



SHALOM HARTMAN INSTITUTE מכון  
OF NORTH AMERICA שלום הרטמן

## David Hartman's Hanukkah

**Maimonides' Value Dilemma – The Heroic Ethics of *Hag HaHashmonaim*:  
Honor, Holiness, and National Pride or  
Forgiveness, Desecration and Domestic Tranquility (*Shalom Bayit*)?**

**Edited by Noam Zion**

Selections from *A Different Light* Vol. One and Two

[noam.zion@gmail.com](mailto:noam.zion@gmail.com)

[www.haggadahsrus.com](http://www.haggadahsrus.com)



*A Menorah in an apartment window overlooking the town hall of Kiel, Germany, bedecked with its Nazi flag (c. 1933-1934)*

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# I The Maccabean "Hanukkah": The Civic Religion

## 1. The Decrees of Antiochus IV (167BCE - 164 BCE)

1. No Jewish sacrifices may be offered in the Temple of God. Instead, mandatory sacrifices of pigs and impure animals were dedicated to Zeus on the Temple's altar.
2. Pagan temples were to be built throughout Judea.
3. No circumcisions were allowed on pain of death to child, parent and *mohel*.
4. The Torah was to be forgotten and its legal system replaced with Greek law.
5. Shabbat and holidays were to be desecrated.
6. The celebration of the Emperor's birthday was enforced including the eating of sacrifices made in his honor.
7. Participation in Dionysian processions crowned with ivy wreaths was required.
8. It was prohibited to identify oneself as a Jew (including, perhaps, the prohibition of the use of Jewish names)

## 2. The Hasmonean Priest as Zealot: Mattathias, Pinhas and Moshe (167-166 BCE) – Our Hero?

In those days [of religious persecution by King Antiochus], a priest named **Mattathias** moved from Jerusalem, and settled in Modiin [a provincial town]. He had five sons, John, Simon, Judah called Maccabeus, Elazar, and Jonathan. When he saw the blasphemous things that were going on in Judea and Jerusalem, he said with a heavy sigh, "Why was I born to witness the ruin of my people and the ruin of the Holy City, and to sit by while it is being given up to its enemies, and its Temple to aliens?" Mattathias and his sons tore their clothes in mourning...

Later the king's officers who were forcing the people to give up their religion, came to the town of **Modiin**, to make them offer an idolatrous sacrifice. When many Jews, among them Mattathias and his sons, gathered together, the king's messengers said to Mattathias:

"You are a leading man, great and distinguished in this town, surrounded with sons and brothers; now be the first to come forward and carry out the king's command as all the peoples, all the men of Judea and those who are left in Jerusalem have done. Then you and your sons will be counted among the Friends of the King and will receive silver, gold and many royal commissions."

Then Mattathias answered and said in a loud voice: "Even if all the peoples in the king's dominions listen to him and forsake each of them the religion of their ancestors, **I and my children and my siblings will live in accordance with the covenant of our ancestors**. God forbid that we should abandon the Torah and the ordinances. We will not listen to the message of the king, nor depart from our religion to the right hand or to the left."

When Mattathias finished speaking, a Jew went up before everyone's eyes to offer the pagan sacrifice on the altar in Modiin as the king commanded. Mattathias saw him and was filled with zeal. Mattathias shook with emotion and could not contain his anger, and ran up and slaughtered him upon the altar. At the same time Mattathias killed the king's officer who was trying to compel them to sacrifice, and tore down the altar. Thus he showed his zeal for the Torah, just as **Pinchas [the zealous priest]** did (*Numbers 25*). Then Mattathias cried out in a loud voice in the town, "**Let everybody who is zealous for the Torah and stands by the Covenant follow me.**" And he and his sons fled to the mountains and left all they possessed in the town. (*I Maccabees 2:1-7, 13-25, 27-28*)

## II Rabbinic Hanukkah

### 1. Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 21b, from *Megillat Ta'anit*

Our Rabbis taught: On the twenty-fifth of Kislev [begin] the eight days of Hanukkah, on which lamentation for the dead and fasting are forbidden. For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oils in it, and when the Hasmonean dynasty prevailed over them and defeated them, they searched and found only one bottle of oil sealed by the High Priest. It contained only enough for one day's lighting. Yet a miracle was brought about with it, and they lit [with that oil] for eight days. The following year they were established as a festival, with *Hallel* and Thanksgiving.

דתנו רבנן: בכ"ה בכסליו יומי דחנוכה תמניא אינון, דלא למספד בהון ודלא להתענות בהון. שכשנכנסו יוונים להיכל טמאו כל השמנים שבהיכל, וכשגברה מלכות בית חשמונאי ונצחום, בדקו ולא מצאו אלא פך אחד של שמן שהיה מונח בחותמו של כהן גדול, ולא היה בו אלא להדליק יום אחד, נעשה בו נס והדליקו ממנו שמונה ימים. שנה אחרת קבעום ועשאום ימים טובים בהלל והודאה.

### 2 *HaNerot Halalu*

"הנרות הללו אנחנו מדליקים על הנסים ועל הנפלאות ועל התשועות ועל המלחמות, שעשית לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה, על ידי כהניך הקדושים"

### 3. Al HaNissim

וְעַל הַנִּסִּים וְעַל הַפְּרָקָן וְעַל הַגְּבוּרוֹת וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת  
וְעַל הַנִּפְלְאוֹת שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזֶמֶן  
הַזֶּה:

בַּיָּמִי מִתְתַּוְּהוּ בֶן יוֹחָנָן בֶּהֱן גְּדוֹל, חֲשֵׁמוֹנָאִי וּבְנָיו,  
בְּשַׁעֲמֻדָּה מַלְכוּת יוֹן הַרְשָׁעָה עַל עַמֶּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל,  
לְהַשְׁפִּיחֵם תּוֹרְתֶךָ וּלְהַעֲבִירֵם מִחֻקֵּי רְצוֹנֶךָ, וְאַתָּה בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ  
הַרְבִּים, עָמַדְתָּ לָהֶם בַּעַת צָרָתָם. רִבַּתְּ אֶת רִיבָם, דִּנַּתְּ אֶת  
דֵּינָם, נִקְמַתְּ אֶת נִקְמָתָם, מִסֵּרְתָּ גְבוּרִים בְּיַד חֲלָשִׁים,  
וְרַבִּים בְּיַד מְעֻטִּים, וְטַמְאִים בְּיַד טְהוּרִים, וְרָשָׁעִים בְּיַד  
צַדִּיקִים, וְזוּדִים בְּיַד עוֹסְקֵי תּוֹרְתֶךָ. וְלֵךְ עָשִׂיתָ שֵׁם גְּדוֹל  
וְקָדוֹשׁ בְּעוֹלָמְךָ, וְלַעֲמֶךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל עָשִׂיתָ תְּשׁוּעָה גְּדוֹלָה  
וּפְרָקָן בְּהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה. וְאַחַר כֵּן בָּאוּ כְּנִיף לְדַבֵּיר בֵּיתְךָ, וּפָנּוּ  
אֶת הַיְכָלְךָ, וְטָהְרוּ אֶת מִקְדָּשְׁךָ, וְהִדְלִיקוּ נְרוֹת בְּחִצְרוֹת  
קִדְשֶׁךָ. וְקָבְעוּ שְׁמוֹנֶת יָמֵי חֲנֻכָּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְהַלֵּל  
לְשִׁמְךָ הַגְּדוֹל:

