

היוצאים

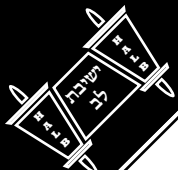
Volume XVII - Issue 6



Special Chanukah Issue!!

דברים

The DRS Weekly Torah Publication



The Light Within Our Darkness

By Rabbi Elly Storch, Assistant Menahel

Every Jewish child knows the Chanukah story on the basic level. The Yevanim did not allow the Jews religious freedoms so the Chashmonaim miraculously defeated them in a battle where they were the underdogs. We went into the Beis Hamikdash where only one jug of oil was found which was supposed to last one day and miraculously the oil lasted eight days.

The Mefarshim grapple with which miracle created the obligation for us to celebrate Chanukah today. On the one hand the gemara in Shabbas 21b asks What is Chanukah and Rashi explains the actual question is why do we celebrate Chanukah. The gemara answers because of the miracle of the pach hasehmen. The war is only mentioned as a means to the end. But in our Liturgy that was established for Chanukah in Al Hanisim we only mention the battle of the war and we don't mention the miracle of the jug. It seems there are conflicting messages as to which story creates our current obligation to celebrate.

The Maharal in two places gives a beautiful answer which explains the theme of the day and sheds light on human reality. He posits that the primary obligation of Chanukah is to celebrate the war. One only says Hallel when he is physically saved from danger and not when given the ability to do a Mitzvah. But sometimes when a military victory is achieved one ascribes the victory to great

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*The staff of
דברים היוצאים מן הל"ב
wishes all of its readers a
Freilichin Chanukah!*

Chanukah: The Holiday of Faith

By Brian Chernigoff, Editor of Student Articles, 12th Grade

Megilat Antiochus, a scroll depicting the story of Chanukah, tells us that at the time the Greeks persecuted the Jews they outlawed three mitzvos, Shabbos, Bris Milah and Rosh Chodesh. By doing so, the Greeks hoped that they would be able to alienate the Jews from their religion and assimilate them into their culture. Yet the question begs itself why they specifically chose to outlaw these three commandments. What did they see in these mitzvos as so essential to a Torah way of life that caused them to specifically restrict them?

The answer perhaps lies in the antithetical nature of these mitzvos in comparison to Greek culture. The Greek culture at the time deemed philosophy as one of the greatest intellectual achievements that a man could reach. They worshipped the idea of using one's rational observation skills to look out to the world and form one's own beliefs. The men whom were respected the most were the great philosophers who could think extraordinarily. Thus they saw these three mitzvos, which emphasize tradition and belief, as clashing with their attempts to assimilate the Jews to their culture which emphasized thought and belief based on rational observation.

Shabbos epitomizes the ultimate belief in the Creator of the Universe. For one day a week we enjoy a ces-

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Torah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

**Parshas Mikeitz
Questions**

1. What in this parsha occurs after "two years"? What else in the book of Genesis occurs after "two years"? (2 answers)
2. Which two pieces of jewelry are in this parsha?
3. Who in this parsha is called a *kohen* (priest)? Who else in the book of Genesis is called a *kohen*?
4. What in this parsha is compared to sand? Where else in the book of Genesis is there a comparison to sand? (2 answers)
5. What 3 vocations appear in this parsha, but nowhere else in the Torah?
6. What object appears in this parsha 15 times, but does not appear anywhere else in Tanach?

Answers

1. Pharaoh has his dreams two years after Yosef interprets the dreams of the butler and baker (Genesis 41:1). In Genesis 11:10, Noah's son Shem has a son, Arpashchad, two years after the Flood. In Genesis 45:6, Yosef tells his brothers that only two years have passed in the famine and they all must move to Egypt.
2. Pharaoh gives Yosef "his ring" and places "a golden chain" upon his neck (Genesis 41:42).
3. Poti-Fera, the father-in-law of Yosef, is the "the priest of On" (Genesis 41:45). In Genesis 14:18, Malkei-Tzedek is called a *kohen*.
4. Yosef gathered so much food that it was as numerous "as the sand of the sea" (Genesis 41:49). In Genesis 22:17, Hashem promises Avraham that his offspring will be "like the sand on the seashore." In Genesis 32:13, Yaakov prays to Hashem to save him from Esav, mentioning that Hashem promised to make his children as numerous as the sand of the sea.
5. Yosef is called the *Shalit* (ruler/viceroy) and the *Mashbir* (provider) (Genesis 42:6). Later on, a *Maylitz* (interpreter) translates the conversation between Yosef and his brothers (Genesis 42:23).
6. An *amtachat* (sack) in which the brothers carry back the grain appears 15 times in this parsha but nowhere else in Tanach.

