

# The Little Light That Kept Burning



Jim Cocklin



**Long ago, in the land of Israel,  
Jewish children went to the  
Holy Temple in Jerusalem.**

**They looked at the temple, they  
marveled at its beauty and felt  
close to Hashem.**



**One day, strange soldiers  
marched into their cities.  
They were Syrian-Greeks, and  
a new king ruled the land.**



**Soldiers in Greek-style armor entered the town, and the Jewish families were watching worriedly about what would happen next.**



**The king's name was  
Antiochus.  
He was cruel and wanted  
everyone to act and believe  
the same way.**



**In Jerusalem lived a wise High Priest named Yochanan.**

**He warned against Syrian-Greek influence and Idol worship.**

**He taught that real beauty is inside—kindness, honesty, love for Adonai and the Torah.**



**Some Jews wanted to be like the Greeks.**

**They were called Hellenists and loved games, statues, and idols more than Torah.**

**The others continued to love Adonai and studied his Torah.**



**In the Temple treasury, there was special money.**

**It paid for offerings, fixing the temple and kept orphans' savings safe until they came of age.**



A Hellenist whispered to the king's men,

**“There’s a lot of money in the Temple.”**

So the king sent his officer, Helyodros, to take it.



Yochanan begged,

**“This money is holy! It belongs to Adonai and to orphans!”**

**But Helyodros did not listen and stepped into the Temple.**



**Suddenly, Helyodros turned pale and fell to the ground in fear.**

**He ran away and never tried to enter the Temple again.**



**King Seleucus was killed by his brother and his brother took his place.**

**Antiochus IV called Epiphanies meaning “the gods’ beloved”**

**But a man name Polebius gave him a different name: Epimans (“madman”)**

**He was a wicked king and made terrible laws.**

**No Shabbat, no brit milah, no kosher food, and no Torah learning!**



**Anyone who kept the mitzvot  
could be punished or even  
killed.**

**But many Jews chose to stay  
loyal to Adonai.**



**In the village of Modiin lived an old kohen named Mattityahu.**

**He had five brave sons:  
Yochanan, Shimon, Yehudah,  
Elazar, and Yonatan.**



The king's men came to Modiin and built an idol altar in the marketplace.

**“Mattityahu,” they said, “you must offer a sacrifice to our gods.”**



**The soldiers went from town to town to force the people to worship pagan gods.**

**The only refuge that they had was to flee to the hills of Judea where there were caves.**

**But the soldiers followed them there as well.**



**Mattityahu said, “I and my sons will stay loyal to Adonai. We will not worship idols!”**

**A Hellenist stepped forward to sacrifice, but Mattityahu stopped him.**



**Mattityahu's sons and friends fought the king's men and chased them away.**

**Then they knocked down the idol altar.**



**Mattityahu knew the king  
would be angry.**

**He and his followers escaped  
into the hills of Judea.**



**Soon, more and more Jews  
joined them—farmers,  
shopkeepers, and Torah  
students.**

**They became a small but brave  
army.**



Before he died, Mattityahu said to his sons, “**Never stop fighting for Adonai’s Torah.**”

He chose Judah to lead them.  
He was called “Maccabee”

מִי כַמּוֹד בְּאֵלִים ה'



Mi Kamocha Ba'eilim Hashem

**Mi Kamocha Ba'eilim Hashem,  
"Who is like You, O Lord, among  
the mighty?"**



**The Maccabees had few weapons and no elephants or big armies.**

**But they had courage, faith in Adonai, and love for the Torah.**



**Antiochus sent many generals  
to defeat Judah.**

**Each time, the Maccabees  
won with smart plans and  
Adonai's help.**



At last, a giant army of over 40,000 soldiers marched into the land.

The Maccabees came together at Mizpah. They blew the shofar, cried out to Adonai, and then went to battle.

Judah said, “Let us fight for our souls and for our Temple!”

After a few battles they had won the war!



**Against all odds, the small Maccabee army defeated the mighty Syrian-Greeks. Now they could return to Jerusalem.**



**When they reached the Temple, their hearts broke. It was dirty, broken, and filled with idols.**



**The Maccabees cleaned the Temple and removed the idols. They built a new altar and made a simple new Menorah.**



**On the 25th of Kislev, they  
were ready to rededicate the  
Temple to Adonai.**

**But they found only one small  
jar of pure oil.**



The oil was enough for just one day.

Still, Judah said, **“We will light the Menorah and trust Adonai.”**



The Menorah was lit.  
Day 1 passed,  
then Day 2...  
then Day 3 and 4...  
and the light kept burning!



**The oil burned for 8 days, until  
new pure oil was ready.**

**Adonai had made a miracle  
for His people.**



The Sages said, “Every year, for eight nights, we will light candles and thank Adonai.”

They called the holiday Hanukkah—“**dedication.**”

חַנוּכָּה - Hanukkah

ḥa – ח (chet with patach under the ch sound, reduced here as chă)

nu – נו (nun with shuruk, “nu”)

kk – כּ (kaf with dagesh for the hard “k” sound)

ah – ה (heh with kamatz, “ah”)



The wars went on for a while,  
and Judah helped protect  
Jewish towns all over the land.  
Adonai gave them strength to  
keep their freedom.