And [we thank You] for the miracles, for the redemption, for the mighty deeds, for the saving acts, and for the wonders which You have wrought for our ancestors in those days, at this time—

In the days of Matityahu, the son of Yochanan the High Priest, the Hasmonean and his sons, when the wicked Hellenic government rose up against Your people Israel **to make them forget Your Torah and violate the decrees of Your will.**

But You, in Your abounding mercies, stood by them in the time of their distress. You waged their battles, defended their rights, and avenged the wrong done to them. You delivered the mighty into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, **the impure into the hands of the pure**, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, and the sinners into the hands of those who occupy themselves with Your Torah. You made a great and holy name for Yourself in Your world, and effected a great deliverance and redemption for Your people Israel to this very day. Then Your children entered the shrine of Your House, cleansed Your Temple, purified Your Sanctuary, kindled lights in Your holy courtyards, and instituted these eight days of Hanukkah to give thanks and praise to Your great Name.

### III The Secular Zionist "Hanukkah": *Hag HaHashmonaim*

#### The Zionist Politics of Remembrance of the Maccabees

##### 1. Writing History is a Self-Projection on the Past by Ehud Luz

History is a mirror by which we can view ourselves... The motive for our interest in history is to interpret our life ideal and to prove that the ideal is achievable in reality in the future just as it once was a fact of history. This approach is especially relevant for Revivalist Movements that seek to shape the future in the image of the past. Revival is never a simple return to the past but always a reflective dialogue in which the present seeks to shape the future in the image of a particular past which it has reconstructed in its own image. We turn to the past to derive a concrete model of our soul's dream and the faith that the dream is realizable. The past is an interpretation and a justification for our aspirations. In this sense, modern study of history functions like ancient myths. Myth gave meaning to one's private life by anchoring it in the eternal comprehensive lawfulness of life. What is ephemeral is really an example of the eternal; private life is a repetition and a revival of a holy event that belongs to eternity...

Therefore the myth of "revival" plays such a central role in the national awakening of historical peoples in the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century. Historical romanticism is the cradle of modern nationalism because the past is mythic and eternal and it grants the power of renewal to the present.

##### 2. The Nationalization of Hanukkah

Rabbi Shmuel Mohilever proposed that Hanukkah be the official holiday of the proto Zionist organization *Hovevei Zion* (Russia, 1881)

"The Maccabees will be resurrected!" - Theodore Herzl (concluding sentence of his prophetic book, *The Jewish State*, 1897)

##### 3. Hanukkah Displaces Pesach as the Holiday of Freedom

While traditionally Pesach has been the holiday of national liberation, its family observance and its exclusive emphasis on God's supernatural redemption, could not serve the Zionist slogans of "auto emancipation" and "if I do not do for myself, who will do for me?"

Yitzhak Ben Zvi, early pioneer and later second president of the State of Israel, wrote in 1911:

"The glory and the educational value of the Hasmonians is that their example revived the nation to be its own redeemer and the determiner of its own future..."

החשמונאים נטלו גורלם בידיהם, ואילו יציאת מצרים נכפתה על העם הר כגיגית...

חנוכה הוא "זמן חרותנו" ולא פסח! - אליעזר בן יהודה

##### 4. The Secular "Hanukkah" becomes the "Festival of the Hasmonians"

While the Rabbis use the Hebrew word “*Hanukkah*” (which means “dedication”) which refers to the religious dedication of the Temple in the wake of its liberation from the control of the Hellenizers, the preferred Zionist name was once the “Festival of the Hasmoneans”. The historian, Joseph Klausner, Amos Oz's uncle and the Revisionist, stated:

"Hanukkah is an ancient festival, but a modest one. The Festival of the Hasmoneans is a new holy day, but full of high spirits and popular gaiety. **What was Hanukkah?**... ‘ a memorial for the Miracles’... the lighting of the little candles... at home, potato pancakes and playing cards for the adults, spinning tops for the toddlers.

**And what is Hanukkah now?** – The Festival of the Hasmoneans, a holiday filled with cheering, a big national holiday which is celebrated by the Jewish people in all its dispersions with parties and speeches, songs and ballads, hikes and parades... This is our Festival of the Hasmoneans as it is today."

"לא בתפילות הסתפקו החשמונאים. את דמם שפכו בעד החופש העממי, ורגשות מלחמה מעוררים קבריהם בלבבות היהודים החדשים בארץ מולדת הישנה". - זרובבל

כמו המכבים בשעתם נירשם גם אנו הליגיטונרים בדברי ימי העם העברי... נוכיח לכל העולם, כי בעורקינו עוד נוזל דם גיבורינו הקדומים. - זאב ז'בוטינסקי

**המקבי** – מילה יוונית שמשמעותה פטיש, כלומר, ראש בצורת פטיש או פעילות צבאית יזומה שמזכירה פעולת פטיש. 'יהודה המקבי' = 'יהודה הפטיש'.  
**מכבי** = "מי כמוכה באלים ה'", דרשה רבנית המדגישה שליהודה בנו של מתתיהו הכהן היה מניע רוחני. כתיב זה מדגיש את העזרה האלוהית במלחמה ע"י אותו אלוהים שהביס את המצרים בים סוף ושעליו נאמר שם – "ה' איש מלחמה" וכן "מי כמוכה באלים ה'" (שמות ט"ו)

##### 5. "No Miracle Occurred" - *Anu nos'im lapidim* ("We are carrying torches")

By the poet Aharon Ze'ev (1951)

"We are carrying torches. In the dark night the paths shine beneath our feet, and whoever has a heart that thirsts for light--let him lift his eyes and his heart to us and come along.

*No miracle happened for us. No cruise of oil did we find.*

We walked through the valley, ascended the mountain. We discovered wellsprings of hidden light. We quarried in the stone until we bled:

"Let there be light!"

**אנו נושאים לפידים**  
מילים: אהרון זאב

אנו נושאים לפידים  
בְּלִילוֹת אֶפְלִים .  
זוֹרְחִים הַשְּׁבִילִים מִתַּחַת רַגְלֵינוּ  
וּמִי אֲשֶׁר יָב לֹ  
הַצֵּמָא לְאוֹר -  
יִשָּׂא אֶת עֵינָיו וְלָבוֹ אֵלֵינוּ  
לְאוֹר וְיָבוֹא !  
גַּם לֹא קָרָה לָנוּ -  
פֶּדֶ שֶׁמֶן לֹא מֵצָאנוּ .  
לְעֵמֶק הַלְּכָנוּ, הִהָרָה עָלֵינוּ ,  
מַעֲיִנּוֹת הָאוֹרוֹת  
הַגְּנוּזִים גָּלֵינוּ .

