

THE LIGHT OF CHANUKAH

Meredith Lerner

A few years ago, I was diagnosed with a rare, autoimmune disease. At the time of my diagnosis, I was already very sick. I had spent the last six months seeing countless doctors and specialists, so I was just grateful to finally have an answer as to what was wrong with me. But the diagnosis was just the beginning of my battle with the disease. It would be two and a half more years of various treatments, medications, doctors' visits and alternative therapies before I would finally see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Auspiciously, the moment when I first discovered that the new medication that I was taking was truly working, coincided with the celebration of Chanukah. I was visiting my parents in Florida, and my sister had flown in from California for the occasion as well. On the first night of the holiday, my mother asked me to light the menorah. I took two brightly colored, wax candles out of the blue cardboard box, and put the candles in the menorah. I had lit the *shamash*, and we had already said the three prayers. But, before I could even light the first candle for the first night, my mother started crying. We all turned to her in alarm and asked what was wrong.

"Nothing's wrong," she said, shaking her head. "But look at your hands."

I glanced down at my hands and my skin looked mostly pearly white, with a few small reddish patches around my knuckles. A few months before, when I had still been in the throes of my illness, I had a painful, scaly, red-purplish rash, which covered most of my body, including my hands. It was hard to believe that I was now staring at those same hands, the ones that could barely make a fist or hold my toothbrush just a few short weeks ago. As we looked at my mother's tear-stained face, we realized that my mother's tears were tears of joy.

Chanukah is known as the festival of lights. To me, the light of the Chanukah candles symbolizes so much more than the miracle that took place thousands of years ago. In a literal sense, the Chanukah candles bring light, warmth and joy into the house during the darkest and coldest period of the year. It is also a reminder of the miracle that took place so long ago. In fact, it is mandated by



Jewish law to place the menorah in a window, thereby publicizing the miracle.

But for me, the light of the Chanukah candles also has a deeper, spiritual meaning. I believe that this light represents the spirit and tenacity of the Jewish people. Just as the small vessel of oil in the desecrated Temple only had enough oil to burn for one night but miraculously stayed lit for eight, the Jewish people have never let the flame of Judaism go out. No matter what our people

have been through, we have never given up our hope, perseverance and faith. Through countless struggles, we have--miraculously at times--endured.

I don't think that it's a coincidence that the Festival of Lights is celebrated during the darkest time of the year. I think it is a reminder from Hashem that just as the Jewish people collectively have faced adversity and survived, on an individual level, we also must face our personal darkest moments and learn to carry on. One of my biggest challenges was my battle with a rare autoimmune disease. It took a long time to regain my health, but even during my darkest moments I never gave up, because of the light inside of me, a light that I believe is kindled by Hashem and our faith in Judaism.

I find it comforting that my family and I first noticed the signs of my recovery during the festival of Chanukah, for not only is Chanukah the festival of lights, but the word itself means rededication. As my family and I celebrated the eight days of Chanukah, full of joy for the holiday and my return to good health, I realized that I had wrestled with one of my darkest moments and had won. I was now ready to rededicate myself to my life and my future.

So when I light the Chanukah candles this year, in addition to saying the prayers, singing songs, eating potato latkes and jelly doughnuts and giving presents to my niece, I will be taking a moment to reflect on the beauty, luminosity and spiritual quality of the light. And I will acknowledge that even though we all must go through struggles and face our own darkest moments, it is the spark of Judaism and the light of Hashem that pulls us through.

Meredith Lerner is an Emmy Award winning TV Producer living in NYC, currently producing a new show for HGTV called Destination Design. It debuts in February 2010.

CONGRATULATIONS AND MAZAL TOV

ENGAGEMENTS

Ariel Goldstein and Gabriel Amzallag

Mazal Tov to parents

Kim and Raymond Amzallag

Paloma Hahn and Eli Gefen

Mazal Tov to parents Ohra and Dr. Manfred Hahn

Rachel Mello and Binyomin Gutman

Lianna Pinsky and Elad Talbi

Mazal Tov to parents Jeanette and Dr. Ross Pinsky

Ariella Sevitz and Yaakov Pinsky

Mazal Tov to parents Jeanette and Dr. Ross Pinsky

MARRIAGES

Ayelet Buchwald and Gavriel Berger

Mazal Tov to parents Aidel and Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald

