

# חֲנֻכָּה

## *Hanukkah - The History*

The story of Hanukkah actually begins with Alexander the Great, who conquered the Ancient Near East, defeating Persia in 353 BCE. After he died, his kingdom was divided among his four generals, with Egypt going to Ptolemy I and Syria going to Seleucus I. Israel was a 'buffer' zone between the two. Finally Israel was controlled by the Ptolemys, who appointed the High Priest as their tax-collector. When the Ptolemys finally defeated the Seleucids (199 BCE), eventually Antiochus IV, who called himself Epiphanies (meaning "G-d manifest") came to power. He appointed Jason



as High Priest, who exacted heavy, heavy taxes upon the people. When the people could not pay the taxes, Jason began to kill the masses. Antiochus heard of the killing and thought that Jason had rebelled against his rule and was trying to take Jerusalem for his own capitol, so Antiochus attacked Jerusalem (169 BCE), killing over 40,000 people.

After attacking the city, Antiochus desecrated the Temple by declaring it a Temple to the Greek gods, and setting up an altar upon which pigs were sacrificed daily. He also built a beautiful Greek gymnasium next to the Temple and encouraged the Jews to participate in the Greek games that were played there.

In his attempts to Hellenize the Jewish nation, Antiochus decided to send his troops to the surrounding towns and villages and set up altars to the Greek gods there as well. Since he knew that the Jews would resist sacrifices to the foreign gods, he declared it a law that anyone who did not participate in the sacrifices of pigs to the pagan gods would be killed. And what is more, he decreed that the Jewish priests in each town and village should lead the people in these pagan sacrifices. One of the first villages his troops went to was Mo'din. Here, the priest was Mattityahu the Hasmonean. When ordered to make sacrifices to the pagan gods, Mattityahu refused. When his fellow priest said he would offer the sacrifices, Mattityahu killed him on the spot, and a great revolt was started. Antiochus sent additional troops to put down the riot, but there was no stopping it. Mattityahu and all who sided with him ran to the hills and began to fight against Antiochus and his troops. The fighting went on for 3 years, during which time Mattityahu died, and the leadership was passed to his son, Yehudah the Maccabee (Maccabee means "hammer").

The numbers were amazingly unbalanced. Antiochus had over 47,000 fighting men, while Yehuda Maccabee had only 4,000. Miraculously, HaShem gave the victory to Yehuda and the Jews. They defeated their enemies, recapturing Jerusalem and the Temple. When they entered the Temple they saw its desecration and began to cleanse it, removing the idols and the pagan altar. They found one small bottle of oil which had not been opened, oil which should have lasted only one day. But miraculously, the oil burned for the full eight days required for the cleansing of the Temple. That is why we have a special menorah on Hanukkah with 8 candles, one for each night.

Thus, the Temple was dedicated (the word Hanukkah means "dedication") and the Festival of Dedication (cf John 10:22f) became the yearly time of praise and thanks to HaShem for delivering us from our enemies and restoring the Temple to us for the proper worship of HaShem.

# HANUKKAH HAPPENINGS

Hidden in these letters are eleven words related to Hanukkah that complete the sentences below. See if you can find them forwards, backwards, or diagonally.

Y A D I B C L A T K E S S  
H L D E M C P I W B G U E  
M Z J G D L T X G N E Q R  
A B T H G I E R D H L I V  
C C X P W X C R G K T B A  
C I S H A M M A S H Z S N  
A L I R L B X E T Q H L T  
B V Y H A N U K K I A H K  
E Y N D K B J I S Y O V H  
E Z V E L S I K B N J N U  
S W D R E Y D E L S L C M

Hanukkah is called the Feast of \_\_\_\_\_.

Hanukkah means \_\_\_\_\_.

The story of Hanukkah is found in the Book of \_\_\_\_\_  
written between the Old and New Testaments.

Hanukkah comes in the Jewish month of \_\_\_\_\_.

Hanukkah lasts for \_\_\_\_\_ days.

A Hanukkah menorah is called a \_\_\_\_\_.

The candle used to light the other candles in the Hanukkah menorah is called the  
\_\_\_\_\_ which means \_\_\_\_\_.

We play games on Hanukkah with \_\_\_\_\_.