גַּם לֹא קָרָה לָנוּ -  
פֶּדֶ שֶׁמֶן לֹא מֵצָאנוּ .  
בְּסֻלַּע חֲצָבָנוּ עַד דָּם -  
וַיְהִי אוֹר !



*Israeli child dressed as Judah the Maccabee, 1935 and JNF Hanukkah Gelt Stamp, 1938*

## 6. MI Y'MALEL – Who can Recount?

**Who can recount the mighty acts of Israel,**

Who can count them?

In every age a hero rises to save the nation.

Hark! In those days at this time, a Maccabee overcame and redeemed.

And in our day the whole nation of Israel will be united and rise to be redeemed.

**מי ימלל  
מנשה רבינא**

מי ימלל גבורות ישראל,  
אותן מי ימנה?  
הן בכל דור יקום הגיבור  
גואל העם.

שמע!  
בימים ההם בזמן הזה  
מכבי מושיע ופודה  
ובמינו כל עם ישראל  
יתאחד, יקום ויגאל.

## 7. Psalms 106

Hallelujah.

Praise the Lord for God is good;

God's steadfast love is eternal.

**Who can tell the mighty acts of the Eternal, proclaim all God's praises?**

God saved [our ancestors], as befits God's name...

God delivered them from the foe,

Redeemed them for the enemy.

א. הללו-יה :  
הודו ליהנה פי-טוב-- פי לעולם חסדו.  
ב. מי--ימלל, גבורות יהנה ; ישמיע, כל-תהלתו  
ח. ויושיעם, למען שמו-- להודיע, את-גבורתו

## IV Two American Jewish Reactions to Hanukkah and Military Heroism



*The Statue of Liberty and American Flag Hanukkah Menorah, by Mae Shafter Rockland*  
This menorah synthesizes modern American and ancient Jewish symbols of freedom. The Statue of Liberty, donated by the Republic of France in honor of its sister Republic, is adorned with a quote from the Jewish poet Emma Lazarus which appears on this menorah as well: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free."  
(Jewish Museum of New York. 1974)

### 1. A Reform Movement Hanukkah Curriculum for School Children:

#### The "Anti-War" Celebration of the Maccabees (1971) by Harry Gersh<sup>1</sup>

##### Freedom of Worship

Jewish holidays have to do with nature and God, with the growth of crops and the growth of the Jewish people. **Only one Jewish holiday – Hanukkah – centers about a war.** Even that one does not celebrate victory but cleaning the Temple and dedicating it once again. **Jews never take up the sword willingly.** No one can take joy in the death of another human being. But sometimes we have no choice. We must stop and fight those who would deny us the freedom to be Jews. If we do not, we are, in effect, agreeing to become slaves.

That's why Mattathias, the priest of Modiin, is the real hero of Hanukkah. He had the courage to stand up to the Syrians. **Mattathias did not want war. When many people shouted for war, Mattathias ran away from Jerusalem hoping to avoid war.** But when he found that meant he would have to give up his Judaism he knew what he had to do. If war and death were the price the Jews had to pay for the right to be Jews, then war and death it would be.

Two thousand years before Abraham Lincoln said that a nation cannot endure half slave and half free, Mattathias, the priest of Modiin, sent his five sons into war against the Syrians because he knew that the Jews could not exist half slave and half free. When Antiochus' soldiers came to the village of Modiin, Mattathias stood firm. The Book of Maccabees (in the Apocrypha) tells what he said:

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<sup>1</sup> *When a Jew Celebrates* by Harry Gersh with Eugene Borowitz and Hyman Chanover, 1971, (pp. 171-181)

*Even if all the nations within the king's empire listen to him and give up, each its own faith, yet will I and my sons and my brothers follow the Covenant of our fathers. God forbid that we give up the Torah and the Commandments. We will not listen to the king's words, to leave our faith...Let all who will obey the Torah and keep the Commandments follow me.*

Mattathias and his sons fought with the Syrian soldiers and drove them from Modiin. And the war began. Mattathias' son Judah gathered together groups of Jews and created an army in the hills of Judea. For three years they fought and beat the Syrians. As winter came in 165 BCE, Judah's soldiers entered Jerusalem and then Judah's army came to the Temple. The great stone altar stood there, with a great statue of Zeus – or was it Antiochus?

### **Cleansing the Temple**

The soldiers threw down their arms and began to clean the Temple. The idols were thrown out and everything cleaned. Priests and Levites came forward from among the soldiers, and animals for sacrifices were brought. All was ready for the beginning of services – except for the great menorah. One legend says that then the soldiers found eight iron rods stuck in the walls. They put them together in the shape of a menorah and lit candles in them.

And on the twenty-fifth day of Kislev, exactly three years to the day from the day the Temple was taken over by the Syrians, the Temple services were held. **Each soldier waved a palm branch instead of a sword.** For many years after the end of that war of independence the Jews celebrated Hanukkah. But it was a kind of old soldiers' holiday, when those who fought the war got together and recounted their battles and victories. As these soldiers died, the holiday became less important.

The sons and grandsons of Mattathias died, and new kings ruled the Jews. Like so many kings, they became tyrants. The Jew in the street cursed the Hasmonean tyrants and would not celebrate the holiday of the victory of the Hasmoneans.

### **The Right to Worship**

Today some people try to use Hanukkah to show that the Jews were a warrior people. They were not. **Most Jews in all ages thought war was stupid.** The great men of the Jews were not warriors. They were men of learning, lawgivers, wise men. In a period of about 1,500 years there were only four great generals among the Jews. Two of them are not thought of as generals, Joshua and David. Only Judah Maccabee and Bar Kokhba are remembered as warriors, and they are more important to us today, because our times are so troubled, than they were to the Jewish tradition.

Some people try to change the meaning of Hanukkah so that it celebrates a war for independence. It wasn't. The Jews would rather have had their own government and king, but they did not go to war over politics. As a matter of fact, they accepted Antiochus; they accepted his taxes, even when he taxed the Temple. But they would not accept his interference with their worship, their belief, their religion.

### **Freedom to Serve God**

So this war was the first for the right of a people within a country to believe as they wish – so long as they followed the king's law in worldly matters. For thousands of years, Jews have lived under kings, princes, dukes, caliphs, governors, presidents. And they have always been loyal to these rulers – so long as they were permitted to practice their own religion. **This idea of religious freedom is followed in all free nations today. It was first given to the world by the Jews.**

One thing more: Antiochus offered the Jews complete equality with all the rest of his subjects – so long as they would agree to *be* like all his other subjects. He said: If you Jews become like all my other people, you can enjoy all the rights my other subjects have. So the Jews fought, not for equality, but for the right to be different. For Jews life is very, very important. But it is not the most important thing. Jews will *not* do

*anything* to survive. For some things one must stand up and not give in. The Maccabees risked their lives for freedom to serve God.

