praise to God. The proper way to light the chanukiah is as follows:

1. Place the lit *Chanukiah* in a window that faces the public.
2. Candles are put in from right to left (like Hebrew) as you face the *Chanukiah*.
3. Use a match or lighter to light the *shamash*, the candle that stands out. Use the *shamash* to light the other candles. On each night, light the newest candle first, and continue lighting from left to right. Recite the blessings/*b'rachot* before you light the candles.
4. Two *b'rachot* are said each night (each after beginning: *baruch ata adonay eloheinu melech ha'olam* - "Blessed are you O God, ruler of the universe").
 - a) *asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Chanukah* – who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to light *Chanukah* candles.
 - b) *she'asah nissim la'avoteinu bayamim hahem bazman hazeh* – Who worked miracles for our ancestors in those days, as He does in our time.
 - c) On the first night only, or if you have a new group of people add *shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higiyanu lazman hazeh* – who has allowed us to live and sustained us so that we can witness this special moment.
5. Light the first *Chanukah* candle on Saturday, December 6, after Havdalah (end of Shabbat).
6. *Chanukah* candles are always lit **BEFORE** lighting the *Shabbat* candles (5:07 p.m.) on Friday night (December 11), and **AFTER**, the *Havdalah* candle on Saturday night.
7. All Chanukah candles should be lit after 6:10 p.m. (except on Friday night)

HOW TO OBSERVE THE YAHRZEIT

It is traditional to kindle a Yahrzeit Candle in the home on the evening Yahrzeit begins. It should remain lighted until sunset the next day. Possible prayer before lighting a Yahrzeit candle: Eternal God, I/we light this candle in memory of (name) _____, my/our beloved (relationship) _____. The light of the flame rekindles all the warm memories of the moment we shared together, and reassures me /us that a piece of his/her soul dwells in my/our heart(s) forever. May his/her soul be bound up with the bonds of eternal life.

Amen. Candles are available at the Gift Shop. Every effort should be made to say Kaddish at congregational services. It is meritorious to perform some Mitzvah or to contribute to the synagogue in commemoration of the deceased.

Kaddish will be read on November 27

Kislev 15 Pauline Bartz
Moses W. Cinnamon
Elihugh Frankfort
Kislev 16 B. Roddy
Emma Wizig
Zlata Singer (Schwartz)
Kislev 17 Mary Friedman
Moze Novich
Max Reed
Kislev 18 William Goldblatt
Warren Israel
H. Novich
Rachel Rosenthal
Kislev 19 Max Corman
Mose Harris
Jack Silver
Kislev 20 Sidney Fleischman
Kislev 21 Flora Epstein
Toby Schwartz
Vernon Woolf

Kaddish will be read on December 4

Kislev 22 Yetta Cohen
Kislev 23 Amanda Goldstein
Sarah Leah Markusfeld
Dr. Sam Ellis
Kislev 24 Carrie Loewenstein
Samuel H. Robinson
Sarah Schaevitz
Margaret Harelik
Kislev 25 Leon Rouvant
Edith Koss
Kislev 26 Sadie Berman
Chaim H. Green
Diana Green Rosner
Margot Meyers
Kislev 27 Shirley Kleiner
Cochavah Lavi
Kislev 28 Cecile Aronson
Dora Goldberg
Max Knop

Kaddish will be read on December 11

Kislev 29 Paul Adams
Saul Morris Gellman
Julian L. Levinson
Sam Rosenberg
Lillian Smith
Kislev 30 Jake Berkman Infant
Jenny Levy
Teveth 1 Mary Roddy
Harry Udashen
Teveth 2 Sobel Baby
Beatrice Kline
Teveth 3 Barnet Brown
Sarah Reva Ellis

Becky Levin
Louis I. Rosenberg
Teveth 4 Mendel Beerman
Mrs. L. Bodenheim
Arnold Keen
Itzak Lavi
Ira L. Solovey
Teveth 5 Mrs. Aaron Levy
Norman Stein

Kaddish will be read on December 18

Teveth 6 S.H. Gardner
Louis Stein
Teveth 7 Katie Kirschner
Teveth 8 Ivan Esserman
Rose Gerson
Ida Kaplan
Isaac Loewenstein
Leon Meinstein
Bessie Cohen Sachs
Teveth 9 Ben Adelman
Morris L. Gardner
Nathan Wood
Teveth 10 Benjamin Adams
Tillie Miller
Teveth 11 Nate Chodorow
Marie Genecov Adams
Teveth 12 Alphonse Podrizki

