

Second Day Hanukkah

December 14, 2017

Zakharya ***Zakharya ben Naomi vi'Manu'el***

Although the *parasha* we read this Monday and that we will read on Shabbat is *Miketz*--continuing with the story of *Yosef*--during the weekdays of Hanukkah it is traditional to chant special Torah readings connected with the holiday. I will be reading from the book of *B'midbar* or Numbers--chapter 7, verses 18-20.

The Hanukkah Torah readings describe the dedication of the *Mishkan*, the Sanctuary the Israelites used during the years they wandered in the wilderness. The dedication lasted for several days and each day one of the heads of the tribes would bring gifts. Although each tribal head or *Nasi* offered identical sacrifices, the Torah describes each sacrifice separately, word-for-word.

Then the Torah tells us that Moshe heard God's voice in the Tent of Meeting, between the two cherubs--the winged, golden creatures that sat on top of the Ark. Later in the reading--and maybe most closely connected with Hanukkah--God tells Aharon how to light the lamps of the all-gold *menorah* that stood in the *Mishkan*. Aharon was to light it--not by lighting the bottom of the wicks but by "raising light" from each of the lamps.

Questions

1) On Hanukkah we light the Hanukkiyah to celebrate miracles and tell people that miracles happen. What is a miracle? Have you ever experienced one? <<Pick 3>>

I think a miracle is something new, surprising, and good that happens to you, something that you didn't think could happen--then it does.

Reading Torah on my own in front of the whole school was a miracle. Even though I've been working on Torah reading for weeks, I haven't done it in front of everyone until today and I couldn't have known exactly how it would go until I did.

2) After we light the Hanukkiyah it is a *mitzvah* to put it outside the entrance to one's house, or in the window in a place where people can see it. Why do you think it might be important to publicize the miracles of Hanukkah by putting the lit Hanukkiyah in a place that people passing by your home could see it? <<Pick 3>>

When I see a lit Hanukkiyah in someone's window, I feel a connection with them and I feel happy that they are doing a *mitzvah*--spreading light to others.

3) One of the miracles that we celebrate at *Hanukkah* is that the smaller, less organized group of Maccabees stood up for themselves against the Greek Syrians who had destroyed their Temple and would not let them be Jewish in the way that they wanted to. Why do you think is it important to stand up for yourself when people do things that hurt your body or your feelings?

You have to be strong to stand up for yourself, but it is important. One way to do this is to use strong words to describe your feelings. When people hurt your body or feelings it is important to use strong words to help them understand how they have hurt you. Then, hopefully, the person who hurt you will know better how not to do and say things that hurt.