The Haftorah Corner**Written By Benjamin Pleshty**

This Haftorah is read on Shabbat Chanukah since it contains a vision of the Golden Menorah in the Beit HaMikdash. The golden menorah in the Chanukah story resembles the outstanding miracle that Hashem has done for us; a small jar of oil that lasts for just one day, lasted for eight days.

This prophecy was communicated by Zechariah shortly before the building of the Second Temple. The haftorah opens with a vivid portrayal of the joy that will triumph when Hashem will return to Jerusalem: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for, behold! I will come and dwell in your midst, says the L-rd."

The prophet then describes a scene in the Heavenly Court: Satan was seeking to convict Yehoshua, the first High Priest to serve in the Second Temple, because of the "soiled garments" (i.e. sins) he was wearing. Hashem himself defends the High Priest: "And G-d said to Satan: The G-d shall rebuke you, O Satan; the G-d who chose Jerusalem shall rebuke you. Is [Joshua] not a brand plucked from fire?" I.e., how dare Satan prosecute an individual who endured the hardships of exile? "And He raised His voice and said to those standing before him, saying, 'Take the filthy garments off him.' And He said to him, 'See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I have clad you with clean garments.'"

Hashem then proceeds to outline the rewards awaiting Yehoshua if he and his descendants follow His ways. The ultimate reward is, "Behold! I will bring My servant, the Young branch" an allusion to Mashiach, the branch of King David.

Finally, Zechariah describes a vision of a golden seven-branched Menorah. An angel interprets the meaning of this vision: "This is the word of Hashem to Zerubbabel [descendent of King David, one of the characters in the building of the Second Temple], 'Not by military force and not by physical strength, but by My spirit,' says the Lord of Hosts." Meaning that Zerubbabel's descendent, Mashiach, will have no difficulty in his task, it will be as simple as lighting a menorah.



The complete edition of
Rabbi Moshe Atik's Torah Teasers
is available on **AMAZON**
(keyword Torah Teasers)

10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by
Zachary Goldberg

Chanukah Gelt and Gifts

Right off the bat, one will not find too many halachic sources about giving presents; however, one would find sources pertaining to the giving of money or “gelt”. It would seem that several of the reasons offered by the Acharonim as to why we give money on Chanukah could also easily explain why one would give gifts on Chanukah too. Of course the most obvious answer that we might suggest as a reason we offer gifts, is in fact not such a good explanation – namely, that we are imitating the customs of the non-Jews around their holiday season. Nevertheless we find that some Acharonim strongly disagree with the suggestion that we are copying the non-Jews’ practice. Some Achronim do not believe that giving gifts is a Christian or pagan winter festival custom that we seized from them, rather if anything, like Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky says, they took it from us.

Strong reasons exist as to why we actually give money or gifts around the time Chanukah. (All maareh mekomos are from Rabbi Josh Blue).

REASON #1

There is a gemara in Pesachim (daf 109) which describes how to fulfill simchas Yom Tov by each family member. For the wife, one would offer lovely clothing. For the man, dining on meat and wine is simchas Yom Tov. Lastly, for the children, one would present them with items that make them happy. So if there is a din of simcha on Chanukah, then there is a very simple explanation why one would give children gifts, to fulfill the mitzvah of simcha.

Is there a mitzvah of simcha on Chanukah?

- The Rambam writes in hilchos Chanukah 3:3 that the days of Chanukah are days of simcha and hallel.
- However, the gemara in Shabbos (daf 101b) says that these days of Chanukah are days of hallel v’hodaah. The gemara did not say anything about simcha.

So the Rambam holds that there is simcha on Chanukah while the gemara implies this element of simcha does not apply.

