



בית העם

שיג ושיח ציוני

Hanukkah

Strengthen the Light

During Hanukkah, which takes place in December (the Jewish month of Kislev), the Jewish people remember the Maccabees' triumph over the Greeks, and celebrate the dedication of the reclaimed temple. The eight days during which we kindle lights, commemorate the miracle that occurred to us upon returning to the temple, when the little oil left by the Greeks sufficed to light the Menorah for eight whole days and nights!

A. D. Gordon

"There will be no triumph of light over darkness as long as we do not realize the simple truth that, instead of fighting the darkness, we must strengthen the light"

1. What do you think A. D. Gordon meant by "strengthen the light"? Is that enough for fighting darkness?
2. What darkness must we fight? How? What forms can darkness take?
3. How can we strengthen the light?
4. What do you think is your role in strengthening the light?

1. What myths/symbols/values connected to Hanukkah do you know of?
2. In the current global reality, what could be related to these myths? How?
3. How can we utilize the values of the holiday for action and contribution? Ours, the community's, inside and out.
4. If you could make one wish for every candle, for the state of Israel/the Jewish people, what would you wish for?
5. If you could do one enlightening thing for the Israeli society/ the community in which you live, what would you do?
6. What metaphoric candle would you light? Who would you dedicate it to?

From "The Menorah" Theodor (Binyamin Ze'ev) Herzl

With such thoughtful occupation the week passed. the eighth night of Hanukkah arrived, the night that all of the candles are lit, including the ninth candle, the shamash, which otherwise serves only to light the others. A great radiance shone forth from the Menorah. The eyes of the children sparkled. For our friend, the occasion became a parable for the enkindling of a whole nation. First one candle; it is still dark and the solitary light looks gloomy. Then it finds a companion, then another, and yet another. The darkness must retreat. The young and the poor are the first to see the light; then the others join in, all those who love justice, truth, liberty, progress, humanity and beauty. When all the candles are ablaze everyone must stop in amazement and rejoice at what has been wrought. And no office is more blessed than that of a servant of light.

Even during difficult days for the Jewish people Binyamin Ze'ev Herzl manages to write a uniquely optimistic text, comparing the revival of the nation to the kindling of the Menorah lights.

Herzl kindled candles of freedom, justice, progress and beauty. In light of the recent terror attacks in Israel and the world, which light do you see flickering? Which lights can you/would you like to kindle?





Ofar Livnat Ma'ariv, November 17th, 2015

The terror attacks in Paris, that claimed the lives of at least 132 victims, shocked the entire world, including France. Three days of mourning were announced in the republic.

Furthermore, a state of emergency was declared, borders were closed, and many citizens gathered in the locations where the terror attacks took place and lit candles, left letters and flowers, or participated in various memorial ceremonies. The Notre-Dame Cathedral in central Paris was lit with the colors of the French flag on Sunday, and thousands of people participated in a unique ceremony commemorating the victims.

Cardinal André Vingt-Trois, the archbishop of the Catholic Church in France, presided over the ceremony. "We are here to share the sorrow with the families and friends, and pray for the wounded in the hospitals", said Vingt-Trois. "We must protect our values and cherish them, this is our only hope. We will respond to such barbarism with faith in mankind."

Formal and improvised memorial and mourning ceremonies are usually characterized by the lighting of candles. This is what had recently happened in Paris. This is also what happened after the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin Z"L, when tens of thousands of young men and women lit candles in the squares.

1. Do you agree with the cardinal that the answer to barbarism is faith in mankind?
2. Is faith in mankind, in light and in goodness true?/ realistic?/leading us safely forward? If not, what is?

A.D. Gordon and Cardinal Vingt-Trois represent different religions, and yet their message is similar.

1. What can be learnt from the fact that representatives of two different religions say things carrying a similar message?
2. What could be the practical significance of the value-based partnership we witnessed here?

Human-Being by Hannah Szenes

In the fires of war, in the flame, in the flare,
In the eye-blinding, searing glare
My little lantern I carry high
To search, to search for true Man.

In the glare, the light of my lantern burns dim,
In the fire-glow my eye cannot see;
How to look, to see, to discover, to know
When he stands there facing me?

Set a sign, O Lord, set a sign on his brow
That in heat, fire and burning I may
Know the pure, the eternal spark
Of what I seek: true Man.

1. Do you perceive Hannah Szenes' poem to be optimistic or pessimistic?
2. Hannah Szenes wrote this poem during the Second World War. Do you think this poem is still relevant today?
3. When you light your little flashlight, what or who are you searching for?

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook A Candle Burns in Every Man

Every man must know and understand
That a candle burns deep within him,
And his candle is unlike his friend's
And no man without a candle exists.
And every man must know and understand
That he must strive to uncover
The light of the candle publicly
And light it into a great torch
And light the whole world

1. In the spirit of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook's words, what candle burns within you?
2. How can this candle "light the whole world"?
3. Can you help your friends in the group uncover the candle burning within them?
4. What power does a "great torch" possess compared to one candle? Who would you like to light a great torch with? Which torch would it be?