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# the Shofar



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Etz Chayim Conservative Synagogue's Monthly Newsletter  
DECEMBER, 2017 KISLEV/TEVET, 5778

Friday evening services begin at 7:30 p.m.  
Saturday morning services begin at 9:30 a.m.

## FROM THE RABBI

### IT'S ABOUT TIME THAT WE LET THE LIGHT SHINE IN

The lighting of the Chanukah menorah is meant as *pirsuma deNisa*, "publicizing the miracle," so that people going past your house will be reminded that a miracle occurred for the Jewish people in the time of the Maccabees. That's why we place our menorah by a window. Leslie and I happen to live at the end of a cul-de-sac, and each year I experience some wistfulness at not being able to observe the mitzvah to the fullest. Well, we do what we can.

This year as Chanukah approaches I am thinking about the importance of publicizing. I'm thinking that certain events and acts should absolutely be placed before the public. I refer specifically to the avalanche of revelations of sexual predation over the past two months, ever since accusations were leveled against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein. You all know the long list of men who have been outed. As we light one additional candle each night for eight nights, it seems as though we are learning of one (or more)

alleged sexual miscreant each day. The menorah at least stops at eight, while this scandal is going on for a couple of months. What a growing and glowing list!

I am glad that long-suppressed truths are coming out. Does a rabbi need to point out the obvious fact that respect for every man and woman is at the heart of our Torah? Yes, I'm glad that the truth is coming out. I'm also dismayed that so many sleazy and criminal acts have been hidden for so long. After many years we suddenly find out that "everybody knew" that Weinstein was a sexual predator. If "everybody knew," why was nothing done?

The most common answer is that the women who were assaulted (and sometimes it was men who were assaulted) were afraid that they would be blackballed. I don't know how Hollywood works. But it's hard for me to understand why some of the most powerful movers and shakers, some of the biggest actors and actresses in the world — celebrities with 20 or 30 years of stardom behind them -- were afraid that they'd be blackballed. Yet they too, apparently, were silent. My friends, those who knew and yet kept silent were complicit in this evil.

Some mitzvot are best performed quietly. It's a mitzvah, for example, to give charity anonymously. You do it for the sake of the mitzvah, and not for any reward or acclaim. But the mitzvah of the Chanukah menorah is done publicly, openly. In the case of sexual assault, it seems to me — and I know that I cannot speak from the point of view of a female — that this is something that should not stay in the quiet corners of anonymity. A woman need not exactly be *proud* to say that she was harassed or assaulted. But why should she be ashamed? She did nothing wrong! One can say that Chanukah teaches us that evil must be confronted. Surely this principle applies to the evil that is done by serial sex abusers.

The Bible says that we should walk *humbly* with our God. But it also tells us to do our best to eradicate the evil in our midst. It's long past time that the vile deeds of exploitative people be exposed to the public. In the presence of evil, we must let the light shine in.

Happy Chanukah,

Stephen Listfield

### FROM THE PRESIDENT

The highlight of November was the joint Shabbat Service in conjunction with Veterans Day at Temple B'nai Sholom. Our next opportunity to work together is the Community Chanukah lighting on Sunday, December 17. This follows our Latke Party and should help us attain the true holiday spirit. It takes the effort of many to succeed, and I am grateful for all the assistance. This month, I especially want to honor our Budget and Finance Committee, Gary Hall and Kevin Thompson. The transition of a treasurer is never easy, though Gary and Kevin were successful without missing a

beat. Gary also lends us his voice during Torah services, and Kevin is one of our accomplished English leaders.

שלום

Barry Meyer

### CHANUKAH, 2018

From Rabbi Stephen Listfield

Chanukah celebrates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after its defilement by the Syrian Greeks in 164 BCE. Although it is a late addition to the Jewish liturgical calendar, the eight-day festival of Hanukkah has become a beloved and joyous holiday. This year the holiday begins on Tuesday evening, December 12, and continues until nightfall on December 20.

The defining act of Chanukah is to kindle the lights of the *hanukkiyah*, the eight-branched candelabrum (commonly referred to as the menorah). These lights, which can either be candles or tiny oil cups with floating wicks, grow in strength during the eight days of Chanukah, with the addition of one candle or lighted wick each night. Because the purpose of these Hanukkah lights is the public proclamation of the miracle, the menorah is traditionally lit in a place where the candles can be seen from out of doors, near a window or a doorway.

