

# CEREMONY & CELEBRATION

FAMILY EDITION

WITH RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS זצ"ל



CHANUKAH 5781 • CANDLE 6



This series is based on the teachings and writings of Rabbi Sacks זצ"ל who passed away on 7 November 2020 / 20 MarCheshvan 5781. The additional educational content has been provided by Dr. Daniel Rose together with The Office of Rabbi Sacks.



## A Chanukah Message for the Sixth Night

### THE THIRD MIRACLE

**WE ALL** know the miracles of Chanukah; the military victory of the Maccabees against the Greeks, and the miracle of the oil that should have lasted one day but kept the Menorah lights burning for eight. But there was a third miracle not many people know about. It took place several centuries later.

After the destruction of the Second Beit Hamikdash, many Rabbis were convinced that the festival of Chanukah should be abolished. After all, it celebrated the rededication of the Beit Hamikdash. And the Beit Hamikdash was no more. It had been destroyed by the Romans under Titus. Without a Beit Hamikdash, what was there left to celebrate?

The Talmud tells us that in at least one town, Lod, Chanukah was abolished. Yet eventually

the other view prevailed, which is why we continue to celebrate Chanukah to this day.

Why? Because although the Beit Hamikdash was destroyed, Jewish hope was not destroyed. We may have lost the building but we still have the story, and the memory, and the light. And what had happened once in the days of the Maccabees could happen again. And it was those words, *od lo avdah tikvatenu*, "our hope is not destroyed," words that became part of the song, *Hatikvah*, that inspired Jews to return to Israel and rebuild their ancient state.

So as you light the Chanukah candles remember this: The Jewish people kept hope alive, and hope kept the Jewish people alive. We are the voice of hope in the conversation of humankind.



### Points to Ponder

- 1 Why do you think it is important to maintain festivals and remembrance days that commemorate historical events from generations ago?
- 2 How does Chanukah represent hope? Hope for what?
- 3 What connections are there between the Chanukah story and the modern State of Israel?





## From the Thought of Rabbi Sacks

**SOMETHING IN** the human spirit survives even the worst of tragedies, allowing us to rebuild shattered lives, broken institutions and injured nations.

That, to me, is the Jewish story. Jews survived all the defeats, expulsions, persecutions and pogroms, even the Holocaust itself, because they never gave up the faith that one day they would be free to live as Jews without fear.

Whenever I visit a Jewish school today, I see on the smiling faces of the children the ever-renewed power of that faith whose symbol is Chanukah and its light of inextinguishable hope.



**Credo, The Times** (8 December 2012)

### Points to Ponder

1 What do Jewish school-children represent to Rabbi Sacks in this quote?

2 What is the connection between this quote and the message from Rabbi Sacks on *The Third Miracle* (previous page)?

## Chanukah for the Young (and Young at Heart!)

### It Once Happened...

**IN THE DAYS** of the wicked kingdom of Greece, it was decreed upon the Jews that whoever had a bolt on his door must engrave upon it the words “I have no portion or heritage in the God of Israel.”

Immediately, all Jews went and pulled out all the bolts from their doors and discarded them.

It was also decreed that whoever had an ox must write on its horn the words “I have no portion or heritage in the God of Israel.”

Immediately, all the Jews went and sold all their oxen.

**Midrash LeChanukah**



### Point to Ponder

How do these acts of defiance compare to the heroism of the Maccabees?

## Chanukah Challenge!

### The Chanukah Story in Emojis

From the days of Alexander the 🏹 of 🌸, 🇬🇷 was under the 🇬🇷 of the Alexandrian Empire of 🇬🇷. During the 2nd century BCE, 🇬🇷 came 🇬🇷 the 🇬🇷 of the Seleucids who were based in 🇸🇪.

The Seleucid leader, Antiochus 4th, who modestly called himself Epiphanes, meaning “God made manifest”, decided to 🏃 up the pace of Hellenisation on the 🇸🇪 of the land of 🇬🇷. He made it illegal to publicly practise 🇸🇪, erected a 🏛 of Zeus in the 🏛, and offered a 🍖 before it as a sacrifice.

An 🇮🇸 Priest called Mattityahu, and his 🇮🇸 and their supporters known to history as the 🏹, 🏹 back. 🇮🇸 the next 3 years they scored a 🏹 🇮🇸 🇮🇸 the Seleucids, reconquering Jerusalem and bringing it 🇮🇸 🇮🇸 sovereignty. They cleansed the 🏛 and rededicated it, 🏹 the 🏹 🇮🇸 that stood in the 🏛, for a celebration lasting 8 days.