Kaddish will be read on December 25

Teveth 14 Sarah Adams
Ida Farbstein
Rubin Gandler
Mrs. Sam Genecov
Hattie Lansky
Teveth 15 Mrs. Hermine Block
J.M. Freeman
Eli Frankfort
Charlotte Gelber
H. Rosenberg
Fannie Wolf
Teveth 16 Elias Greenfield
Mrs. B.R. Goldberg
Hilda Hoffman
Mrs. L. Ringold
Arthur Rubel
Teveth 17 Jacob Arnold Fischman Pauline Kolom
Rachel Levy
Teveth 18 Taube Jacobson Cohen
Frances G. Jacobson
Ben Levin
Madeleine Richings
M.B. Farmer
Dr. Hyman Irwin Mendelson
Teveth 19 Frances Novy
Hanina Pinto

December 2015

19 Kislev 5776 - 19 Tevet 5776

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 8:10AM/6:25PM 19 Kislev Sotah 36	2 8:11AM/6:25PM 20 Kislev Sotah 37	3 8:12AM/6:25PM Tanya Class 4:00 p.m. 21 Kislev Sotah 38	4 8:13AM/6:25PM jj6:07PM Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 p.m. 22 Kislev Sotah 39	5 8:14AM/6:25PM §7:10PM Shacharit 9:30 a.m. 23 Kislev Sotah 40
6 8:14AM/6:25PM Erev Hanukkah Hanukkah Bazaar 4:00 p.m. Minyan 9:00 a.m. 24 Kislev Sotah 41	7 8:15AM/6:25PM §7:10PM Hanukkah I 25 Kislev Sotah 42	8 8:16AM/6:25PM §7:10PM Hanukkah II 26 Kislev Sotah 43	9 8:17AM/6:26PM §7:11PM Hanukkah III CAJ Board Meeting 6:00 p.m. 27 Kislev Sotah 44	10 8:17AM/6:26PM §7:11PM Hanukkah IV 28 Kislev Sotah 45	11 8:18AM/6:26PM §7:11PM/jj6:08PM Hanukkah V Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 p.m. 29 Kislev Sotah 46	12 8:19AM/6:26PM §7:11PM Rosh Hodesh - Hanukkah VI Shacharit 9:30 a.m. 30 Kislev Sotah 47
13 8:19AM/6:26PM §7:11PM Rosh Hodesh - Hanukkah VII Minyan 9:00 a.m. Basic Judaism 10:15 a.m. Hebrew Class 11:15 a.m. 1 Tevet Sotah 48	14 8:20AM/6:27PM §7:12PM Hanukkah VIII 2 Tevet Sotah 49	15 8:21AM/6:27PM 3 Tevet Gittin 2	16 8:21AM/6:27PM 4 Tevet Gittin 3	17 8:22AM/6:28PM Tanya Class 4:00 p.m. 5 Tevet Gittin 4	18 8:23AM/6:28PM jj6:10PM Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 p.m. 6 Tevet Gittin 5	19 8:23AM/6:29PM §7:14PM Shacharit 9:30 a.m. 7 Tevet Gittin 6
20 8:24AM/6:29PM Minyan 9:00 a.m. Basic Judaism 10:15 a.m. Hebrew Class 11:15 a.m. 8 Tevet Gittin 7	21 8:24AM/6:30PM 9 Tevet Gittin 8	22 8:25AM/6:30PM §7:15PM Fast of Tevet 10 10 Tevet Gittin 9	23 8:25AM/6:31PM 11 Tevet Gittin 10	24 8:26AM/6:31PM Office Closed Tanya Class 4:00 p.m. 12 Tevet Gittin 11	25 8:26AM/6:32PM jj6:14PM Kabbalat Shabbat 6:00 p.m. Office Closed 13 Tevet Gittin 12	26 8:27AM/6:32PM §7:17PM Shacharit 9:30 a.m. 14 Tevet Gittin 13
27 8:27AM/6:33PM Minyan 9:00 a.m. Basic Judaism 10:15 a.m. Hebrew Class 11:15 a.m. 15 Tevet Gittin 14	28 8:27AM/6:34PM 16 Tevet Gittin 15	29 8:28AM/6:34PM 17 Tevet Gittin 16	30 8:28AM/6:35PM 18 Tevet Gittin 17	31 8:28AM/6:36PM Office Closed Tanya Class 4:00 p.m. 19 Tevet Gittin 18		