



Spread the Light

CHANUKAH NEWSLETTER

תשפ"ה/2024 Issue 1



A Chanukah Message from Rebbetzin Rosenbaum

The Chanukah story hides the answer to the question: How do we maintain and bring more קדושה into our lives?



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It's amazing to see the Alumnae Association growing, thriving, and making an impact.

Every day brings exciting new ideas, events, and initiatives—like this impressive Alumnae Newsletter!

What do our alums want most?

Our surveys show that at the top of the list are Shiurim and events that lead to personal growth. How can we improve our עבודת ד' in our stage of life? When we are so busy with work, school and families, how do we continue to grow in our connection with ד'? How do we maintain and bring more קדושה into our life?

The mission of יון was to abolish the קדושה of ישראל. They didn't want to destroy us physically (that was ה'מנ's goal); they wanted to take away the קדושה of ישראל, so that we would not be any different than all the גויים. Many of their גזרות were aimed at the women of ישראל, as it is the women who keep the קדושה. If they could destroy and break the women, it would destroy the קדושה of the entire nation. They decreed that every unmarried woman, on the night before her חתונה, would be forced to be with טפסר, a high dignitary (or the king) of יון. What did the women do? For 3 years and 8 months woman did not get married! They preserved the קדושה! When the יונים saw that this wasn't working,

they introduced another law, attacking the married women. No woman was allowed to be טובה in a מקוה. Any woman caught would be fair game to any יוני man who wanted to enslave her. Husbands and wives separated from each other, keeping the קדושה. When ד' saw the resolve of these women, ד' said, "I will be מטהר them." ד' made a great נס and opened up מעיני מים, fountains of water, in each of their homes, allowing the women to be טובה in the privacy of their homes. That is the understanding of the *ושאבתם מים בששון ממעיני הישועה: פסוק. It was the women, under the leadership of יהודית, the daughter of גדול כהן, who played a vital role in bringing about the ישועה of חנוכה.

Once again, we are living in a time when the very existence and קדושה of ישראל is at stake. Let's continue in the ways of the women, בימי החשמונאים and the long line of women throughout history, who were מוסר נפש to guard the קדושה. Let's look for ways, whether it is strengthening our הלכות, תפילה, beautifying our שבת, working on שבת, enhancing our מצוות, or whatever path we choose for ourselves, to be the leaders in bringing the final ימינו.

...זכות נשים צדקניות נגאלו אבותינו...
...וזכות נשים צדקניות עתידין להגאל...

* אוצר מדרשים - מדרש מעשה חנוכה

Alum Spotlight



Raizel (Feldbaum) Kelison, LCSW '08
Clinical Children's Director, Ohel Private Practice Therapist

Since graduating WITS/Maalot in 2007 and earning her MSW from the University of Maryland, Raizel has built a 15-year career at Ohel in NY, where she now serves as Clinical Children's Director. She leads a groundbreaking early childhood mental health program, supporting mothers and infants from pregnancy onward, focusing on trauma, attachment, and mental health. Raizel is also certified in multiple treatment modalities and has pioneered protocols for supporting children ages 7-18 struggling with suicidality. Balancing her impactful work and private practice with a young family, Raizel's dedication continues to make a profound difference.



Q&A With Rabbi Heber

Q: Does a single woman who lives with her parents but is staying with friends out of town over Chanukah need to light a menorah at her friend's house?

A: Ideally, she should give 25 cents to the owner of the oil to have a portion in that house's lighting (and have in mind not to be yotzai with her own family's lighting taking place in a different city). If her friend's father lights, she will be yotzai with him. If her friend lights, she will be yotzai with her. Furthermore, she should try to be present for the brachos and lighting or at least hear the recitation of someone reciting the brachos at a different location. Of course, she herself can light at her friend's house. Again, all of this assumes she is sleeping there that night. If necessary, she can rely on the lighting in her own home where she lives, but that lighting has to take place when she is already in a zman that she is already chayiv.

Q: Where does the minhag of giving gelt to children on Chanukah come from? Is it better to give children gelt or gifts or do they accomplish the same goal? What if the child is too young and cannot appreciate the gelt?

A: While there is no obligation per se to give gifts or gelt, some explain the minhag of Chanukah gelt began when parents would send money to their children's Rabbi and others in need. It was then also given to the children so that the needy would not be embarrassed to receive Chanukah gelt. If someone wants to give something for Chanukah and feels a gift is more appropriate than gelt, that is fine.

Q: If a husband or wife comes home significantly later than the other, should one light without their spouse or should they wait to light together?

A: The custom is to wait. However, if the

spouse coming home late is mochel, one can light without the spouse present. Around 40 years ago, Rabbi Yissocher Frand gave a lecture about Sholom Bayis. In the shiur he said that he asked the Rosh HaYeshiva, Harav Ruderman zt"l what to say. Rav Ruderman said to tell them about Reb Nachum'ke of Horodna. This 19th Century pious sage who was a Rebbi of the Chofetz Chaim was known for his stringencies. However, on Chanukah when his wife once came home late, he waited for her to light rather than light in the l'chatchila zman without her. He explained that if a family can only afford either candles for Shabbos or candles for Chanukah, halacha states they should use the candles for Shabbos as they are for shalom bayis and that takes precedence even over the pirsumei nissah of Chanukah candles. So, waiting for a spouse, if it will bring shalom bayis, takes precedence over lighting in the optimum time.