**Today, when you light your Hanukkah candles, you join this same story.**

**Each little flame remembers the Maccabees and the miracle oil.**



**Even a small light can chase away a lot of darkness.**

**And even one child doing a mitzvah can make the whole world brighter.**





**Hanukkah** (hah-NOO-kah) is an eight-day Jewish celebration that remembers a true story from long, long ago.

The Israelites fought for their freedom, reclaimed the Temple in Jerusalem, and found only one small jar of oil—just enough to light the menorah for one day.

But something amazing happened: **the oil lasted for eight whole days!**

And so today, families around the world celebrate **Hanukkah** as a reminder of God's miracles, courage, and light.



**This special nine-branched lamp holds candles for each night of Hanukkah plus the helper candle (the shamash) used to light the others.**



**We want everyone to see the Hanukkah lights so they can remember Adonai's miracles.**

**Common places:**

**Near a window that faces outside  
or  
In a doorway, opposite the mezuzah**

**Mezuzah:**  
Inside the box is a parchment scroll with verses from the Torah inscribed on it, including the Shema prayer





## Night 1: Lighting the First Candle

At sunset, gather with family. Use the **shamash** to light the first candle on the far right.

Blessings are sung or spoken, thanking God for His miracles. Kids often help by placing candles in their holders or joining in the singing.

### Each Night After

Add one more candle each night ...until all eight glow brightly on the last evening.

It's super cozy—like watching little lights chase away the darkness!



## Eating Yummy Foods

Because oil is part of the miracle, families enjoy:

Latkes (crispy potato pancakes)

Sufganiyot (jelly doughnuts)

Fried cheese treats

Applesauce & sour cream toppings

Kids often help mix batter or sprinkle powdered sugar.



Playing games a spinning top  
(dreidel)  
with four Hebrew letters:

Nun: נ

Gimel: ג

Hey: ה

Shin: ש

Together they stand for:  
“A Great Miracle Happened  
There.”



## Playing the game:

Everyone gets chocolate coins (gelt) or small treats.

1. Everyone puts one piece in the pot
2. When empty or only 1 piece left everyone put 1 piece in
3. Everyone takes a turn
4. When one person has won all, that round is over.



## Spin the dreidel!

- Nun** — do nothing
- Gimel** — take the whole pot!
- Hey** — take half
- Shin** — put one in

It's silly, fast, and  
full of giggles.



# Giving Gifts

Some families give a small gift each night.

Others choose one night for giving and one night for acts of kindness, like:

**Making cards**

**Donating toys**

**Helping a neighbor**



## Singing Hanukkah Songs

“Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah,”  
“Ma’oz Tzur,” and fun  
children’s songs bring the  
celebration to life.



**Hanukkah teaches us to:**

**Bring light into the world.**

**Never give up doing what's right.**

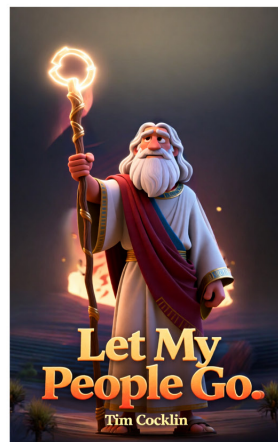
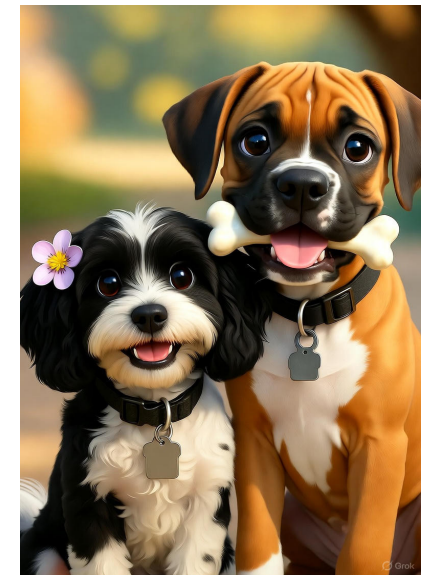
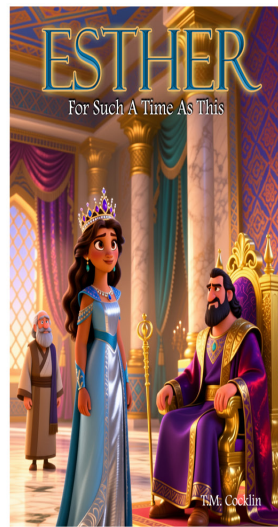
**Care more about the inside than  
the outside.**

**Remember and thank Adonai for  
miracles.**

**Use your talents and kindness for  
good.**

**Grow a little more every day, like  
adding another candle.**

You can also view Charmin's Pet Adventures. Where dogs have fun all day long.



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