Barry Freedman and Rachel Piskyn

Mazal Tov to mother Helen Freedman

Drs. Brooke Sysler and Ronen Elefant



BIRTHS

Sara and David Berman, on the birth of a boy, Theodore

April and Dr. Jeffrey Blair, on the birth of a boy, Ephraim

BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Benjamin Ilan Dukas

Mazal Tov to parents Gail & Richard Dukas

Laurel Elizabeth Fox

Mazal Tov to parents Marci and Dr. David Fox

Ellin Mitchell

Mazal Tov to parents Rabia and Oliver Mitchell

CONDOLENCES

Mem Bernstein, on the loss of her mother, Anita Prinsky

Joan Schliessel Hillel, on the loss of her husband, Meir Hillel

Beryl Korot, on the loss of her father, George Korot

SPEEDY RECOVERY/REFUAH SH'LAIMA

Evelyn Ebenstein, *Chava bat Miriam*

Raphi Leicht, *Raphael Eliezer ben Rina Raizl*

Reuven ben Baila

CONGRATULATIONS

Bill Greenbaum for being honored as Chatten Torah at

Lincoln Square Synagogue

Daniel Kronengold upon receiving rabbinic ordination

from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary

of Yeshiva University

TODAH RABBAH

Roberto Novig, usher extraordinaire at the High

Holiday Services

To the Reich Family for decorating the NY Historical

Society auditorium for the High Holidays

Reuven Wannemaker for sounding the shofar so

meaningfully on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sat December 12, 2009 - 25th of Kislev
Vayeshev CHANUKAH
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services... 7:40, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Talmud & Bible Classes 3:15 PM
 Mincha 4:00 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 5:11 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 4:20 PM

Sun December 13, 2009 - 26th of Kislev
CHANUKAH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM
 Mincha/Ma'ariv this week 4:20 PM
 Light 3 Candles after 5:01 PM

Mon December 14, 2009 - 27th of Kislev
CHANUKAH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM
 Light 4 Candles after 5:01 PM

Tue December 15, 2009 - 28th of Kislev
CHANUKAH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM
 Light 5 Candles after 5:01 PM

Wed December 16, 2009 - 29th of Kislev
CHANUKAH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM
 Light 6 candles after 5:02 PM

Thu December 17, 2009 - 30th of Kislev
CHANUKAH ROSH CHODESH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM
 Light 7 candles after 5:02 PM

Fri December 18, 2009 - 1st of Tevet
CHANUKAH ROSH CHODESH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM
 Chanukah & Shabbat Candles .. 4:13 PM
 Mincha 4:20 PM

Sat December 19, 2009 - 2nd of Tevet
Miketz CHANUKAH
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services... 7:40, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Bible/Talmud Classes 3:20 PM
 Mincha 4:05 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 5:13 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 4:20 PM

Fri December 25, 2009 - 8th of Tevet
LEGAL HOLIDAY
 Morning Services 7:10 & 8:30 AM
 Candle Lighting 4:17 PM
 Mincha 4:20 PM

Sat December 26, 2009 - 9th of Tevet
Vayigash
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services... 7:40, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Bible/Talmud Classes 3:20 PM
 Mincha 4:05 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 5:17 PM

Sun December 27, 2009 - 10th of Tevet
A'SARAH B'TEVET
 Fast begins 6:06 AM
 Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM
 Mincha 4:15 PM
 Fast ends 5:07 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 4:25 PM

Fri January 1, 2010 - 15th of Tevet
NEW YEAR'S DAY
 Morning Services 7:10 & 8:30 AM
 Candle Lighting 4:22 PM
 Mincha 4:25 PM

Sat January 2, 2010 - 16th of Tevet
Vayechi
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services ... 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Talmud & Bible Classes 3:25 PM
 Mincha 4:10 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 5:22 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 4:30 PM

Fri January 8, 2010 - 22nd of Tevet
 Candle Lighting 4:28 PM
 Mincha 4:35 PM

Sat January 9, 2010 - 23rd of Tevet
Shemot
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services ... 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Talmud & Bible Classes 3:35 PM
 Mincha 4:20 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 5:38 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 4:35 PM

Fri January 15, 2010 - 29th of Tevet
 Candle Lighting 4:36 PM
 Mincha 4:40 PM

Sat January 16, 2010 - 1st of Shevat
Va'era ROSH CHODESH
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services ... 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Talmud & Bible Classes 3:40 PM
 Mincha 4:25 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 5:36 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 4:45 PM

Mon January 18, 2010 - 3rd of Shevat
MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY
 Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM

Fri January 22, 2010 - 7th of Shevat
 Candle Lighting 4:44 PM
 Mincha 4:50 PM

Sat January 23, 2010 - 8th of Shevat
Bo
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services ... 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Talmud & Bible Classes 3:50 PM
 Mincha 4:35 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 5:44 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 4:50 PM

Fri January 29, 2010 - 14th of Shevat
 Candle Lighting 4:53 PM
 Mincha 5:00 PM

Sat January 30, 2010 - 15th of Shevat
Beshalach TU B'SHEVAT
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services ... 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Talmud & Bible Classes 4:00 PM
 Mincha 4:45 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 5:53 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 5:00 PM