For more Hilchos Chanukah Q&As from Rabbi Heber, please visit our website at www.wits.edu/chanukah.



Elevate Your Chanukah Table with Latke Bar Magic!

Sure, plain latkes are delicious, but why not take it to the next level?



A Chanukah Thought from Mrs. Rabenstein

The Jewish People are a tiny part of the population, and our enemies are numerous. How do we expect to survive?

Alum Spotlight



Elisheva (Strauss) Rom '18
Limudei Kodesh and General Studies Teacher
Columbus Torah Academy

Elisheva graduated from WITS in 2018 with a degree in Computer Science and soon after moved to Columbus, OH, where her husband joined the kollel. After working for five years as a computer programmer, she recognized a need for kodesh teachers in the local Jewish day school and transitioned into her current role as an educator.

Now, Elisheva brings her passion for teaching to her middle and high school classes in Chumash, Nach, and math, while also using her WITS degree to teach an AP Computer Science course to high school girls. She has fond memories of her days at WITS and recently returned to co-teach a computer science capstone alongside her twin sister.



Imagine a spread with crispy latkes and a variety of exciting toppings! Whether fleishigs, milchigs, or parve, there are so many possibilities, letting guests customize their own perfect flavor.

FLEISHIG LATKE BAR

Pulled brisket · Shredded chicken · Jack's facon · Thinly sliced london broil · Pastrami · Corned beef with sauteed onions

Israeli latkes: chummus, shawarma, and fried eggplant

Fiesta Latkes: guacamole, taco meat, salsa

MILCHIG LATKE BAR

Sour cream & chives · Cream cheese & lox · Goat cheese & pomegranate seeds

Fiesta Latkes: guacamole, sour cream, black olives

Caprese Latkes: mozzarella slice, tomato, basil, drizzle with balsamic vinegar

Loaded Latkes: sour cream, baco bits, chives

PARVE LATKE BAR

Applesauce · Basil pesto · Ketchup · BBQ sauce · Ranch dressing

Sushi Latkes: avocado slices, kani, spicy mayo

Bagel Latkes: lox or whitefish salad, red onion, everything bagel spice

Let us know if you try this out by sending pictures to alumnae@wits.edu!

It's confusing. Considering the amount of press time we get, considering the amount of time Israel gets on the air, and space Israel takes up in the newspapers – one would think that the Jewish population is quite large. But we know that's not true. The Jewish people remain at about 2% of the general population in this country, and only .02% of the world's population.

How will we possibly prevail in such a crazy world? We are surrounded by a value system that is devoid of values. We represent truth in a world of שקר. We represent depth and ruchniyus in a world that is becoming more and more about image and materialism. There are so few of us and so many of them. The world we live in has so many ways of seeping in to be מטמא כל השמנים, to defile the oil.

On Chanukah, we remind ourselves that a small jar of oil can burn much longer than we think. On Chanukah, we remind ourselves that the few can defeat the many. Because it's not about numbers; it's about the quality of who we are. It's about the emes that we represent. Yes, it sometimes feels overwhelming. We are living in a world that considers us to be the villains. We are living in a world that represents a value system completely contrary to our own. The challenges to our personal רוחניות are many and they are great. On Chanukah, we recognize that we are exactly as the Torah told us we would be – כי אתם המעט – מכל העמים.

We are tiny in number. Small in number, but powerful in message and in mission, we are

the army of Hashem. While we may often find ourselves as אבינו did, כל העולם כולו, מעבר אחד והוא מעבר אחד, with the entire world is on one side and we are on the other, we take strength from the victory in which Hashem placed רבים ביד מעטים. The few who stood for the truth of הקב"ה in this world prevailed against the many who represented the denial of His presence and a lifestyle contrary to His want. May we, too, shine the light of אמת, the light of Torah and truth, in a world so full of darkness and confusion.

May that light help us to recognize that personal and global challenges are not as insurmountable as they once seemed.



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Health Science Alumnae: Join Our Cohort!

Launch Event: Handling the Hustle: Balancing Life as a Frum Health Professional
Jan 8 | Baltimore

Learn more and sign up: wits.edu/alum-cohort

Israel Alumnae Reunion

Interactive Q&A with Rebbetzin Rosenbaum
Jan 18 | Yerushalayim

Learn more and sign up: wits.edu/alum-event

Professional Development Day

For alumnae and women of the community
March 2 | More details to follow

OUR MISSION - The WITS/Maalot Alumnae Association, under the guidance of Rebbetzin Rosenbaum, is committed to nurturing a lifelong community offering chizuk and resources for alumnae so they can continue to thrive as frum women in both their personal and professional lives. | wits.edu/alumnae