That's why the festival of Hanukkah does not take place on the day of a great battle. It does not take place on the day the Jews reconquered Jerusalem. It takes place during the week that the Temple was cleansed and a new fire lighted in the menorah. Such a day is so important that it must be celebrated. This is the meaning of Hanukkah. Hanukkah is a **Festival of Dedication**. It reminds us of the value of freedom of worship. It recalls our dedication to God.

## 2. Jewish Renewal's Hanukkah by Arthur Waskow\*

### The Rabbis' Ambivalence about the Maccabees' Victory

Jewish tradition about Hanukkah is not so simple. The books of the Maccabees themselves became an issue. They seem to have been treated as holy books by the Greek-speaking Jews of Alexandria. But the Rabbis [of Eretz Yisrael] never regarded them as holy, never entered them among the books that made up the Jewish Bible. And it was the Rabbis who determined what became Jewish Tradition. Ironically enough, these books that celebrated the Maccabees' victory over Hellenism survived not in Hebrew but only in the Greek language. And it was the most Hellenized Jews [in Egypt] who most honored these [written] memorials of resistance to Hellenism.

For the classic Jewish view of the origins of Hanukkah, therefore, we must turn to the Talmud. Here we find Hanukkah in a most peculiar position. It is the only one of the traditional festivals that does not have a place in the *Mishnah* or the Talmud. ... The reason is that the Rabbis were not happy with the Maccabean approach to Jewish life. They were writing in the period when similar revolts against Rome, seeking to win the Jews political independence, to turn Judea into a rocky fortress, and to toughen the Jewish people had been systematically and brutally smashed by the iron fist of Rome. Only the rabbinical kind of power – the power not of rock but water, fluid and soft from moment to moment and yet irresistible over the long run – had survived. **Only the rabbinical kind of power had protected and preserved Jewish peoplehood...**

### New Approaches: The Struggle Between the Light of Hope and the Darkness of Despair

...The Rabbinic tradition was hostile to the Maccabees, and modern Zionism, identifying with the Maccabees, was often hostile to the Rabbis. Thus Hanukkah has been a kind of battlefield between “**Rabbi**” and “**Maccabee**” as models of Jewish life. Is there any way to integrate these conflicting orientations to Hanukkah? From the standpoint of the **Rabbi**, Hanukkah celebrated God's saving Spirit: “**Not by might and not by power...**” To the Rabbi, this spiritual enlightenment required a kind of inwardness and contemplation that was contradictory to insurgent politics. From the standpoint of the **Maccabee**, Hanukkah celebrated human courage and doggedness, the human ability to make history bend and change. The need to organize, to act, to fight, to build might and use power, seemed in the aspect of the Maccabee to contradict study, prayer, and contemplation.

**The real conflict is not between the Rabbi and the Maccabee, between spiritual and political, but between apathy and hope, between a blind surrendering to darkness and an acting to light up new pathways.** Sometimes the arena will be in outward action, sometimes in inward meditation. But always the question is whether to recognize the darkness – and transcend it. The necessity of recognizing the moment of darkness is what we learn from seeing Hanukkah in its context of the sun and moon. There is no use pretending that the sun is always bright; there is no use pretending that the moon is always full. **It is only by recognizing the season of darkness that we know it is time to light the candles, to sow a seed of light that can sprout and spring forth later in the year.**

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\* *Seasons of Our Joy* by Arthur Waskow (1982), pp. 87-101

## V Maimonidean Hanukkah

<p>1) In [the era of] the Second Temple, the Greek kingdom issued decrees against the Jewish people, [attempting to] nullify their faith and refusing to allow them to observe the Torah and its commandments. <b>They extended their hands against their property and their daughters;</b> they entered the Sanctuary, wrought havoc within, and made the sacraments impure. The Jews suffered great difficulties from them, for they oppressed them greatly</p>	<p><u>ג:א חלק א'</u> בבית שני כשמלכו יון גזרו גזרות על ישראל ובטלו דתם ולא הניחו אותם לעסוק בתורה ובמצות, ופשטו ידם בממונם ובבנותיהם ונכנסו להיכל ופרצו בו פרצות וטמאו הטהרות, וצר להם לישראל מאד מפניהם ולחצום לחץ גדול</p>
<p>2) until the God of our ancestors had mercy upon them, <b>saved</b> them from their hand, and saved them. The sons of the Hasmoneans, the High Priests, overcame [them], slew them, and <b>saved</b> the Jews from their hand. They appointed a king from the priests, and <b>sovereignty returned to Israel for more than 200 years</b>, until the destruction of the Second Temple.</p>	<p><u>ג:א חלק ב'</u> עד שריחם עליהם אלהי אבותינו <u>והושיעם</u> מידם והצילם וגברו בני חשמונאי הכהנים הגדולים והרגום <u>והושיעו ישראל</u> מידם והעמידו מלך מן הכהנים <u>וחזרה מלכות לישראל</u> יתר על מאתיים שנה עד החורבן השני.</p>
<p>3) When the Jews overcame their enemies and destroyed them, they entered the Sanctuary; this was on the 25th of Kislev. They could not find any pure oil in the Sanctuary, with the exception of a single cruse. It contained enough oil to burn for merely one day. They lit the arrangement of candles from it for eight days until they could crush olives and produce pure oil.</p>	<p><u>ג:ב</u> וכשגברו ישראל על אויביהם ואבדום בחמשה ועשרים בחדש כסלו היה ונכנסו להיכל ולא מצאו שמן טהור במקדש אלא פך אחד ולא היה בו להדליק אלא יום אחד בלבד והדליקו ממנו נרות המערכה שמונה ימים עד שכתשו זיתים והוציאו שמן טהור.</p>
<p>4) Accordingly, the Sages of that generation ordained that these eight days, which begin from the twenty-fifth of Kislev, should be commemorated to be days of happiness and praise [of God]. Candles should be lit in the evening at the entrance to the houses on each and every one of these eight nights to publicize and reveal the miracle. These days are called Chanukah.</p>	<p><u>ג:ג</u> ומפני זה התקינו חכמים שבאותו הדור שיהיו שמונת הימים האלו שתחלתן מליל חמשה ועשרים בכסלו ימי שמחה והלל ומדליקין בהן הנרות בערב על פתחי הבתים בכל לילה ולילה משמונת הלילות להראות ולגלות הנס, וימים אלו הן הנקראין חנוכה</p>
<p>5) How many candles should one light on Chanukah? The mitzvah is that a single candle should be lit in each and every house, regardless of whether there are many members of the</p>	<p><u>ג:ד</u> כמה נרות הוא מדליק בחנוכה, מצותה שיהיה כל</p>