The Maharam M’rotenberg has a list of seudos that are a seudas reshus and not a seudas mitzvah. One such example of a seudas reshus are the seudos that we have on Chanukah. The Tur therefore concludes that Chanukah is for Hallel and hodaah, but not for simcha.

In his peirush to Baba Kama, the Maharshah writes in

perek 7 siman 37, there exists some level of simcha on Chanukah since we are more likely to pasken like the Rambam than the Maharam M’rotenberg, and furthermore, the gemara says that the days of Chanukah are like days of Yom Tov.

The Shulchan Aruch exclaims that there is no mitzvah to have a seudah on Chanuka. The Rama however, adds should one have a seudah, it is a fulfillment of a mitzvah.

To summarize, if one holds that there exists a din of simcha on Chanukah, then one could suggest that offering gifts or treats to children - similar to all other Yomim Tovim - is a kiyum mitzvah of simcha. Consequently, should that be the case, then it is not Chukas Akum either; in order for it to be considered Chukas Akum, it must be a chok, but since there is a kiyum mitzvah here, there is no problem.

REASON #2

The Magen Avraham writes that indigent children go around collecting money on Chanukah. So although the Magen Avraham discusses the concept of giving money to children, he addresses it in connection to “poor” children specifically. Nonetheless, the Belzer Rebbe adds that it is not limited to poor children. In his sefer Chayim Sheyeish Bahem (page 248), the author writes that the practice of giving money to children developed as a mechanism to avoid embarrassing poor children.

REASON #3

The third possibility as to why we give gifts on Chanukah is found in the Emes L’yaakov on Shulchan Aruch. Children used to extend gifts of money to their teachers. The minhag developed that children were offered some money to keep for themselves.

Rav Yaakov explained that the minhag to give rebbeim money evolved specifically to reward the rebbeim on the holiday which is about keeping the mesorah alive with the Torah Sheba’al Peh, namely, Chanukah. Once we reward the rebbeim, we reward the children as well.

In fact, the Orchos Rabeinu in cheilek teaches that the Steipler Gaon maintained the minhag of giving out Chanukah gelt davka on the fifth night of Chanukah. Why specifically the fifth night? Answers the Orchos Rabeinu, since the fifth night is the only night that cannot coincide with Shabbos.

(Continued on page 4)

The Miracle of Chanukah

By Jason Loskove, 9th Grade

One who is asked to summarize the miracle of Chanukah would probably say something like this: "After the Maccabees were victorious, they found only enough pure oil to light the Menorah for one day, but it miraculously lasted for eight days. This is why we light a Menorah for eight days."

While this summary is accurate, it raises a number of questions. Perhaps the most famous of these is asked by the Bais Yosef. Why do we celebrate Chanukah for eight days if the miracle of the oil burning only occurred for the final seven days, while on the first day it was naturally lit. There are numerous answers suggested to this question.

The summary of the Chanukah-story above raises another lesser-known question. As the Pnei Yehoshua asked, why did Hashem need to perform a miracle of allowing the Jews to find "pure" oil and have it last for eight days, the Maccabees could have even lit the Menorah with impure oil? There is a concept in Halacha called Tumah Hutra b'Tzibur. This means that when the majority of the

Jewish people are Tamei, the services in the Beit Hamikdash may be performed in a state of Tumah. Thus, because at the time of the Chanukah story the majority of the Jewish people were Tamei, the Menorah could have been lit with impure oil. If this is true, then why did Hashem see fit to perform the miracle of the pure oil?

Some have answered this question by relating it to the power of teshuva and Hashem's love of the Jewish people. Yes, it is true that the Jewish people could have lit the Menorah using impure oil. However, Hashem wanted to demonstrate to the Jewish people that he had forgiven their sins and that his love for them had not diminished. To do this, he allowed the Jews to find the pure oil and miraculously let it last for eight days, enabling the Jews to light the Menorah in the ideal way, and not in a less-than-perfect way.

We must always remember that Hashem gives us the opportunity to do teshuva. Once we do so, we will find that Hashem's love for us had never diminished at all.

(10-Minute Halacha — Continued from page 3)

REASON #4

Another possible explanation of giving Chanukah gelt or gifts is found in the Sifsei Chayim, who quotes the Ponevezher Rav. In the time when Chanukah occurred, the Greeks prohibited us from learning Torah. From the time that decree was abolished, when we were once again permitted to learn, the children were rewarded to learn Torah with money. To remember that time of our history, we continue giving gifts on Chanukah.

