

KOL MEVASSER

Hanukkah and The Bravery of Yehudit

by Rabbi Hagai Batzri

Not everyone is familiar with the practice of eating dairy foods on Hanukkah. It is a custom that originates in Jewish history, in the actions of Yehudit, or Judith.

Yehudit was a courageous Jewish heroine who acted decisively in the face of overwhelming odds. G-d performed great miracles through her, and on her behalf, for the Jewish people—just as he did for the Maccabees. In fact, her bravery was recognized in several cultures and religions through the ages.

While perhaps more famous at other times in history than our own, she continues to be recognized through the dairy foods we eat at Hanukkah. I would like to offer you the story of Judith, as adapted from Chabad's website, this Shabbat and Hanukkah.

Yehudit's Story

edited from chabad.org

The town of Bethulia, in the land of Judea, came under siege by Holofernes, a mighty Syrian-Greek general, at the head of a huge army. Holofernes was notorious for his cruelty in suppressing rebellions. When he captured a rebel stronghold, he showed no mercy to the men, women, and children sheltered there. Now he was determined to crush the rebellion of the

town of Bethulia, whose inhabitants refused to recognize the oppressive rule of the Syrians.

The men of the beleaguered town fought bravely and desperately to repulse the repeated assaults by the superior enemy forces. Seeing that he couldn't take the town by force, Holofernes decided to starve the inhabitants into submission. He cut off the food and water supply, and before long the town was indeed brought to the verge of surrender.

In utter despair, the townspeople gathered in the marketplace and demanded that, rather than die of hunger and thirst, they should surrender to the enemy. Uzzia, the commander of the defense forces, and the elders of the town, tried to calm the populace without success. Finally they pleaded, "Give us five more days. If no salvation comes by the end of five days, we will surrender."

Reluctantly the people agreed, and slowly they dispersed. Only one person, a woman, remained in her place, and she addressed Uzzia and the elders, who had also turned to go. Her voice was clear and firm.

"Why do you test G-d, giving Him only five days in which to send us His help? If you truly have faith in G-d, you must never give up your trust in Him. Besides, don't you know that surrender to Holofernes is worse than death?!"

So spoke Yehudit, a young widow, the noble daughter of Yochanan the High Priest. Yehudit was blessed with extraordinary charm, grace,

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KJ Schedule

Erev Shabbat & Hanukkah, Fourth Night Friday, December 23, 2011

Shaharit/Morning Prayer..... 6:30 am
Hanukkah Candle Lighting.....*before Shabbat candles*
Shabbat Candle Lighting 4:30 pm
Minhah/Arbith 4:30 pm

Shabbat Miketz & Hanukkah, Fifth Night Saturday, December 24, 2011

Shabbat Shaharit/Morning Prayer..... 8:30 am
Guest Speaker..... during services & Kiddush
Tehillim Women's Reading after kiddush
Shabbat Minhah, Seudah, Arbit..... 4:00 pm
Motzei Shabbat / Havdallah..... 5:34 pm
Hanukkah Candle Lighting..... *after Havdallah*

Weekdays

Hanukkah, Sixth Night / Sunday, Dec. 25, 2011
Shaharit/Morning Prayer..... 7:30 am
Hanukkah Candle Lighting..... *just after dark*

**Hanukkah, Seventh & Eighth Nights
Monday & Tuesday, December 26 & 27**
Hannukah Candle Lighting *just after dark*

Monday to Friday, December 26 to 30, 2011
Shaharit/Morning Prayer 6:30 am

Erev Shabbat

Friday, December 30, 2011

Shaharit/Morning Prayer..... 6:30 am
Shabbat Candle Lighting 4:34 pm
Minhah/Arbith 4:30 pm

Welcome

Eliezer Valvidies, Junior NCO, a Jewish American soldier who served in Baghdad and who is just out of the army. A 3rd generation American whose family immigrated from Spain, he speaks Ladino and Spanish. This Shabbat he will share with us miracles he experienced in Iraq and will discuss how his tour of duty strengthened his connection to Judaism by placing him at an epicenter of Jewish history, in Ur Kasdin where Abraham lived & close to where the Rabbis of Baghdad lived and taught..

Pictures from
Ur Kasdin



Refuah Shlemah

Eliezer Hai Saltoon ben Roz Saltoon

Parasha & Haftara Readings

Parashat Miketz p. 155
Haftara

Shabbat Kiddush

is co-sponsored
in memory of

Saul Mizrahie, z"l

by

The Mizrahie & Jonah Families

Shabbat Kiddush

is co-sponsored
in memory of

Jack Sassoon, z"l

by

Hilda Sassoon & Family

Thank You

Sisterhood of
Kahal Joseph
for orchestrating

The Annual
Children's Hanukkah Party

In Memoriam

We remember the following yahrzeits, the annual anniversary of passings, for the week of December 24th to 31st, 2011. It is customary to light a memorial candle and donate tzedakah. Family members are encouraged to attend prayer services in honor of loved ones on the Shabbat preceding the yahrzeit. To update information call 310.474.0559.

