



# Carnegie Shul Chatter

November 24, 2021

*Shabbat Shalom*  
*Happy Chanukah*



Light candles 4:37pm

Shabbat Services 9:20am

## Vayeshev in a Nutshell

**Genesis 37:1–40:23**

Jacob settles in Hebron with his twelve sons. His favorite is seventeen-year-old Joseph, whose brothers are jealous of the preferential treatment he receives from his father, such as a precious many-colored coat that Jacob makes for Joseph. Joseph relates to his brothers two of his dreams which foretell that he is destined to rule over them, increasing their envy and hatred towards him.

Simeon and Levi plot to kill him, but Reuben suggests that they throw him into a pit instead, intending to come back later and save him. While Joseph is in the pit, Judah has him sold to a band of passing Ishmaelites. The brothers dip Joseph's special coat in the blood of a goat and show it to their father, leading him to believe that his most beloved son was devoured by a wild beast.

## Why Not Treasure What's Ours?

If there is one thing I have always hated it is when people refer to Chanukah as the Jewish Christmas. Besides the fact that Chanukah often overlaps Christmas on the calendar, and this year that doesn't even occur, Chanukah and Christmas have nothing in common.

Christmas is the most important holiday on the Christian calendar. Chanukah is not the most important holiday on the Jewish calendar. It is not mentioned in the Torah.

Christmas commemorates the birth of Jesus, the Christian messiah. Jesus is not our messiah and Chanukah has nothing to do with Jesus.

Chanukah is important to us as Jews because, on Chanukah, the Maccabees, against all odds, defeated the mighty Greek army, and reclaimed the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. And miraculously, the Temple's menorah, which had just a single day's supply of oil, burned for eight days.

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In modern times, to celebrate Chanukah, Jews give lots and lots of presents to their kids, much as the Christians lavish Christmas presents upon their kids. Do we do it because our Christian neighbors give their kids gifts and we do not want our kids to feel left out? Perhaps. But certainly we have enough to celebrate with the miracle of Chanukah without needing to give gifts to compete with our neighbors.

We are Jews. We have an incredible heritage. We have holidays of our own that are unique and special in their own right. Let us never confuse them with Christian holidays. Let us always treasure what is ours and ours alone.



Judah marries and has three children. The eldest, Er, dies young and childless, and his wife, Tamar, is given in levirate marriage to the second son, Onan. Onan sins by spilling his seed, and he too meets an early death. Judah is reluctant to have his third son marry her. Determined to have a child from Judah's family, Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute and seduces Judah himself. Judah hears that his daughter-in-law has become pregnant and orders her executed for harlotry, but when Tamar produces some personal effects he left with her as a pledge for payment, he publicly admits that he is the father. Tamar gives birth to twin sons, Peretz (an ancestor of King David) and Zerach.



Joseph is taken to Egypt and sold to Potiphar, the minister in charge of Pharaoh's slaughterhouses. G-d blesses everything he does, and soon he is made overseer of all his master's property. Potiphar's wife desires the handsome and charismatic lad; when Joseph rejects her advances, she tells her husband that the Hebrew slave tried to force himself on her, and has him thrown into prison. Joseph gains the trust and admiration of his jailers, who appoint him to a position of authority in the prison administration.



In prison, Joseph meets Pharaoh's chief butler and chief baker, both incarcerated for offending their royal master. Both have disturbing dreams, which Joseph interprets; in three days, he tells them, the butler will be released and the baker hanged. Joseph asks the butler to intercede on his behalf with Pharaoh. Joseph's predictions are fulfilled, but the butler forgets all about Joseph and does nothing for him.

# Our Volunteer of the Year

*This week's Jewish Chronicle includes the Volunteers of the Year for Jewish organizations in the Pittsburgh area. Our Board selected Irwin Norvitch, our Treasurer, who often leads our Shacharis services on Shabbos, as our Volunteer of the Year. Here is the article about Irwin that was included in the Chronicle. Mazel Tov, Irwin!*

## Congregation Ahavath Achim (The Carnegie Shul)



Irwin H. Norvitch is Congregation Ahavath Achim's Volunteer of the Year for 2021. Irwin has been a regular member of our minyanim since joining our shul some years ago. He is an active participant in our services. Since retiring in 2018 from Michaels Arts & Crafts, Irwin has been very active with West Hills Pittsburgh Meals on Wheels, the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank and 412 Food Rescue and all of their partners, "harvesting" food from local restaurants and grocery stores, delivering the foods to the kitchen, prepping and packaging food, mentoring and delivering daily to clients' homes.

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*One thing that Chabad does extremely well is to explain the significance of our Jewish Holidays. Below, from [chabad.org](http://chabad.org), is almost everything you'd ever want to know about Chanukah.*

## What Is Chanukah?

Chanukah is the Jewish eight-day, wintertime "festival of lights," celebrated with a nightly menorah lighting, special prayers and fried foods.

