

NCSY Winter Regional 2016

*We find 2 places where our sages recount the story of Chanukah:
The story is found both in the Talmud, and a prayer that was added to the silent amidah.*

Shabbat 21b:44-48

What is Chanukah, that our Sages taught: On the 25th of Kislev - the days of Chanukah, they are eight, not to eulogize on them and not to fast on them? When the Greeks entered the Temple, they polluted all the oils in the Temple, and when the Hasmonean dynasty overcame and defeated them, they checked and they found but one cruse of oil that was set in place with the seal of the High Priest, but there was in it only [enough] to light a single day. A miracle was done with it, and they lit from it for eight days. The following year [the Sages] fixed those [days], making them holidays for praise and thanksgiving.

שבת כ"א ב:מ"ד-מ"ח

מאי חנוכה דתנו רבנן בכ"ה בכסליו יומי דחנוכה תמניא אינון דלא למספד בהון ודלא להתענות בהון שכשנכנסו יוונים להיכל טמאו כל השמנים שבהיכל וכשגברה מלכות בית חשמונאי ונצחום בדקו ולא מצאו אלא פך אחד של שמן שהיה מונח בחותמו של כהן גדול ולא היה בו אלא להדליק יום אחד נעשה בו נס והדליקו ממנו שמונה ימים לשנה אחרת קבעום ועשאוים ימים טובים בהלל והודאה

Siddur Ashkenaz, Weekday, Shacharit, Amidah, Thanksgiving

And we praise You for the miracles and for the redemption and for the mighty deeds and for the victories and for the battles that You performed for our fathers in those days at this time: In the days of Mattisyahu, the son of Yochanan the High Priest, the Hasmonean, and his sons, when the wicked kingdom of Greece rose up against Your people Israel to make them forget Your Torah and to stray from the laws of Your will, You, with great mercy stood by them in the time of their distress. You fought their fight, judged their cause and avenged them with vengeance. You delivered the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the impure into the hands of the pure, the wicked into the hands of the righteous and the arrogant into the hands of those engaged with Your Torah. For Yourself you made a great and holy name in Your world, You performed a great deliverance for Your people Israel on this day. After these things, Your children entered into the Holy of Holies of Your House, cleansed Your Temple, purified the place of Your Holiness, kindled lights in Your holy courts and established these eight days of Hanukkah to express thanksgiving and praise to Your great name.)

סידור אשכנז, ימי חול, תפילת

שחרית, עמידה, מודים

בחנוכה ופורים אומרים כאן ועל הנסים: על הנסים ועל הפך וועל הגבורות ועל התשועות ועל המלחמות ששעשית לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה:
() לחנוכה: בימי מתתיהו בן יוחנן כהן גדול חשמונאי ובניו. כשעמדה מלכות יון הרשעה על עמך ישראל להשפיתם תורתך ולהעבירם מחקי רצונך. ואתה ברחמיך הרבים עמדת להם בעת צרתם. רבת את ריבם. דנת את דינם. נקמת את נקמתם. מסרת גבורים ביד חלשים. ורבים ביד מעטים. וטמאים ביד טהורים. ורשעים ביד צדיקים. וזדים ביד עוסקי תורתך. ולך עשית שם גדול וקדוש בעולמך. ולעמך ישראל עשית תשועה גדולה ופנקו פהיום הזה: ואחר כן באו בניך לדביר ביתך. ופנו את היכלך. וטהרו את מקדשך. והדליקו נרות בהצרות קדשך. וקבעו שמונת ימי חנכה אלו. להודות ולהלל לשמך הגדול:

- ❖ If the Greeks defiled and contaminated our Beit Hamikdash (Holy Temple) terribly, why didn't they just destroy it completely?
- ❖ There were 2 incredible miracles of Chanukah:
 - The oil lasted for 8 days instead of one.
 - The few brave Jewish militants defeating the mighty Greek army.

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- ❖ If you were to name this holiday, what would you call it?
- ❖ What does the name "Chanukah" mean?

Shabbat 21b:23-33

Our Sages taught: The mitzvah of Chanukkah is a [single] candle for [each] man and his household, and those who are scrupulous: A candle for each and every one, and the scrupulous among and the scrupulous among the scrupulous: **Beit Shammai** says: The first day he lights eight, from here going [forward], he goes on reducing, and **Beit Hillel** says: The first day he lights one, from here going [forward], he goes on adding. Ulla said They argued about it - two Amoraim from the West [i.e., Eretz Yisrael]: Rabbi Yosi ben Avin and Rabbi Yosi ben Zevida. One said: the reasoning of Beit Shammai is: to correspond to the days which are entering, and the reasoning of Beit Hillel is: to correspond to the days which are going out;

שבת כ"א ב:כ"ג-ל"ג

ת"ר מצות חנוכה נר איש וביתו והמהדרין
 נר לכל אחד ואחד והמהדרין מן המהדרין
 ב"ש אומרים יום ראשון מדליק שמנה
 מכאן ואילך פוחת והולך וב"ה אומרים יום
 ראשון מדליק אחת מכאן ואילך מוסיף
 והולך אמר עולא פליגי בה תרי אמוראי
 במערבא ר' יוסי בר אבין ור' יוסי בר
 זבידא חד אמר טעמא דב"ש כנגד ימים
 הנכנסין וטעמא דב"ה כנגד ימים היוצאין

- ❖ What is the difference between the two opinions?
- ❖ What do YOU think could be the reasoning for each opinion?
- ❖ Which opinion resonates more with you? Why?

Netivot Shalom, The Slonimer Rebbe - (August 8, 1911 – August 8, 2000)

The Talmud teaches us that Beit Shammai says to light Chanukah candles starting with 8 lights, and subtracting one each night. Beit Hillel holds that we begin lighting the number of candles for the actual day of the holiday, one candle on the first night, two on the second, so on and so forth. The Netivot Shalom explains that Beit Shammai is saying that Chanukah is about potential, meaning, "what do we have left?" 8, then 7, then 6 and so on. Practically speaking, today, we follow the opinion of Beit Hillel.

The Slonimer Rebbe explains that Beit Hillel's opinion is about **recognizing our current reality**. Today is the first day, so therefore we light 1 candle. Day 2, is the second day, so therefore we light 2 candles. The Rebbe explains that Chanukah is about recognizing our reality. The light of the menorah, according to the Slonimer is there to shine upon the truth of our reality. **Who are we? How do we define ourselves?** What walls have I established in my social circles? What walls have I established in my family? What is the truth about me? What talents do I have? What are my honest lackings. Let's allow Chanukah to shine upon the realities of our lives to help us grow.

The Rebbe continues to say that Chanukah, as we know, is the holiday of **miracles**. We have 8 days of Chanukah, because **8 is above nature**. The world was created in 7 days, making "8" *L'malah Min HaTeva, above nature*. This is to remind us that as Jews, we live in a constant contradiction. We must confront our realities, work hard to deal with them head on and not rely on miracles... at the same time, we must know that **our existence as Jews is a miracle itself**. Every time we experience anything Jewish, we should see the clear miracle of our existence. Throughout the centuries, different powers in the world have tried to stop our positive influence through many different mediums.

We have to know that our existence and continued influence is a miracle. In summary, the contradiction with which we live, is as follows: We shouldn't rely on miracles, yet should always be taking note, and showing appreciation for their happenings.