<p>household, or merely one person [lives] there. A person who performs the mitzvah in a beautiful manner should light candles for every member of the household, whether male or female. A person who is even more conscientious in his performance of the mitzvah than this and observes the mitzvah in the most desirable manner should light candles for every member of his household, a candle for each individual, whether male or female, on the first night. On each subsequent night, he should add one.</p>	<p>בית ובית מדליק נר אחד בין שהיו אנשי הבית מרובין בין שלא היה בו אלא אדם אחד, והמהדר את המצוה מדליק נרות כמנין אנשי הבית נר לכל אחד ואחד בין אנשים בין נשים, והמהדר יתר על זה ועושה מצוה מן המובחר מדליק נר לכל אחד ואחד בלילה הראשון ומוסיף והולך בכל לילה ולילה נר אחד.</p>
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<p>6) The Chanukah candles should not be kindled before sunset. Instead, [they should be kindled] at <b>sunset</b>. One should not light later or earlier. Should one forget, or even if one purposely did not light at sunset, one may light afterwards <b>until there are no longer any passersby in the marketplace</b>. How long a duration of time is this? Approximately half an hour or slightly more than that. Should this time pass, one should not kindle the lights. One should place enough oil in the lamp so that it will continue burning until there are no longer any passersby in the marketplace. If one lit it and it became extinguished, one need not light it a second time. If it remained burning until there are no longer passersby in the marketplace, one may extinguish it or remove it if one desires.</p>	<p><u>ד:ה</u>  אין מדליקין נרות חנוכה קודם שתשקע החמה אלא עם שקיעתה לא מאחרין ולא מקדימין, שכח או הזיד ולא הדליק עם שקיעת החמה מדליק והולך עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק, וכמה הוא זמן זה כמו חצי שעה או יתר, עבר זמן זה אינו מדליק, וצריך ליתן שמן בנר כדי שתהיה דולקת והולכת עד שתכלה רגל מן השוק, הדליקה וכבתה אינו זקוק להדליקה פעם אחרת, נשארה דולקת אחר שכלתה רגל מן השוק אם רצה לכבותה או לסלקה עושה.</p>
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<p>7) It is a mitzvah to place the Chanukah lamp at the outside of the entrance to one's home, within the handbreadth that is closest to the doorway on the left side as one enters the home, so that the mezuzah will be on the right side and the Chanukah lamp on the left side. When a person lives in a second story apartment, he should place [the Chanukah lamp] in a window close to the public domain. If [a person] places a Chanukah lamp more than twenty cubits [above the ground], his actions are of no consequence, because [the lamp] does not attract attention [at that height].</p>	<p><u>ז:ז</u>  נר חנוכה מצוה להניחו על פתח ביתו מבחוץ בטפח הסמוך לפתח על שמאל הנכנס לבית כדי שתהיה מזוזה מימין ונר חנוכה משמאל, ואם היה דר בעליה מניחו בחלון <u>הסמוכה לרשות הרבים</u>, ונר חנוכה שהניחו למעלה מעשרים אמה לא עשה כלום <u>לפי שאינו ניכר</u>.</p>
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<p>8) <b>In a time of danger</b>, a person may place a Chanukah lamp inside his house; even if he lit it on his table, it is sufficient. Therefore, another</p>	<p><u>ח:ח</u>  <u>בימי הסכנה</u> מניח אדם נר חנוכה בתוך ביתו</p>
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<p>lamp must be burning in the house to provide light for one's activities. If a fire is burning in the house, an additional candle is not necessary. For a prestigious person who does not normally use the light of a fire, an additional candle is required.</p>	<p>מבפנים ואפילו הניחו על שולחנו דיו, וצריך להיות בתוך הבית נר אחר להשתמש לאורו, ואם היתה שם מדורה אינו צריך נר אחר, ואם אדם חשוב הוא שאין דרכו להשתמש למדורה צריך נר אחר.</p>
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<p>9) The mitzvah of kindling Chanukah lamps is very dear. A person should be very careful in its observance to publicize the miracle and thus increase our praise of God and our expression of thanks for the miracles which He wrought on our behalf. Even if a person has no resources for food except [what he receives] from tzedakah, he should ask [meaning: beg for tzedakah or borrow money or pawn his garment as collateral] or he should sell his garment and purchase oil and lamps to kindle them [in fulfillment of the mitzvah].</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>ד:יב</u></p> <p>מצות נר חנוכה מצוה חביבה היא עד מאד וצריך אדם להזהר בה כדי להודיע הנס ולהוסיף בשבח האל והודיה לו על הנסים שעשה לנו, <u>אפילו אין לו מה יאכל אלא מן הצדקה שואל או מוכר כסותו ולוקח שמן ונרות ומדליק.</u></p>
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#### 10) Laws of Hanukkah 4:13

If someone has only one coin and one is confronted with the [simultaneous mitzvot] to say kiddush over wine [on Shabbat] and to light the Hanukkah lamp, then one should give priority to buying oil for the Hanukkah lamp over wine for kiddush. Since both mitzvot derive from the Rabbis' legislation [and have equal status legally], it is better to prefer the Hanukkah lamp that contains the memory of the miracle.

ד,יג הרי שאין לו אלא פרוטה אחת, ולפניו קדוש היום והדלקת נר חנוכה--מקדים שמן להדליק נר חנוכה, על היין לקדוש היום: הואיל ושניהם מדברי סופרים, מוטב להקדים נר חנוכה שיש בו זכרון הנס.

#### 11). Laws of Hanukkah 4:14

If one is confronted with the [simultaneous mitzvah] to light one's household lamp [for Shabbat] and to light the Hanukkah lamp... then the [Shabbat] household lamp takes precedence because it contributes to *shalom bayit* (domestic peace and tranquility). After all, the Divine name is also to be erased [in the Biblical ritual of the wife suspected of adultery - *sotah*] in order to facilitate the making of peace between man and woman. Great is shalom (peace)! For the whole Torah was given to make peace in the world as it says in the Bible: "*Its ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peace*" (Proverbs 3:17).

ד,יד הנה לפניו נר ביתו ונר חנוכה, או נר ביתו וקדוש היום--נר ביתו קודם, משום שלום ביתו: שהרי השם נמחק, לעשות שלום בין איש לאשתו. גדול השלום, שכל התורה נתנה לעשות שלום בעולם, שנאמר 'דרךיה דרכי-נעם; וכל-נתיבותיה שלום' (משלי ג, יז).

## VI Shabbat Candles: *Shalom Bayit* and *Oneg*

### 1. Maimonides, Shabbat Laws, Chapter 5:1-3

1. The lighting of a lamp on the eve of the Sabbath is not a voluntary act - in the sense that one may choose to light it or leave it unlit, as one pleases; nor is it a commandment which one is not obligated to make a special effort to fulfill, as are the commandments to wash one's hands before eating. Rather, lighting a lamp on the eve of the Sabbath is a **duty**.

Furthermore, **men and women alike are obligated to have a lamp burning in their houses on Sabbath eve**. Even if one has no food to eat, **one must go begging** in order to buy oil to light a lamp, for the lamp is an integral part of Sabbath enjoyment.

Before lighting the lamp one must recite a bracha - "*Blessed are You Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with commandments and has **commanded us to light the Sabbath lamp***" - just as one must recite a benediction over all other duties enjoined only by the Scribes.