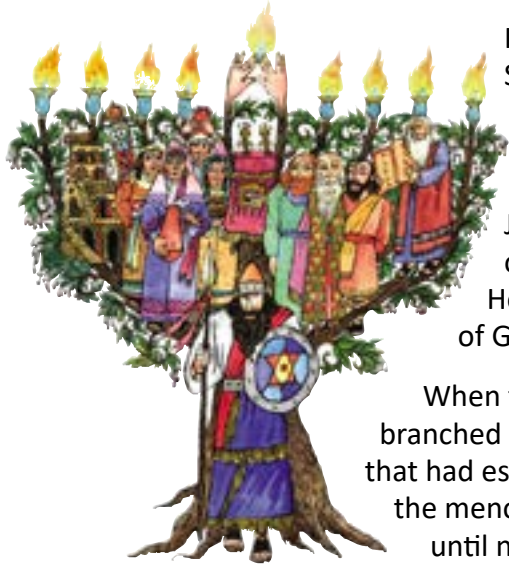
The Hebrew word Chanukah means "dedication," and is thus named because it celebrates the rededication of the Holy Temple (as you'll read below). Also spelled Hanukkah (or variations of that spelling), the Hebrew word is actually pronounced with a guttural, "kh" sound, kha-nu-kah, not tcha-new-kah.



## When Is Chanukah?

Chanukah begins on the eve of Kislev 25 and continues for eight days. On the civil calendar, it generally coincides with the month of December. Chanukah 2021 runs from Nov. 28-Dec. 6.

# What Chanukah Commemorates



In the second century BCE, the Holy Land was ruled by the Seleucids (Syrian-Greeks), who tried to force the people of Israel to accept Greek culture and beliefs instead of mitzvah observance and belief in G-d. Against all odds, a small band of faithful but poorly armed Jews, led by Judah the Maccabee, defeated one of the mightiest armies on earth, drove the Greeks from the land, reclaimed the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and rededicated it to the service of G-d.

When they sought to light the Temple's Menorah (the seven-branched candelabrum), they found only a single cruse of olive oil that had escaped contamination by the Greeks. Miraculously, they lit the menorah and the one-day supply of oil lasted for eight days, until new oil could be prepared under conditions of ritual purity.

To commemorate and publicize these miracles, the sages instituted the festival of Chanukah.

## How Chanukah Is Observed

At the heart of the festival is the nightly menorah lighting. The menorah holds nine flames, one of which is the shamash (“attendant”), which is used to kindle the other eight lights. On the first night, we light just one flame. On the second night, an additional flame is lit. By the eighth night of Chanukah, all eight lights are kindled.

On Friday afternoon, care must be taken to light the menorah before Shabbat candles are lit, and the following evening they are to be kindled only after Shabbat has ended.

Special blessings are recited, often to a traditional melody, before the menorah is lit, and traditional songs are sung afterward.

A menorah is lit in every household (or even by each individual within the household) and placed in a doorway or window. The menorah is also lit in synagogues and other public places. In recent years, thousands of jumbo menorahs have cropped up in front of city halls and legislative buildings, and in malls and parks all over the world.

We recite the special Hallel prayer daily, and add V’Al HaNissim in our daily prayers and in the Grace After Meals, to offer praise and thanksgiving to G-d for “delivering the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few ... the wicked into the hands of the righteous.”

## Chanukah Foods

Since the Chanukah miracle involved oil, it is customary to eat foods fried in oil. The Eastern-European classic is the potato latke (pancake) garnished with applesauce or sour cream, and the reigning Israeli favorite is the jelly-filled sufganya (doughnut).

# Dreidel: the Chanukah Game

On Chanukah, it is customary to play with a “dreidel” (a four-sided spinning top bearing the Hebrew letters, nun, gimmel, hei and shin, an acronym for nes gadol hayah sham, “a great miracle happened there”). The game is usually played for a pot of coins, nuts, or other stuff, which is won or lost based on which letter the dreidel lands when it is spun.



# Chanukah Gelt

In today’s consumer-driven society, people tend to place great importance on giving Chanukah gifts. However, the tradition is actually to give Chanukah gelt, gifts of money, to children. In addition to rewarding positive behavior and devotion to Torah study, the cash gifts give the children the opportunity to give tzedakah (charity). This has also spawned the phenomenon of foil-covered “chocolate gelt.”

# Yahrtzeits

This week the Carnegie Shul acknowledge the yahrtzeits of:

**Julius Shutzberg**

**Ethel S. Peresman**

**Sam Perlman**

**Winifred Klee**

**Larry Levkoy**

**Esther R. Wechsler**

May their memories be for a blessing.