

Fifth Day *Hanukkah*

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<https://www.sefaria.org/Numbers.7.30?lang=bi&aliyot=0>

Although the *parsha* 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 30-32.

The *Hanukkah* Torah readings describe the dedication of the *Mishkan*, the Sanctuary the Israelites used during the years they wandered in the wilderness. The three verses I will read talk about what the heads of tribes brought to offer as sacrifices when the *mishkan* was complete.

The dedication of the *mishkan* lasted for several days and each day one of the heads of the tribes would bring gifts. Although the head of each tribe, or *Nasi*, offered identical sacrifices, the Torah describes each sacrifice separately, word-for-word.

QUESTIONS

1) In the Torah reading for Hanukkah we learn that the head of every tribe brings exactly the same gifts to celebrate the dedication of the Mishkan. Why do you think that every leader brings the same gift? <<pick 3>>

I would always rather receive a bunch of the same gifts--if they're gifts that I want--than receive a bunch of different gifts that my friends might like but that are not interesting to me. Maybe the heads of the tribes brought the same gifts because every one of them understood that only particular kinds of gifts would be appropriate and they all knew that these would be the appropriate gifts to offer.

2) Why do you think that the early rabbis of Jewish tradition teach us that we should not read or cook by or use the light of Hanukkah candles for any purpose other than to celebrate Hanukkah? <<pick 3>>

My dad has this kiddush cup that only shabbat wine or grape juice can go in. When he takes the cup off the shelf and whenever he holds it he knows that he is only going to use it for *kiddush* and his thoughts focus on *kiddush*. If we know that the light of the *hanukkiah* can only be used for *hanukkah*, then when we light the candles we are focused on doing only the mitzvah of lighting the Hanukkah candles. When we light the candles we are publicizing the miracle of Hanukkah.

The early rabbis of our tradition taught us to light the *hanukkiyah* as a way of publicizing the miracles of *Hanukkah*. Could you think of some other, brand new thing we might be able to do, other than lighting a *hanukkiyah*, to publicize the miracles of *Hanukkah*?

I thought it might be a great idea to cover the floor in the lobby of the school with oil and go oil skating. This would publicize the miracle of the oil AND the miracle of the military victory at the same time. It is obvious that the oil on the floor would publicize the miracle of the small amount of oil lasting for 8 whole days. But oil skating on the floor in the lobby is dangerous and people would have to be careful to not get hurt. The miracle of the military victory of the Maccabees over the Greeks only happened because the Maccabees were willing to fight and to do things that were unsafe.