2. **It is permissible to make use of the light of the Sabbath lamp**, provided that the object to be looked at does not require close scrutiny. If, however, the object requires minute inspection, it may not be examined by the lamp's light, lest one should be tempted to tilt the lamp (and extinguish it by accident).

3. **Women are given this mandate even more than men because they are present in the home and are involved in the business of housework.**

**א** הַדְּלִקַת נֵר בַּשַּׁבָּת אֵינָהּ רְשׁוּת, אִם רָצָה מִדְּלִיק וְאִם רָצָה אֵינֶנּוּ מִדְּלִיק; וְלֹא מִצְוָה שְׂאִינֹו חֵיב לְרַדֵּף אַחֲרֶיהָ עַד שְׂעִיעֶשְׁנָה, כְּגוֹן עֲרוּבֵי חֲצֵרוֹת אוֹ נְטִילַת יָדַיִם לְאֲכִילָהּ; אֲלֵא חוּבָה.

וְאֶחָד אֲנָשִׁים וְאֶחָד נָשִׁים, חֵיבִין לְהִיּוֹת בְּבִתְיָהֶן נֵר דְּלוּק בַּשַּׁבָּת. אֲפֹלוּ אֵין לוֹ מָה יֵאכֹל-- שׁוֹאֵל עַל הַפְּתָחַיִם, וְלוֹקֵחַ שָׁמֶן וּמִדְּלִיק אֶת הַנֵּר: שְׂזָה בְּכָלֵל עֲנֹג שַׁבָּת הוּא.

וְחֵיב לְבָרֵךְ קֶדֶם הַדְּלָקָה, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוּנוּ לְהַדְּלִיק נֵר שֶׁלִּשְׁבָּת--כְּדָרְךָ שֶׁמְבָרֵךְ עַל כָּל הַדְּבָרִים שֶׁהוּא חֵיב בָּהֶם מִדְּבָרֵי סוּפְרִים.

**ב** מִתֵּר לְהַשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ לְנֵר הַשַּׁבָּת: וְהוּא, שְׁלֹא יְהִי הַדְּבָר צְרִיךְ עֵיוֹן הַרְבֵּה; אֲבָל דְּבָר שְׂצָרִיךְ לְדַקְדֵּק בְּרֵאִיתוֹ, אֲסוּר לְהַבְחִינוֹ לְאוֹר הַנֵּר--גְּזֵרָה, שְׁמָא יִטָּה.

ג הַמִּדְּלִיק צְרִיךְ לְהַדְּלִיק מִבְּעוֹד יוֹם, קֶדֶם שְׁקִיעַת הַחֲמָה. וְנָשִׁים מִצְוֹת עַל דְּבָר זֶה, יוֹתֵר מִן הָאֲנָשִׁים, לְפִי שֶׁהֵן מִצְוִיּוֹת בְּבִתִּים, וְהֵן הַעֲסָקוֹת בְּמִלְאֲכַת הַבַּיִת; וְאִף עַל פִּי כּוֹ, צְרִיךְ הָאִישׁ לְהִזְהִיר וּלְבַדֵּק אוֹתוֹ עַל כָּךְ, וְלוֹמֵר לְאֲנָשֵׁי בֵּיתוֹ עֲרַב שַׁבָּת קֶדֶם שֶׁתַּחֲשֹׁד, הַדְּלִיקוּ אֶת הַנֵּר. סִפֵּק חֲשֵׁכָה וְנִכְנַס הַשַּׁבָּת, סִפֵּק לֹא נִכְנַס--אֵין מִדְּלִיקוֹן.

### 2. **Karaite Shabbat Laws by Anan ben David** (9<sup>th</sup> Century, Israel and Babylonia from the *Karaite Anthology*)

It is forbidden to light fire in Jewish homes on the Sabbath or to permit fire kindled before the arrival of the Sabbath to continue burning into the Sabbath, as it is written: "*You shall not burn fires in all your dwellings upon the Sabbath day*" (Exodus 35:3).

### 3. When Life is In Danger on Shabbat: A Philosophy of Jewish Law and Life-

#### Maimonides, Laws of Shabbat 2:1-2, 11 -

Shabbat is also deferred when there is any threat to life ...even a suspicion that one's life is in danger ...We do not say "Let's wait until after Shabbat [to see what is happening]." ... Rather we do whatever is necessary on Shabbat... For someone with a dangerous condition the rule is that Shabbat is like any day of *hol* = the day.

For example, a woman giving birth is considered a suspected life-threatening condition, so we violate Shabbat to call a midwife, to cut the umbilical cord ... In fact if she screams out during transition that she needs a candle lit, then even if she is blind, we light the candle because we assume that it will help her maintain her sanity even if she cannot see the candle.

When doing these things for the ill whose life may be threatened, we do NOT do them via non-Jews or children or slaves or women, lest in their eyes they think Shabbat is a light matter to violate.

Rather the greatest and wisest leaders of Israel should violate Shabbat without hesitation to help them as it says: "*My laws are to be done by a human being to live by them*" (Ezekiel 20: 11 -12, 21; Leviticus 18:5) - NOT to die by them!

So you learn that the laws of the Torah are not for vengeance in the world but to promote *rachmanut* / mercy, *hesed* /kindness and *shalom* / peace in the world.

It is the sectarians [= Karaites] who say that these acts to save life are forbidden as a desecration of Shabbat. About their way of life it says: "*I have given them bad laws, rules that they cannot live by*" (Ezekiel 20:25).

א דחוייה היא שבת, אצל סכנת נפשות, כשאר כל המצוות; לפיכך חולה שיש בו סכנה-- עושין לו כל צרכיו בשבת, על פי רופא אמן שלאותו מקום. ספק שהוא צריך לחלל עליו את השבת, ספק שאינו צריך, וכן אם אמר רופא לחלל עליו את השבת, ורופא אחר אומר אינו צריך--מחללין עליו את השבת שספק נפשות, דוחה את השבת.

ב אמדוהו ביום השבת שהוא צריך לכך וכך שמונה ימים--אין אומרים נמתין עד הערב, כדי שלא לחלל עליו שתי שבתות; אלא מתחילין מהיום שהוא שבת, ומחללין עליו אפלו מאה שבתות: כל זמן שהוא צריך ויש בו סכנה או ספק סכנה, מחללין--מדליקין לו את הנר, ומכבין מלפניו את הנר, ושוחטין לו, ואופין ומבשלין, ומחמין לו חמין בין להשקותו בין לרחיצת גופו. כללו שלדבר: שבת לגבי חולה שיש בו סכנה--הרי היא כחל, לכל הדברים שהוא צריך להן.