28 Kislev / Shabbat, December 24

Joseph Jacob *Yosef ben Avraham Hayim*
Habeeba bat Aziza

29 Kislev / Sunday, December 25

Ralph Isaac *Rafal ben Yehezkel ben Mulla Rahamim*
Simcha Ezra Isaac *Simcha bat Masooda*

1 Tevet / Tuesday, December 27

Saul Mizrahie *Shaul ben Eliyahu Mordechai*
Jack Sassoon *Yaacov Yoseph ben Sassoon*
Victoria Saul

2 Tevet / Wednesday, December 28

David ben Ezra

3 Tevet / Thursday, December 29

Isaac Jacob *Itzhak ben Yaakov*
Vicky Messiah *Rahma Victoria bat Khatoon*

4 Tevet / Friday, December 30

Seemah Meyer *Simha bat Azizah*

5 Tevet / Shabbat, December 31

Mida Judah *Masooda bat Dina*
Esther Sales *Esther HaMalka bat Rivka*
Elisha Samuel *Elisha ben Sassoon Shmuel Hacham*

Sponsor a Shabbat Kiddush or Seudah Shlisheet

Honor a member of your family or celebrate a joyous occasion by sponsoring a Shabbat celebration at Kahal Joseph. Call Sarah in the KJ office, at 310.474.0559 Monday through Friday, 11 am to 4 pm to find out more.

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and beauty, but she was particularly respected and admired for her devoutness, modesty, and loving kindness. Yehudit's words made a deep impression on Uzzia and the Elders. "We must all continue to pray, and never despair of G-d's help," Yehudit said. "But I have also thought of a plan. I ask your permission to leave town with my maid. I want to go to Holofernes..."

Uzzia and the Elders were shocked and dismayed. But Yehudit persisted. "It had happened before that G-d sent His salvation through a woman. Yael, the wife of Heber, was her name, as you well know. It was in her hands that G-d delivered the cruel Sissera..." Uzzia and the Elders attempted to discourage Yehudit from such a dangerous mission, but she insisted that she be allowed to try. Finally, they agreed.

Yehudit passed through the gates of Bethulia, dressed in her best clothes, which she had not worn since her husband passed away. A delicate veil all but hid her beautiful face. She was accompanied by her faithful maid, who carried on her head a basket filled with rolls, cheese, and several bottles of old wine.

The sun had already begun to hide behind the green mountains when Yehudit and her maid wound their way toward the enemy's camp, their lips whispering a prayer to G-d. Presently they were stopped by sentries, who demanded to know who they were. "We have an important message for your commander, the brave Holofernes," Yehudit said.

"Who are you, and why are you here?" Holofernes asked when they came before him. Yehudit answered, "I am but a plain widow from Bethulia. I

came to tell you how to capture the town, in the hope that you will then deal mercifully with it..."

Yehudit then told Holofernes that life in the beleaguered town had become unbearable for her, and she bribed the watchmen to let her and her maid out. She went on to tell what she'd heard of Holofernes's bravery and mighty deeds in battle. Holofernes spent his time listening and drinking.

"My goat cheese is famous in all of Bethulia," Yehudit said. "I'm sure you'll like it, General." He did. And he also liked the strong, undiluted wine she had brought. She fed him the cheese, and he washed it down with wine. Before long he was sprawled on the ground, dead drunk.

Yehudit propped a pillow under his head and rolled him over on his face. Then she uttered a silent prayer. "Answer me, O L-rd, as You answered Yael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, when you delivered the wicked general Sissera into her hands. Strengthen me this once that I may bring Your deliverance to my people whom this cruel man vowed to destroy, and let the nations know that You have not forsaken us..."

Now Yehudit unsheathed Holofernes' heavy sword, and taking aim at his neck, she brought the sword down on it with all her might. For a moment she sat down to compose herself. Then she wrapped up the general's head in rags, concealed it under her shawl, and walked out.

Uzzia attacked at dawn. The enemy camp was not prepared. And when the soldiers saw their commander beheaded, they fled in confusion and terror, leaving much behind. It was a complete victory, brought about by the G-d-fearing and brave daughter of Yochanan the High Priest, from the Hasmonean family/

Shabbat Shalom & Happy Hanukkah



Hanukkah Candle Lighting Guide

Families usually light their Hanukkah menorah directly or soon after nightfall. If Hanukkah begins on Shabbat, the Hanukkiyah should be lit just before Shabbat candles:

1) *Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech HaOlam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Hanukkah.* Blessed are You, Lord Our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who has sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us to kindle the lights of Hanukkah.

2) *Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech HaOlam, she'asah nisim l'avoteinu, b'yamim haheim bazman hazeh.* Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who made miracles for our forefathers in those days at this time.