(From <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/hanukkah>)

### **Candle Lighting for the Holiday**

Candles are added to the menorah from right to left but are kindled from left to right. The newest candle is lit first. (On the Shabbat of Chanukah, kindle the Chanukah lights first and then the Shabbat candles.)

Light the shamash (the helper candle) first,

using it to kindle the rest of the lights. As you do, say or sing:

**Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tsivanu l'hadlik ner shel Hanukkah.**

Blessed are You, Adonai our God,  
Sovereign of all, who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us to kindle the Hanukkah lights.

**Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, she-asah nisim la'avoteinu bayamim hahaeim baz'man hazeh.**

Blessed are You, Adonai our God,  
Sovereign of all, who performed wonderful deeds for our ancestors in days of old at this season.

For first night only: **Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higianu laz'man hazeh.**

Blessed are You, Adonai our God,  
Sovereign of all, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.

## SISTERHOOD

Greetings All,

The Sisterhood Craft Night was held on November 20th. Risa helped us decorate and paint tote bags, and we had a nice crowd and a lot of fun. Thanks to Risa for all her help. If you can think of any other programs or craft projects you would be interested in, please let Nannette or me know.

Lynne Edmondson is still in need of volunteers for the Onegs for Jan-June. Please call her and get your name on the list. Millie is also in need of people (doesn't have to be Ladies, so you guys can step up) for the Sunday brunches when the Rabbi comes.

Don't forget the Hanukkah Latke Party on the 17th of December. It's only \$7 for each adult, and Sunday school children are no charge. We still need people to provide some bingo prizes.

Natha

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

There are 14 empty oneg slots to be filled from January through June, 2018. We request each synagogue member participate in the mitzvah of providing 2 onegs each year.

There are 2 open slots for dinner with the Rabbi: Friday, March 16 and Friday, May 4.

To volunteer, call 256-776-9898 or email: [dr.L.edmondson@gmail.com](mailto:dr.L.edmondson@gmail.com)

Thank you,

Lynne Edmondson

## LATKE PARTY

Join us at EC for our annual and famous Chanukah Latke Party on December 17<sup>th</sup>. There will be Bingo!, a huge salad bar and of course, delicious homemade latkes. Adults are \$7 each and Sunday school children are free.

We (WWII Vets) will always remember Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. This is the 76<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.  
"A day that will live in infamy"  
FDR

From Howard Polin

## ONEGS

Nov 24 Kolchin  
Dec 01 Thompson  
Dec 08 Nelson  
Dec 15 Leitner  
Dec 22 Levitt  
Dec 29 Berger

## DONATIONS

### Rabbi Fund

From: Shirley & Ted Roberts

From: Michelle Lapidus  
To: Millie & Max Rosenthal- In Honor of their 60th anniversary.

### General Fund

From: Natha & Scott Hancock  
To: Millie & Max Rosenthal - In honor of their 60th anniversary.

### BBYO Fund

From: Janet Schindler  
To: Jamie Campbell - Glad your surgery is over and you are on the road to a great recovery.

From: Millie & Max Rosenthal  
To: Jamie Campbell - Glad your surgery is over, continued good health.

### Outdoor Lighting Fund

In Memory of Gertrude and Perry Schlein from their daughters Natha Hancock & Robin Slomka and their families.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec 13-20 Chanukah, light candles the sunset before  
Dec 17 EC Latke Party, Bingo! Adults \$7, Sunday school children free!  
Dec 28 Fast of Tevet 10

## BIRTHDAYS

Dec 04 Joe Paddock  
Dec 06 Gabi Lapidus  
Dec 11 Charlie Fisher  
Dec 12 Nicole Sacks Dillard  
Dec 13 Joe Roberts  
Dec 13 Martin Freeman  
Dec 16 Sue Paddock  
Dec 23 Ira Leitner  
Dec 25 Holly Kent  
Dec 27 Kaitlin Polin  
Dec 31 Joshua Dixon