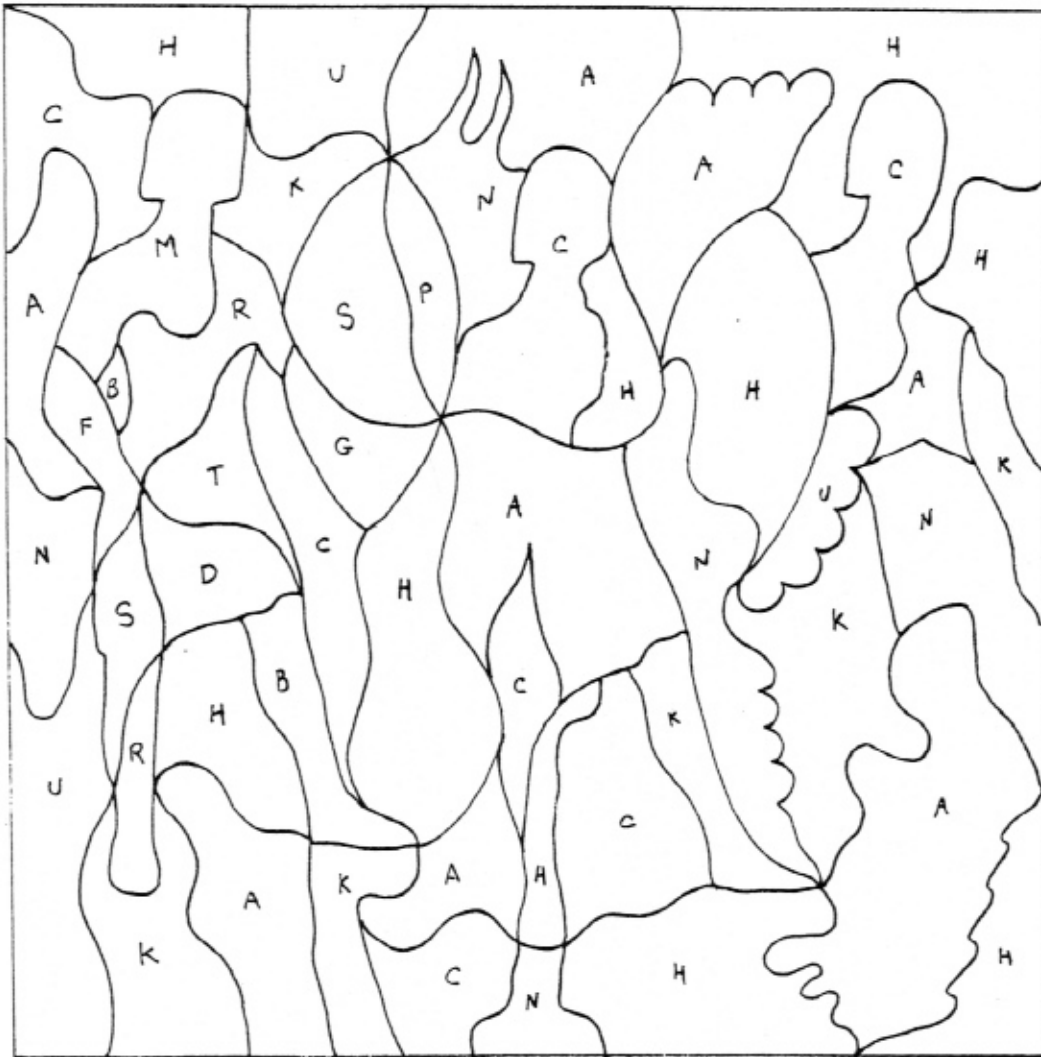
A food we eat on Hanukkah is \_\_\_\_\_.

Money received for Hanukkah is called \_\_\_\_\_.



# CHANUKAH HIDDEN DRAWING

Shade in only the shapes with one of the letters in CHANUKAH and a hidden drawing will appear.





*Hanukkah*  
(continued)

When the Greeks fled the Land of Israel, the victorious Jews happily climbed the hills to Jerusalem, their capital city. They dragged the Greek idols out of the Temple and painted and scrubbed it clean. But when it was time to light the *menorah* (candelabrum) and rededicate the Temple to the Lord, the people could find only a tiny jar of pure, sanctified oil. There was only enough to burn for one day. They lit the *menorah* and watched. And miraculously the oil burned on and on . . . not for one or two days, but for eight days and nights.