**FUN FACT!**

There is a custom on Chanukah to play with special spinning tops called *dreidels* (in Yiddish) or *sevivonim* (in Hebrew). The Greeks forbade Jews to learn Torah and so Jews would meet in secret to learn, but if a Greek soldier walked past, they would pretend to be gambling with their *dreidels*. The words *dreidel* (Yiddish) and *sevivon* (Hebrew) both mean to turn or spin. The *dreidel* has four sides, which each feature a Hebrew letter. In Israel, the letters are *Nun, Gimel, Hay* and *Peh*. Outside Israel, they're *Nun, Gimel, Hay, Shin*. The letters stand for the Hebrew phrase, “*Ness Gadol Hayah Poh/Sham*”, meaning, “A great miracle happened here/there” (here for those in Israel, there for those outside of Israel).

## Educational Companion to the Questions

### THE THIRD MIRACLE

1. The festivals that commemorate historical events are the way that we transmit our heritage and our history. They are the most effective way to build our values and our identity in future generations, creating a national DNA that is passed from one generation to the next.
2. Hope is a recurring theme in the Chanukah story. The Maccabees had hope that despite overwhelming odds, they could defeat the mightiest and largest army in the world. They had hope that they could find oil to light the Menorah. And despite the later destruction of the Beit Hamikdash, we still celebrate Chanukah because we have hope that one day it will be rebuilt.
3. The story of the establishment of the modern State of Israel is also a story of hope and miracles, and the overcoming of immense odds. Just three years after the Jewish people experienced the greatest tragedy in human history, they re-established sovereignty in their ancestral homeland, and thereafter had to fight several wars against numerous enemies, triumphing, despite the odds, again and again.

### FROM THE THOUGHT OF RABBI SACKS

1. Children represent the future, and a society or community that invests in its children has hope for the future. Jewish children in Jewish schools prove that the Jewish people have overcome thousands of years of adversity and persecution, and today we continue to invest in our future, a hopeful future.
2. This message is the message of Chanukah. The story of inextinguishable hope.

### IT ONCE HAPPENED...

Heroism comes in small and large acts. The Maccabees were brave military fighters, but these acts from the wider populace were equally heroic and courageous. They were an act of defiance in the face of persecution, making a clear statement that their will and spirit could not be broken.

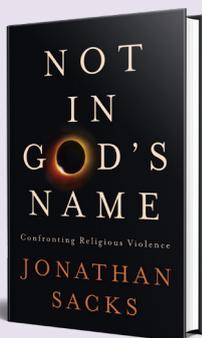
### THE CHANUKAH STORY IN EMOJIS

From the days of Alexander the **Great** of **Macedonia**, **Israel** was under the **control** of the Alexandrian Empire of **Greece**. During the **second** century BCE, **Israel** came **under the control** of the Seleucids who were based in **Egypt**.

The Seleucid leader, Antiochus the **Fourth**, who modestly called himself Epiphanes, meaning “God made manifest”, decided to **speed** up the pace of Hellenisation on the **Jews** of the land of **Israel**. He made it illegal to publicly practise **Judaism**, erected a **statue** of Zeus in the **Temple**, and offered a **pig** before it as a sacrifice.

An **elderly** Priest called Mattityahu, and his **sons** and their supporters known to history as the **Hammers (Maccabees)**, **fought** back. **Over** the next **three** years they scored a **great victory** over the Seleucids, reconquering Jerusalem and bringing it **back under Jewish** sovereignty. They cleansed the **Temple** and rededicated it, **lighting** the **great Menorah** that stood in the **Temple**, for a celebration lasting **eight** days.

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Just as the Chanukah lights illuminate our homes, Rabbi Sacks **ליל** lit up the world by inspiring us and others with his timely and timeless insights. Chanukah reminds each one of us to be a light in the wider world. Every night of Chanukah we will be highlighting one book where Rabbi Sacks articulated his deep insights into Judaism, morality, sociology, theology, and much much more, guiding us all to live a life of Judaism engaged with the world.

Tonight's book is **Not In God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence**, an exploration of the roots of violence and its relationship to religion, with ground-breaking biblical analysis and interpretation. This is an eloquent call for people of goodwill from all faiths and none to confront the religious extremism that threatens to destroy us, and stand united.

*Jonathan Sacks*  
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