Fri February 5, 2010 - 21st of Shevat
 Candle Lighting 5:01 PM
 Mincha 5:05 PM

Sat February 6, 2010 - 22nd of Shevat
Yitro
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services ... 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Talmud & Bible Classes 4:05 PM
 Mincha 4:50 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 6:01 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 5:10 PM

Fri February 12, 2010 - 28th of Shevat
 Candle Lighting 5:10 PM
 Mincha 5:15 PM

Sat February 13, 2010 - 29th of Shevat
Mishpatim SHEKALIM
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services ... 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Talmud & Bible Classes 4:15 PM
 Mincha 5:00 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 6:10 PM

Sun February 14, 2010 - 30th of Shevat
ROSH CHODESH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 5:20 PM

Mon February 15, 2010 - 1st of Adar
ROSH CHODESH PRESIDENT'S DAY
 Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM
 Mincha 4:25 PM

Fri February 19, 2010 - 5th of Adar
 Candle Lighting 5:18 PM
 Mincha 5:25 PM

Sat February 20, 2010 - 6th of Adar
Terumah
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services ... 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Talmud & Bible Classes 4:25 PM
 Mincha 5:10 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 6:18 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 5:25 pm

Thu February 25, 2010 - 11th of Adar
TA'ANIT ESTHER
 Fast begins 5:23 AM
 Morning Services 6:50 & 7:40 AM
 Mincha 5:15 PM
 Fast ends 6:14 PM

Fri February 26, 2010 - 12th of Adar
 Candle Lighting 5:27 PM
 Mincha 5:30 PM

Sat February 27, 2010 - 13th of Adar
Tetzaveh ZACHOR
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services ... 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Additional Zachor readings
 after Mussaf & Mincha
 Talmud & Bible Classes 4:30 PM
 Mincha 5:15 PM
 Ma'ariv/Megilla 6:27 PM
 Additional Megilla Reading 9:15 PM

Sun February 28, 2010 - 14th of Adar
PURIM
 Morning Services 6:45 & 8:30 AM
 Additional Megilla Reading & Mincha
 1:00 PM
 Additional Mincha 4:45 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 5:35 PM

Fri March 5, 2010 - 19th of Adar
 Candle Lighting 5:35 PM
 Mincha 5:40 PM

Sat March 6, 2010 - 20th of Adar
Ki Tisa PARAH
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services... 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Talmud & Bible Classes 4:40 PM
 Mincha 5:20 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 6:35 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 5:40 PM

Fri March 12, 2010 - 26th of Adar
 Candle Lighting 5:42 PM
 Mincha 5:45 PM

Sat March 13, 2010 - 27th of Adar
Vayakhel-Pekudei HACHODESH
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services... 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Talmud & Bible Classes 4:45 PM
 Mincha 5:30 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 6:42 PM
 Move clocks ahead one hour
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 6:50 PM

Tue March 16, 2010 - 1st of Nisan
ROSH CHODESH
 Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM

Fri March 19, 2010 - 4th of Nisan
 Candle Lighting 6:50 PM
 Mincha 6:55 PM

Sat March 20, 2010 - 5th of Nisan
Vayikra
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services... 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Talmud & Bible Classes 5:55 PM
 Mincha 6:40 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 7:50 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 6:55 PM

Fri March 26, 2010 - 11th of Nisan
 Candle Lighting 6:57 PM
 Mincha 7:00 PM

Sat March 27, 2010 - 12th of Nisan
Tzav SHABBAT HAGADOL
 Daf Yomi 7:00 AM
 Bible Class 8:30 AM
 Morning Services... 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM
 Mincha & Shabbat HaGadol Drasha
 6:30 PM
 Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 7:57 PM
 Daily Mincha & Ma'ariv 7:05 PM

Mon March 29, 2010 - 14th of Nisan
TA'ANIT BECHORIM
 Morning Services with Siyum
 6:30 & 7:30 AM
 Eat Chametz by 10:19 AM
 Burn Chametz by 11:31 AM
 Candle Lighting 7:00 PM
 Mincha 7:05 PM
 Begin Seder after 7:49 PM

Tue March 30, 2010 - 15th of Nisan
PESACH
 Morning Services 8:00 & 9:00 AM
 Talmud Class 6:20 PM
 Mincha 7:05 PM
 Light candles & begin Seder after 8:00 PM

SAVE THE DATES

Beginners Chanukah Party
\$20 in advance, \$25 at the door
 Mon, Dec 14, 7:00 PM

Beginners Shabbaton - \$40
 Fri - Sat, Dec 18-19

Beginners Shabbat Luncheons - \$20
 Saturdays 12:30 PM
 Jan 2, Feb 6

Beginners Shmooze - Free
 Mon, March 1, 8:15 PM

Purim Party
\$20 in advance, \$25 at the door
 Sat, Feb 27, 9:05 PM

SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA
 Fri, March 5