ג כשעושים דברים אלו, אין עושין אותן לא על ידי גויים, ולא על ידי קטנים, ולא על ידי עבדים, ולא על ידי נשים--כדי שלא תהא שבת קלה בעיניהם; אלא על ידי גדולי ישראל וחקמייהם. ואין מורין לנשים לעשות דברים אלו. ואסור להתמהמה בחלול שבת, לחולה שיש בו סכנה, שנאמר "אשר יעשה אתם האדם נחי בהם" (ויקרא יח, ה), -ולא

שְׂמִימֹת בָּהֶם. הָא לְמִדָּת, שְׂאִין מִשְׁפָּטֵי הַתּוֹרָה נִקְמָה בְּעוֹלָם, אֵלָא רַחֲמִים וְחֶסֶד וְשְׁלוֹם בְּעוֹלָם. וְאֵלֹו הַמִּינִים שְׂאוּמְרִים שְׁזָה חֲלוּל וְאָסוּר, עֲלִיָּהוּ הַכְּתוּב אוֹמֵר "וְגַם-אֲנִי נִתְתִּי לָהֶם, חֻקִּים לֹא טוֹבִים; וּמִשְׁפָּטִים--לֹא יִחִיו, בָּהֶם" (יחזקאל כ, כה).

יֵא הַיּוֹלָדֵת, כְּשִׁכּוֹרַעַת לִילַד--הָרִי הִיא בְּסִכְנַת נַפְשׁוֹת, וּמִחֲלָלִין עֲלֶיהָ אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת: קוֹרְאִין לָהּ חֲכָמָה מִמְּקוֹם לְמִקּוֹם, וְחוֹתְכִים אֶת הַטְּבוּר, וְקוֹשְׁרִין אוֹתוֹ. וְאִם הִיָּתָה צְרִיכָה לָנוּ בְּשַׁעָה שֶׁהִיא מִצְעָקֵת בְּחִבְלֶיהָ--מִדְּלִיקוֹן לָהּ אֶת הַנֵּר, וְאִפְלוּ הִיָּתָה סוּמָה, מִפְּנֵי שְׂדַעְתָּה מִתְּיַשְׁבֵּת עֲלֶיהָ בְּנֵר, וְאִף עַל פִּי שְׂאִינָה רוּאָה. וְאִם הִיָּתָה צְרִיכָה לְשִׁמּוֹן וְכִיּוֹצֵא בּוֹ, מְבִיאִין לָהּ. וְכָל שְׂאִפְשֵׁר לְשִׁנּוֹת, מְשַׁנִּין בְּשַׁעַת הַבָּאָה, כְּגוֹן שְׂתַבִּיא לָהּ חֲבֵרְתָּהּ, כְּלֵי תְלוּי בְּשַׁעְרָה; וְאִם אֵי אִפְשֵׁר, מְבִיאָה כְּדָרְכָּהּ.

#### 4. Mattityahu: A Radical Religious Reform - Shabbat versus National Defense and Human Life (I Maccabees 2: 29-41)

When Mattathias and his friends learned of [the massacre], they grieved bitterly and said to one another: **"If we all do as our brothers have done and refuse to fight [on Shabbat] against the pagans, for our lives and for what we believe is right, they will very soon wipe us off the face of the earth."** On that day they reached this decision: **"If anyone attacks us on Shabbat, let us fight against them and not all die, as our brothers died in the hiding places."**

#### 5. Oneg Shabbat

a. *"Call the Shabbat a delight* (Isaiah 58:13) means a delight for both body and soul, a delight for celestial and earthly realms." (Jerusalem Talmud Kiddushin 4:12)

b. It is duty to eat three meals on Shabbat ..The Rabbis used to prepare the richest food and finest wines that one can afford. (Maimonides Laws of Shabbat 30:7)

ז אֵיזָה הוּא עֲנוּג: זֶה שְׂאִמְרוּ חֲכָמִים שְׂצָרִיד לְתַקּוֹן תְּבִשִׁיל שְׁמֹן בְּיוֹתֵר, וּמִשְׁקָה מְבִשֵׁם, הַכֹּל לְשַׁבָּת--הַכֹּל לְפִי מְמוֹנוּ שְׂלֶאֱדָם. וְכָל הַמְרִבָּה בְּהוֹצֵאת שַׁבָּת וּבְתַקּוֹן מֵאֲכָלִים רַבִּים וְטוֹבִים, הָרִי זֶה מְשַׁבַּח. וְאִם אֵין יָדוּ מִשְׁגָּת, אִפְלוּ עָשָׂה שְׂלֶק וְכִיּוֹצֵא בּוֹ מִשׁוּם כְּבוֹד הַשַּׁבָּת--הָרִי זֶה עֲנֵג שַׁבָּת.

c. "A husband eats with his wife [at least] every Shabbat eve." (TB Ketubot 64b)

וְאוֹכֵלֵת עִמּוֹ מִלִּילֵי שַׁבָּת לְלִילֵי שַׁבָּת.

d. "A Torah scholar should fulfill the mitzvah of his conjugal duties on the evening of Shabbat" (TB Ketubot 62b; see Mishna Ketubot 5.8)

עוֹנָה שֶׁל תַּלְמִידֵי חֲכָמִים אֵימַת? אִמַּר רַב יְהוּדָה אִמַּר שְׂמוּאֵל: מַעֲיִשׁ לַעֲיִשׁ.

e. "One should be very careful to light Shabbat candles for without them there is no peace in the home. For when walks, one may trip in the darkness. It is an ancient tradition going back to Moshe Rabbenu that we must light Shabbat candles." (Midrash Lekach Tov)

בְּמִקּוֹם שְׂאִין נֵר, אֵין שְׁלוֹם, שֶׁהוֹלֵךְ וְנִכְשֵׁל בְּאִפִּילָהּ.

## VI. The Rabbinic Peacemakers

### 1. Rabbinic Priest as Peacemaker: Aaron and Rabbi Meir

**Pirkei Avot 1:12, Avot d' Rabbi Natan "A" Chapter 12; Avot d'Rabbi Natan Avot d' Rabbi Natan "B," Chapter 25**

- a. Mishnah: Hillel says, "Be among the followers of Aaron; for Aaron loved shalom and pursued shalom. He loved humanity and brought people close to Torah." (Pirkei Avot 1:12)
- b. Midrash: What does "love shalom" mean?

It means that we should bring harmony between each and every person in Israel, just as Aaron himself tried to bring harmony between each and every person. As it says, "*The Torah of truth was in his mouth and unkindness was not on his lips. In peace and righteousness he walked with Me; and he prevented many from doing wrong*" (Malachi 2:6).

**Rabbi Meir** asked, What does "*He prevented many from doing wrong*" mean?

We could illustrate it as follows: Whenever Aaron encountered even someone of questionable reputation, he would stop and say "shalom." On the next day, that same person might want to do something wrong, but would stop and think to himself: "What would happen if I run into Aaron? How could I look him in the face? When he says "shalom" to me, I would be ashamed. Consequently, that man would restrain himself from wrong.

Another example: If two people were feuding, Aaron would walk up to one, sit down next to him and say, "My child, don't you see how much your friend is tearing his heart out and rending his clothes." The person would then say to him/herself: "How can I lift up my head and look my friend in the face? I would be ashamed to see him; I really have been rotten." Aaron would remain at his/her side until s/he had overcome resentment [*kinah*, etymologically related to the word for zealot, *kanai*].