REASON #5

The sefer Binas Yisroel suggests that there is a relationship between the financial cost incurred for a Yom Tov and the love we show the Yom Tov. The author of Binas Yisroel considers that sometimes one loves something because one has given up more for it. So by Chanukah, since the costs are relatively de minimus, we artificially create additional costs – in the form of offering gifts or gelt, for sole objective of enhancing the connection with the holiday.

REASON #6

Another possible approach is quoted by Rabbi Fluke, is that our minhag after a war was for those victorious to distribute the booty amongst the soldiers and poor people. So distributing Chanukah gelt is a way of commemorating the victory of the war.

REASON #7

The final reason offered by Rabbi Fluke is that we learn in the Book of Maccabees, that when the Jews finally made peace, Antiochas VII allowed them to mint their own coin. Archaeological discoveries show that those coins were low-valued coins, so perhaps these coins were distributed to children in the immediate years following Chanukah. This practice would support the granting of coins/gelt, but not gifts. Rabbi Fluke continues that in 1958, the Bank of Israel started to mint commemorative Chanukah coins. So maybe there is an additional kiyum of Chanukah gifts by giving these special coins.

In conclusion, we have seven possible reasons for the widespread minhag Yisrael to extend Chanuka gelt of which, several also explain giving gifts as well. We generally do not assume that offering gifts or gelt is Chukas Akum, but rather we generally assume that it is mutar.

Make it Known

By Harry Chwat

9th Grade

When it comes to Chanukah, there is a special concept of publicizing the mitzvah by lighting the menorah near a window or facing the street. The concept is very specific to Chanukah and is not seen at all for other mitzvot during the year. We don't publicize the Korban Pesach or the Megillah Reading. Why do we publicize this mitzvah specifically?

The Chasam Sofer brings down a very logical answer. He explains that we do this because not a lot of people saw the miracle of the oil originally. Only the Kohanim who were in that part of the Beit Hamikdash saw the miracle, whereas in Yetziat Mitzrayim a lot of people saw the miracles that happened then. All nations there heard about it. By the story of Purim too, we know that the entire nation was involved. By lighting the candles near the window, we are sharing with the world an often unknown and under-appreciated miracle.

(Brian Chernigoff — Continued from page 1)

sation from labor to reconnect with our Maker. Counter to rational observation, we believe that taking a day off once a week will actually be a source of blessing for our endeavors for the rest of week. This is what the Greeks abhorred about this mitzvah. They thought it impossible to convince a people with such irrational beliefs to indulge in a lifestyle solely based on just the rational observations of the eye.

Bris Mila and Rosh Chodesh both exhibit a tenacity to the age old tradition of our forefathers and the further continuation of our holy mesorah. As the first mitzvah that a father is commanded to perform for his son, Bris Mila represents the beginning of the father-son relationship that is so essential to the survival of our people. It cements the unbreakable love and commitment that a father and son must have for one another to ensure that the flame of Judaism lives on. Similarly, Rosh Chodesh exhibits the dedication of our people to the authority of the Beis Din and to the Torah leaders of each generation. In the times of the Temple, Beis Din was tasked with establishing the start of the new month by the testimony of witnesses, which would have important ramifications as to when the holidays would fall out. This required a great deal of faith in the judgment of the Sages, as the people had to trust that Beis Din had not erroneously declared the start of the new month on the wrong day resulting in them laboring on the actual holidays and observing the holidays on regular days. It was this faith in figures of authority and connection to the past that the Greeks saw as so powerful against their idea of trusting one's own observations and thoughts that prompted them to ban it.

As we light the candles this Chanukah, we must look around to see what we are blessed to have and appreciate the gift of family and tradition that the Greeks tried to take away from us. Especially as the modern world continues to deemphasize the importance of the familial structure, we must look to the past to find inspiration for the future.