KAHAL JOSEPH TREE OF LIFE

Check out the Tree of Life in the lobby. The tree is sprouting many new leaves. Help fill out our tree with life. Celebrate your loved ones by ordering a leaf—a donation of \$126 a leaf. Order 4 & get the 5th free. For information contact Yvette.ydabby@sbcglobal.net

NOTICE TO PARENTS

1. Children under 5 years old must be supervised by parents in KIDS ZONE upstairs.
2. No child is allowed in the synagogue lobby or hallways without constant supervision by a parent or guardian.
3. We are not responsible for children walking out the front door.

Rosh Hodesh Tevet

A new month can also mean a new beginning in our lives. One of the reasons may be that something new always causes a higher motivation.

Rosh Hodesh Tevet begins on the seventh candle of Hanukkah, and could see the positive influence of the Hanukkah candles, light and heat even with the cold and darkness of the month of Tevet.

Hodesh Tov – A great, healthy and successful month to all of you.

Host by: Sholeh Shaaya

Date: Monday December 26, 2011

Location: TBA

Time: 6:30 p.m. Be on time

Other: Rsvp- space is limited

Contact: oriysbatzri@gmail.com



Maqam Siga for Shabbat & Hanukkah

On this Shabbat, we explore Maqam Siga, associated with both Shabbat and Hanukkah. Maqam Siga contains the melodies we use in chanting Torah. The light of the Hanukkah candle resembles the energy that appears when the Torah is chanted in the correct manner. It has similar spiritual power.

We invite you to listen to Hazzan Moshe Habusha, a childhood friend of Rabbi Batzri, as he sings a traditional Iraqi song for Hanukkah, "Ya Ha'tzel Yona" at <http://youtube/1kbxkwv0JUJ> You may also hear a song of Rabenu Yosef Haim for this Shabbat and Hanukkah as performed by Abe Abraham and recorded by Rabbi Batzri at <http://youtube/khzVpi5Eukk>

יה הצל יונה מִחֶבֶת וְדַמְעָתָהּ לִדְ מִפְּנֵי וְתִשְׁמַח בְּךָ אֵתָהּ
 מִלֶּפְנֵי. בְּשִׁמּוֹנַת יְמֵי חֲנֻכָּה: וְתִשְׁמַח בְּךָ וְיִסֵּי
 הוֹדוּ לְנֹאֵה עַל גַּאִים. וְנֹרָא עַל פְּלִטוֹרָאִים. תְּצִיל אֶת נִין
 חֲשִׁמוֹנָאִים. מִיֵּד צַר כִּי בָהֶם חֶבֶת: וְתִשְׁמַח בְּךָ וְיִסֵּי
 וְיִשְׁרִי עֲפֹךְ שִׁירוֹת. וְזִמְרוֹת מִפֶּן יִקְרוּת בְּתִדְלִיקָם אֶת הַצְּרוֹת
 בְּשִׁמּוֹנַת יְמֵי חֲנֻכָּה: וְתִשְׁמַח בְּךָ וְיִסֵּי
 דְרִשׁוּ לֹאֵל פְּלִלְכֻמוֹת. כִּי גַמַּל עֲלֵנוּ טוֹבוֹת שְׂמֵחוּ בָּנִים עִם
 הָאֲבוֹת. בְּחַת מִצֵּי יָם אֶרֶץ: וְתִשְׁמַח בְּךָ וְיִסֵּי
 הָאֵל יִמֵּי יְחִידָה וְצַר לְחִרְיָהּ יִקְרָשׁ. יִשְׁלַח עֲזָרָה מִקִּדְשׁ. וּמִצִּיּוֹן
 יִשְׁעֵד:

Ya ha'tzel yona mekhaka. V'dimata lakh mefaka. V'tismakh bakh ata malkah. Bi'shmonat yemei Hanukkah.. V'tismakh bakh Hodu l'ge-eh al ge-im. V'nora al kol nora-im. Hitzil et nin hashmona-im. Mi'yad tzer ki vahem hika. V'tismakh bakh V'yashiru amakh shirot. U'zmirot mi'paz yekarot. B'hadlikam et hanerot. B'shmonat yemei Hanukkah. V'tismakh bakh Dirshu la'El kol levavot. Ki gamal alenu tovot. Simkhu vanim im ha'avot. B'dat miniy yam arukah. V'tismakh bakh Ha'El yamenu yekhadash. V'tzar la'harigah yekadesh. Yishlakh ezrekha mi'kodesh. U'mitzion yisadekha. V'tismakh bakh . . .

Kahal Joseph Children's Choir

Starting January 2012

Sunday mornings, 11 am to 12 noon

Calling all KJ kids ages 6 to 12! Learn Jewish songs and prayers in our Sephardic, Iraqi tradition and develop your singing abilities under the guidance of our talented Rabbi Batzri. For more information, contact Louise Elias at louisendme@yahoo.com. (Minimum enrollment of 8 kids required.)

Directed by Rabbi Hagay Batzri

Reserve your child's spot! Contact Louise Elias at louisendme@yahoo.com