## ANNIVERSARIES

Dec 14 Lucy & Charles Fisher  
Dec 23 Dorothy & Bill Goldberg

## YAHARZEITS\*\*

Dec 01 Kislev 13 Gertrude S. Goldberger  
Dec 05 Kislev 17 Irving Weinberger  
Dec 15 Kislev 27 Moe Post  
Dec 16 Kislev 28 David Amiel Wertheim\*  
Dec 16 Kislev 28 Morris Freeman  
Dec 17 Kislev 29 Rita Goldstein\*  
Dec 19 Tevet 01 Meyer Rodkin\*  
Dec 19 Tevet 01 Murray Golub  
Dec 20 Tevet 02 Dr. David Sidel  
Dec 21 Tevet 03 Max Theodor Hoehne\*  
Dec 22 Tevet 04 Freida Makower\*  
Dec 24 Tevet 06 Fannie Ginsburg  
Dec 24 Tevet 06 Estelle Okeon  
Dec 26 Tevet 08 Dan Polin\*  
Dec 27 Tevet 09 Florence Goldstein\*  
Dec 27 Tevet 09 Rose Kahn\*  
Dec 30 Tevet 12 Gilbert Brodtkin  
Dec 30 Tevet 12 Lou Herbin\*  
Dec 30 Tevet 12 Bea Smolker\*  
Dec 14 Tevet 14 Betty K. Greenberg

\* **Plaque**

\*\***Light Memorial candle sunset of previous evening**

## CHANUKAH AND CHRISTMAS; A STUDY IN ECUMENICISM

By Ted Roberts

Chanukah and Christmas have many similarities: they both fall in December - They both delight the merchant classes - They're both lighthearted holidays that don't sufficiently emphasize their religious/historical origins, and both festivals love light. Jews light candles. Christians light up evergreen trees. And finally, they're both followed by a flood of bankruptcy filings by Christian and Jewish families who have blown the December budget on munificent gifts to kids who will forget their parents' names, address, and phone number by the time they're 21. ("Citi Bank writes monthly about their new credit card, but not a word from Marvin," says one of my neglected friends.)

Chanukah used to be a skimpy little holiday - more patriotic than religious. Jewish families feasted on fried potato cakes - latkes - a delightful medley of potato, onion, and matzoh meal. De riguer On Chanukah, followed by long periods of togetherness as the family holds hands, suffers from heartburn, and chews Roloids together.

The Jewish family laps up potato cakes while their Christian neighbor dines on a great, golden goose surrounded by festive delicacies. This menu inequality, and perhaps a disagreement over the origin and arrival date of the Messiah, is all that keeps Christians and Jews from some serious cost cutting with a corporate merger.

In Jewish homes, after the prayers, candle lighting, latke feast and anti-acid therapy regimen, a long-winded story teller, like the author, tells the tale of Chanukah: the campaign of liberation vs Greek/Syrian masters waged by the Jews of the second century before Christ.

In the old days, kids enjoyed a frugal Chanukah. They usually received a coin each day of the 8-day celebration. But

sometime around the middle of the 20th century, inflamed by their Christian neighbors and their frenzied December generosity, Jews turned Chanukah into an 8-day orgy of gifts. It was a giant step toward economic assimilation and bridge building between the two sister religions. Jews were now ALSO broke in January. Their checks bounced as well as those of their Christian friends. They could even tell better shopping stories due to the 8-day frenzy of exercising their credit cards.

I remember the scene when I was a youthful Chanukah celebrant. My grandmother, enthroned in the softest chair in the living room, handed out holiday coins to a line of grandkids, nephews, and nieces. There was a protocol - like when you were introduced to the Queen. You held out your hand as Grandmother reached into her purse and selected your coin. This was no egalitarian exercise. The coins ranged from quarters to silver dollars. Both behavior and kinship went on the scale. A courteous well cleaned up cousin with clean fingernails could cop a bigger prize than a grandkid who never called grandmother. The ceremony ended with a long slow kiss to grandmother's cheek. An obligation which smart kids realized affected next year's disbursement. My cousin, Arlene, as far sighted as the prophet Elijah, was even smart enough to help cut up her Bubbe's latkes. And that was Chanukah in my day.

Ted Roberts, "The Scribbler on the Roof," is a syndicated Jewish columnist and longtime member of our Synagogue. Buy Ted's collected works at Amazon.com or the Sisterhood Gift Shop. Ted welcomes your comment and/or critique and can be emailed at: [shirlr@hiwaay.net](mailto:shirlr@hiwaay.net)