



Rosh Hodesh Kislev

Tuesday, December 3, 2024 @ 5:30 pm

Program Facilitator: LilyFish Gomberg

Agenda

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Introductions and Opening Blessing

Introduce yourself! We invite you to use your first name and your mother's first name. It doesn't matter if your mother isn't/wasn't Jewish.

Blessing:

Commentary by LilyFish Gomberg:

The reference to children in the blessing can apply to biological or adopted children, and it can also apply to anyone we nurture and teach within the community, the next generation of Jews we collectively hope to inspire.

The prayer is intended to be inclusive, speaking to our shared responsibility in helping to shape the future of the Jewish community.

In Sanhedrin 99b, Reish Lakish says, "Anyone who teaches someone else's child Torah is regarded by the Torah as though they have made them." R. Elazar adds that it is as though the teacher has "made" the child in terms of Torah, highlighting the importance of the role of teaching and mentorship in Jewish life.

May it be Your will, my God and God of my ancestors, to be gracious to me and to all my family and to give us, and all Israel, a good and long life. Remember us with goodness and blessing, and grant us salvation and mercy. Grant us abundant blessing, and fortify the places we call home. May Your Presence dwell among us as we gather here today. May we be blessed with wise and learned disciples and children, lovers of God who stand in awe of You, people who speak truth and spread holiness. May those we nurture light the world with Torah and good deeds.

Hear the prayers I utter now in the name of our mothers Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah. May Your light, reflected in these candles, surround us always. And let us say, Amen.

About Kislev

Kislev is the third month of the civil year and the ninth month of the ecclesiastical year on the Hebrew calendar.

This is a cold and dark time of year. Nature rests, and winter is upon us. It also includes Hanukkah, which is the only Jewish holiday that spans two months!

When the Talmud begins to discuss Hanukkah, it first mentions the story: one small jug of oil, intended to burn for one night, lasted eight nights. Only when the season came around again, did they perceive the nature of the previous year's events. They sensed that the energies of these miracles were 'established' – the miracles re-manifested, in a spiritual way, on the same dates of a following year.

Important Dates During Kislev:

- circa 2105 BCE — Flood rains cease (According to Genesis 6–8).
- circa 1445 BCE — Death of Reuben, son of Jacob Avinu.
- circa 457 BCE — Ezra addressed Jews in Jerusalem, telling them to adhere to the Torah.
- 167 BCE — The Hanukkah miracle.
- 164 BCE — The Greeks set up the "Abomination of Desolation" in the Temple.
- 1947 — The UN General Assembly approves a plan for the partition of Palestine.
- 1973 — Death of David Ben-Gurion.
- 1978 — Death of Golda Meir.

The *mazal* for Kislev is Sagittarius, the keshet (arching bow). Sagittarius is a centaur with a drawn bow. A drawn bow is similar to the above image of 'bouncing back'. The arrow is drawn backwards, and great tension is created. The bowsman trusts, however, that the deeper the arrow regresses, the further it will fly when released.



Hanukkah and Resiliency **(from the Blue Dove Foundation)**

On Hanukkah we recall the courage and resilience of the Jewish people when we confronted overwhelming odds against powerful oppressors. We also remember the strength we are capable of.

Hanukkah is a celebration of resilience, both physical and emotional, in the face of overwhelming odds.

Resilience is the psychological quality that allows some people to be knocked down by the adversities of life and come back at least as strong as before.

Rather than letting difficulties, traumatic events or failure overcome them and drain their resolve, highly resilient people find a way to change course, emotionally heal and continue moving toward their goals.
(Psychology Today)

In the Hanukkah story, the Maccabees - the Jewish defenders of their faith and homeland - stood up against overwhelming odds and faced their Greek oppressors, who greatly outnumbered them.

Following their victory, the Jewish people returned to the Temple and discovered that the oil for the holy menorah had apparently vanished.

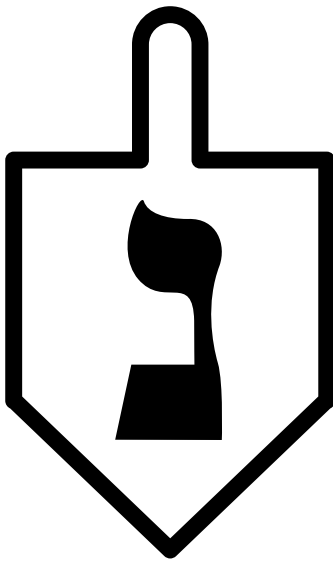
After desperately searching for some oil to light the menorah, they found just enough for one day. Despite a seemingly hopeless predicament, they lit it. Miraculously, it burned for eight days.

Throughout history, the Jewish people have faced adversity again and again.

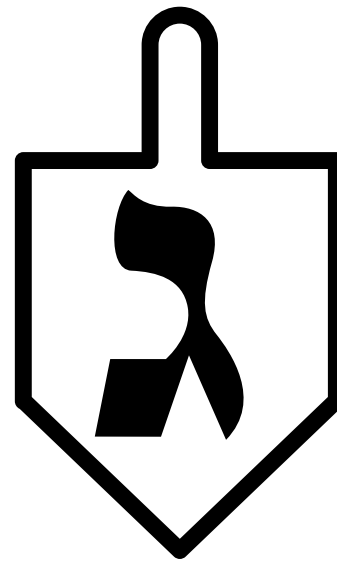
But with hope and resilience, we have refused to give up, and we have ultimately succeeded. Even the dreidel represents resilience, as it spins without knowing where it will land or what will happen when it does.

Now, as we light our Hanukkias, let's consider the ways we are building strength and resilience to be like the Maccabees.

Only then can we persevere through the challenges that confront us.



The Maccabees worked together to protect their values and traditions. How do you balance personal resilience with collective action?



What does the story of the Maccabees teach you about standing up for your beliefs, even when the odds are against you?



Hanukkah literally means "dedication," and it reminds us to rededicate ourselves. What areas of your life might benefit from rededication or renewal of commitment?



In what ways does resilience look like persistence? And in what ways does it look like adaptation?

A Hanukkah Prayer for a Time of Darkness

by Marla Baker

Creator of All,
In the beginning
You made the night sky luminous with the light of the moon and the stars and
You made the daytime bright with the light of the sun and
Saw that it was good.

And You created human beings in Your own image, with capacity
To distinguish dark from light, with capacity
To create holy sparks, see into the shadows and
Shine light where it is dark.
And You saw that it was very good.

Creator of All and Rock of Ages,
In the time of the Maccabees once more You worked a miracle of light,
Permitting our ancestors to rededicate holy space.
And it lasted eight days and eight nights.

Creator of All and Rock of Ages,
In the dark of night, at the darkest time of year
We light candles in remembrance of the miracle,
One more each night until there are eight.

Creator of All and Rock of Ages,
Too many lights have been extinguished.

The world has grown too dark.
Creator of Light and Dark,
Teach us once more to see into the shadows,
To shed our light in all the dark corners and to
Create holy sparks for all humankind
So that once more we can say
It is very good.



Resilience in the Face of Adversity: Scholar-in-Residence Shabbat with Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum

Dec. 6-7, 2024, registration required

Join us to welcome Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum as our Scholar-in-Residence! Rabbi Kleinbaum, celebrated for 32 years of transformative leadership at Congregation Beit Simchat Torah (CBST) in NYC, will share her insights on resilience, civil rights, and LGBTQIA+ inclusion in Judaism. **All are welcome!**

societyhillsynagogue.org/sharon-kleinbaum