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The Selfless Lesson of Mitzraim and Chanukah

By Yehuda Shetrit, 11th Grade

In this week's parsha we have the story of the dream that Pharaoh had. The first part of the dream is that there were seven "healthy cows" / "beautiful of appearance" who had a lot of flesh and seven cows that did not have a nice appearance and who had very little flesh. The story goes that the seven skinny and not beautiful cows ate the seven cows who were fat and beautiful. We know that this symbolized that there will be seven years of plenty in Mitzrayim and then seven years of famine. But the question to discuss is what exactly does it mean when it says that the cows were of beautiful appearance and cows are not known to be carnivorous and violent animals, so what is the understanding behind this?

Rashi explains that when the pasuk says that the cows were beautiful of appearance it means that it was a symbol to the days of plenty, that everyone is getting along and is happy with each other and are not jealous of each other. Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik further explains Rashi to mean that at the time of plenty and prosperity that no one was jealous of the wealth of others because everyone had a lot. At this point everyone was satisfied with what they had, however the issue is what follows. Rabbi Soloveitchik explains that if during the years of abundance the people acted in a selfish manner towards each other and hoarded their food so that they could sell it for ridiculously high prices because they have a monopoly during the famine, then in a figurative way of looking at it they are eating each other.

This is how we understand the dream of Pharaoh where the seemingly herbivore suddenly become carnivorous. It is a representation of the way of the way the people were going to act during the famine and R'Soloveitchik now says that we can understand Yosef's warning to Pharaoh. The warning was to watch over the farmers and take control of the farmers and

their produce so that the greediness and hoarding of produce to charge higher prices does not happen.

There is a halacha discussed in a separate sefer of Rabbi Soloveitchik where he explains the mitzvah of Ve-Ahavta Le-Rei'akha ka-Mokha. The question he discusses there is whether or not this mitzvah is meant to be taken literally. The reason one might think not is because of the Gemara which said that one has to worry about one's survival before the survival of others. So that contradicts the concept of loving your friend like you love yourself.

The answer and the conclusion of R' Soloveitchik is that in regard to life threatening situations you have to save yourself first before your friend. But in all other cases the mitzvah of Ve-Ahavta Le-Rei'akha ka-Mokha is meant to be taken literally.

So now one might ask on our original answer to the question regarding Pharaoh's dream is that the Mitzrim were hoarding the food to save their lives so it should be ok. But you can't ask that because its one thing to save up food and its another thing to be selfish and not want to share and instead possibly charge higher prices. The latter was what Yosef was warning Pharaoh about.

As we are now in Chanukah we have to remember the selfless acts of the Maccabim who fought and fought so that we can have the Beit Hamikdash clean ready to use. And then we have to remember what ended up being the ultimate cause for the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash which was Sinat Chinam, baseless hatred. The lesson we must with acts of selflessness and with general acts olearn from Chanukah and Parshat Miketz is that we have to remember that we must be kind to each other f kindness. By doing so, we can hope for the coming of Mashiach Bimhera Biyamenu!

(Stories of Greatness — Continued from page 8)

the doorway between the main room of their barracks and the small storage area at its rear, and filled the right-hand cup; together, the two Jews recited the blessings and kindled the first light, as millions of their fellows did that night in their homes around the world.

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WHY EIGHT?

By Avi Bulka, 11th Grade

As the days shorten and we near Chanukah, we arrive at the age-old question - "Why do we celebrate 8 days if the miracle of the candles only lasted for 7 days? The oil was expected to last for the first day so its miraculous ability was only to last for an additional seven days!" Some attempt to answer by explaining that the one night's worth of oil was divided into eight equal portions. Miraculously, each tiny portion lasted an entire night. Others explain that, in order for the oil to last, they made the wicks one-eighth as thick as they usually would. Nevertheless, the flames burned just as brightly as they would if the wicks would have been of normal thickness. Another explanation is that the text read "and there wasn't enough (oil) to burn even one day." Although these answers seem sufficient, they are not consistent with the facts. The *real*, and *only* true answer is as follows:

Looking back on the year of the Chanukah story, we see that since we were involved in war, we did not celebrate Sukkos. After we defeated the enemy, the people celebrated Sukkos on the 25th of Kislev for 8 days. Hence, we have 8 days of Chanukah. The original Chanukah was just a delayed Sukkot, resulting in our current celebration of eight days of Chanukah.

