

The Maccabean Connection

By Rabbi Ezra Boyarsky

The Festival of Chanukah which celebrates the miraculous victory of the Maccabees over the despotic Antiochus and his Syrian legions in the year 165 B.C.E., marks the first instance in history for a nation to go to war to maintain its religious freedom. So epoch-making was this military victory that it salvaged not only the religious component of Judaism - Torah observance - but it also restored Jewish national independence that continued for a period of over two centuries.

But the Maccabean resistance activities were not solely confined to the external foes - the Greco-Syrian invading aggressors. Concurrently they were also engaged in a bitter and unyielding ideological battle with an emerging internal enemy - The Hellenists - the assimilationist element who lured by the delusive glitter of the vacuous Grecian life-style posed an imminent threat to traditional Judaism.

Throughout their relentless conflict with the foreign intruders, the Maccabees fought with an unrelenting zeal and resolution to excise this

carcinogenic element from the Jewish body-politic; they regarded the assimilationists' opting for Hellenistic culture of equal, if not greater threat to authentic Judaism and survival of the Jewish people than the harsh anti Judaic edicts imposed on them.

Although Chanukah occupies a minor position in the hierarchy of Jewish holidays, yet is yielded a major influence on succeeding generations. In a manner of speaking, it was the Festival of Lights that fuelled the flames of restiveness for two thousand years that sustained the undying, collective Jewish hope for Shivat Tziyon, the return to their ancestral homeland.

And it was indeed due to this restiveness that led to the founding of the World Zionist Organization by Theodor Herzl and later to the issuance of the Balfour Declaration by the British Foreign Ministry. Ironically, it was the indomitable Haganah forces and the underground resistance operations of the Irgun against the flagrant anti-Jewish policies of the British mandate over Palestine that ultimately gave birth to the State of Israel in 1948. This moment in history may be appropriately designated as the Maccabean

illustrated in an Anglo-Jewish institution at the turn of the century. Beginning in 1893 a Chanukah military maariv service was held annually on Sunday during the festival. All Jews serving, or who had once served, in the British armed forces attended, together with their families, in military attire. The key theme emphasized, year after year, was the parallel between the Maccabees and Anglo-Jewish patriots.

The Modern Maccabees

In the last 39 years the Israelis have frequently been called the modern Maccabees. Israel has never wanted to fight, but has been forced to in order to survive. This is emphasized in the special prayer of Chanukah - al hanissim. There we recite that 'the strong were given into the hands of the weak and the many were given into

the hands of the few.' With dedication and heroism the Jews have survived through the ages.

As we kindled the Chanukah menorah this year, let us re-dedicate ourselves to carrying forward the beacons of our Judaism and in that way insure the survival of our faith through the ages.

When kindling the Menorah lights it would be well to ponder over the fact that Chanukah (dedication) and chinuch (education) are intimately associated in that they both have a common Hebrew root.

Lower calorie latkes can help diabetics control their disease and weight watchers control their weight during Chanukah festivities, says Ada P. Kahn, author of DIABETES CONTROL AND THE KOSHER DIET.

Foods fried in oil are traditional for the holidays because the miracle with which Chanukah began involved oil. Latkes (fried pancakes) are a popular tradition in many homes. Chanukah foods can be disastrous for those on controlled diets because of the calories in fat.

To prepare Chanukah taste treats such as latkes for those who have diabetes or are on weight-control diets, Kahn advises using less oil, frying on a no-stick pan, or using a vegetable pan spray.

Work safely while you prepare your latkes. Place spoonful of batter mixture in the pan carefully so you do not splash hot oil. Be sure to regulate the heat so that the oil does not get too hot and burn.

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Chanukah-Dedication And Heroism

By Dr. David Geffen

Two strands weave together in fashioning the heritage of Chanukah: dedication on the one hand and heroism on the other.

Chanukah Themes

The theme of dedication is implicit in the name Chanukah (dedication) referring to the cleansing of the Temple and the reestablishment of the service therein after the Maccabean victory.

The second theme, that of heroism, relates to Judah Maccabee, whose courageous actions left an impress not only on the psyche of the Jews but also on all the peoples of the world. When Handel chose the "champion" for his oratorio, it was Judah Maccabee whom he selected. This heroic theme has particularly manifested itself in modern Jewish history, not only here in Israel but in many countries where Jews have carried arms.

First Synagogue

This Chanukah we celebrate the 220th anniversary of the dedication on Chanukah 1763 of the oldest synagogue building still standing in the United States, the Touro synagogue of Newport, Rhode Island. It is reported to have been based on the plans of the Spanish and Portuguese synagogues in Amsterdam. Many members of the community were Marranos. This synagogue was honored last year by becoming the first one to be depicted on an American stamp.

Chanukah Milestones

In Israel the holiday of Chanukah marks some of the milestones of the return to the land. Just 110 years ago on the 4th night of Chanukah, the foundation stone of Mea Shjearim was laid. That neighborhood was the fourth to be built outside of the old City of Jerusalem and was the first to be erected at such a great distance from the main settlement within the walled city.

Dedication and Heroism

In the early 1880's Chanukah was chosen as the time for inaugurating new agricultural settlements. In 1881 it was Rosh Pinah; 1882, Zichron Yaakov; 1883, Yesod HaMaala; and in 1884 Gedera. The latter was known as the Biluim settlement - they were the 50 or so settlers who constituted the first wave of modern Zionist aliya. In the history of these settlements the two themes of dedication and heroism have both been present in abundant nature.

The theme of heroism was dramatically

All In The ORT Family



Officers of the American ORT Federation recently got acquainted with toddlers at the Gani Nursery School which is being operated by the Education Alliance West at the American ORT national office in Manhattan until new nursery facilities are available in early 1987. "ORT and the Alliance have a long, proud history of cooperation helping Jewish communities overseas," noted AOF President Alvin L. Gray. "It's a pleasure to be able to help out with temporary space for the nursery." American ORT officers, left to right: Morris Olshina, Chairman, National Campaign and Organization Committee; Rudy Reis, National Secretary; and Bruce B. Teicholz, Chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee. Gani children, left to right: Jesse Balis-Harris, Howard Ray, Yuri Velez, and Dana Levin.

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