(Rabbi Storch — Continued from page 1)

tactics, skillful soldiers or the great weapons. Similarly Israel after winning the 1967 war all the bumper stickers read in Tzhal we trust and not in Hashem we trust. Hashem enabled the supernatural miracle of the Pach Hashemen to show that even the military victory was the hand of Hashem. Once one realizes that Hashem enabled the oil to last eight days and there are no other explanations for that occurrence one must give credit for the war to the hand of Hashem as well.

The Celebration of Chanukah always happens in the thick of winter where the days and moments of light are the shortest. It is difficult at times to see the hand of God in moments of darkness. The lighting of the menorah is a tremendous symbol for us today. Just like at the time of the Chashmonaim we needed the Menorah to shed light for us that even the natural appearance of victory came though the hand of God so too today even in our moments of darkness when it is difficult to see, we light the menorah as a great testament that the hand of God is everywhere in our lives.

(Stories of Greatness — Continued from page 6)

On that first night the lighting went off without a hitch, as it did on the second, third and fourth nights of the festival. As a rule, the prisoners in the camp did not inform on each other, and their barrack-mates had already grown accustomed to the religious practices of the two Jews.

On the fifth night of Chanukah, just as Reb Asher and Nachman had lit five flames in their menorah, a sudden hush spread through the barracks. The prisoners all froze in their places and turned their eyes to the doorway, in which stood an officer from the camp's high command.

Eventhough surprise inspections such as these were quite routine occurrences, they always struck terror in the hearts of the prisoners. The officer would advance through the barracks meting out severe penalties for offenses such as a hidden cigarette or a hoarded crust of bread. "Quick, throw it out into the snow," whispered the prisoners, but the officer was already striding toward the back doorway, where the two Jews stood huddled over the still-burning flames of their candelabra.

For a very long minute the officer gazed at the menorah. Then he turned to Reb Asher. "P'yat? (Five?)" he asked.

"P'yat," replied the chassid.

The officer turned and exited without a word.

STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: YEHUDA BENHAMU

Chanukah is a holiday that is filled with miracles. The candles represent the light in the darkness and the strength that Hashem gives us to live our lives even through the most difficult times. This year especially we must appreciate everything we have and thank Hashem for protecting us every day. Adapted from chabad.org. Have a great Shabbos and a happy Chanukah.

One of the legendary soldiers in the Lubavitcher Rebbe's army of teachers and activists who kept Judaism alive in Communist Russia in the darkest years of repression was Rabbi Asher Sossonkin, who spent many years in Soviet labor camps for his "counter-revolutionary" activities. In one of these camps he made the acquaintance of a Jew by the name of Nachman Rozman. In his youth, Nachman had abandoned the traditional Jewish life in which he was raised to join the communist party; he served in the Red Army, where he rose to a high rank; but then he was arrested for engaging in some illegal business and sentenced to a long term of hard labor in Siberia.

Rozman was drawn to the chassid who awakened in him memories of the home and life he had forsaken. With Reb Asher's aid and encouragement, he began a return to Jewish observance under conditions where keeping kosher, avoiding work on Shabbat,

or grabbing a few moments for prayer meant subjecting oneself to near-starvation, repeated penalties and a daily jeopardy of life and limb.

One winter, as Chanukah approached, Reb Asher revealed his plan to his friend. "I'll get a hold of a small, empty food can -- the smaller the better, so it'll be easy to hide and escape notice. We'll save half of our daily ration of margarine over the next two weeks, for oil. We can make wicks from the loose threads at the edges of our coats. When everyone's asleep, we'll light our 'menorah' under my bunk...."

"Certainly not!" cried Nachman Rozman. "It's Chanukah, Reb Asher, the festival of miracles. We'll do the mitzvah the way it should be done. Not in some rusty can fished out from the garbage, but with a proper menorah, real oil, at the proper time and place. I have a few rubles hidden away that I can pay Igor with at the metal-working shed; I also have a few 'debts' I can call in at the kitchen...."

A few days before Chanukah, Nachman triumphantly showed Reb Asher the menorah he had procured -- a somewhat crude vessel but unmistakably a "real" menorah, with eight oil-cups in a row and a raised cup for the shamash. On the first evening of Chanukah, he set the menorah on a stool in

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