Afterwards, Aaron would walk over to the other person, sit down next to him/her and say: "Don't you see how much your friend is eating his/her heart out and tearing his/her clothes." And so this person too would think to her/himself: "O, my God! How can I lift up my head and look my friend in the eye. I am too ashamed to see him/her." Aaron would sit with this person too until s/he had overcome resentment. And finally when these two friends met, they embraced and kissed each other. Therefore, it is said of Aaron's funeral, "*And they wept for Aaron thirty days, the entire house of Israel*" (Numbers 20:20). (Avot d' Rabbi Natan "A" Chapter 12)

How do we know that Aaron never made a man or a woman feel bad about him or herself? Because it is written, "and all the house of Israel wept for Aaron." Moses, however, rebuked the people with harsh words. Therefore, of him it is written, "*and the children of Israel wept for Moses*." Not all of Israel. Moreover, just think of how many thousands in Israel are named after Aaron. Were it not for Aaron's domestic peacemaking, they would not have been brought into the world!

Moses was a judge and it is impossible for a judge to vindicate both litigants for he must exonerate the innocent and convict the guilty. Aaron, however, was not a judge but one who brought peace between human beings [and between God and Israel]. (Avot d' Rabbi Natan "B," Chapter 25)

### הלל אומר: הוי מתלמידיו של אהרן -

אוהב שלום, ורודף שלום, ומשים שלום בין איש לאשתו, אוהב את הבריות, ומקרבן לתורה. הוא היה אומר: אם אין אני לי מי לי, וכשאני לעצמי מה אני, ואם לא עכשיו אימתי.

### אוהב שלום כיצד?

מלמד שיהא אדם אוהב שלום בישראל בין כל אחד ואחד, כדרך שהיה אהרן אוהב שלום בין כל אחד ואחד. שנאמר: (מלאכי ב) 'יתורת אמת היתה בפהו, ועולה לא נמצא בשפתיו, בשלום ובמישור הלך אתי, ורבים השיב מעון.'

### רבי מאיר אומר: מה תלמוד לומר יורבים השיב מעון?

כשהיה אהרן מהלך בדרך, פגע בו באדם רשע, ונתן לו שלום. למחר ביקש אותו האיש לעבור עבירה. אמר: אוי לי, היאך אשא עיני אחר כך ואראה את אהרן, בושתי הימנו שנתן לי שלום. נמצא אותו האיש מונע עצמו מן העבירה.

וכן שני בני אדם שעשו מריבה זה עם זה, הלך אהרן וישב אצל אחד מהם. אמר לו: בני, ראה חברך מהו אומר, מטורף את לבו וקורע את בגדיו, אומר אוי לי היאך אשא את עיני ואראה את חברי, בושתי הימנו שאני הוא שסרחתי עליו. הוא יושב אצלו עד שמסיר קנאה מלבו.

והולך אהרן ויושב אצל האחר, ואומר לו: בני ראה חברך מהו אומר, מטורף את לבו וקורע את בגדיו, ואומר אוי לי היאך אשא את עיני ואראה את חברי, בושתי הימנו שאני הוא שסרחתי עליו. הוא יושב אצלו עד שמסיר קנאה מלבו. וכשנפגשו זה בזה, גפפו ונשקו זה לזה. לכך נאמר (במדבר כ) 'וייבכו את אהרן שלשים יום כל בית ישראל'.

דבר אחר: מפני מה בכו ישראל את אהרן שלשים יום? - מפני שדן אהרן דין אמת לאמיתו. מניין לאמר לאיש שסרחת, ולא לאישה שסרחת. לכך נאמר וייבכו אותו כל בית ישראל. אבל משה שמוכיחן בדברים קשים, נאמר וייבכו בני ישראל את משה. ועד כמה אלפים היו בישראל שנקראו שמם אהרן, שאלמלא אהרן לא בא זה לעולם, שהיה משים שלום בין איש לאשתו, ומזדווגין זה עם זה, והיו קורין שם הילוד על שמו.

## 2. A Jealous Husband, Zealous Students and a Rabbinic Peacemaker:

### “Spit in My Eye”: Rabbi Meir’s Marital Counseling

I. Rabbi Meir<sup>2</sup> was sitting and speaking [about Torah] on Shabbat evening.

A certain woman was sitting there listening.

His talk lasted too late.

She waited until he was finished speaking.

Then she went to her home, and found that the lamp was already extinguished

II. Her husband asked her: “Where have you been?”

She told him: “I have been sitting and listening to the rabbi.”

The husband said to her: “I swear by such-and-such that you are not to enter here until you go and spit in the rabbi's face!”

III. They sat [separated] for one week (Shabbat), a second, and a third.

IV. Her neighbors told her: “You are having a quarrel. Let us go with you to the Rabbi.” When Rabbi Meir saw them, he envisioned [the reason for their coming] by means of the holy spirit [of prophecy].

[Pretending to have something wrong with his eye] He said to them: “Is there among you a woman skilled in reciting a charm for the eye?”

Her neighbors said to her, “Now, go spit in his face and you will be permitted<sup>3</sup> to live with your husband again.”

[So she came forward] but when she sat down before his face, she cringed before his presence. She confessed: “My master [literally, my rabbi], I do not know how to recite a charm for [healing] the eye.”

But he said to her: “Just spit seven times and I will be healed.”

She spat in his face seven times.

Then he said to her: “Go and tell your husband: ‘You asked me to do it only once but I spat seven times!’”

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<sup>2</sup> Rabbi Meir is associated in Rabbinic literature with complicated relations with women, such as his wife, Beruriah, and her sister, who was sold into prostitution as a Roman captive. Later he venerated as a miracle worker – “Meir Baal HaNes.”

<sup>3</sup> Permitted or released from the vow that prohibited your return home.

V. His disciples said to him, "Master! Is the Torah to be treated with such contempt?

If you had only told one of us to recite the incantation for you."

R. Meir replied: "Isn't it enough for Meir to be equal to his Maker?

VI. Rabbi Yishmael taught: Great is peace, so that God's holy Name written in sacred fashion is as commanded by the Holy One to be obliterated in the water [in the case of the suspected adulteress (Numbers 5: 23-24)], in order to bring about peace between a man and his wife."

(Leviticus Rabbah 9:9)

ר' מאיר הוה יתיב ודריש בלילי שבתא. הוה תמן חדא איתתא יציבא ושמעה ליה תנתא מדרשא, אמתנית עד דיחסל ממדרש, אזלה לביתה אשכחא בוצינא טפי.  
אמר לה בעלה: אן הוית?  
אמרה ליה: אנא יתיבא ושמעה קליא דרושה.  
אמר לה: כן וכן, לא אעיילת להכא, עד דאזלת ורוקת באנפי דרושה.  
יתיב שבתא קמייתא, תנינא ותליתא.

אמרין לה מגירתא: כדו אתון צהיבין?  
אתינן עמך לגבי דרושה, כיון דחמי יתהון, ר' מאיר צפה ברוח הקודש, אמר להו:  
אית מנכון איתתא דחכימא למילחש בעינא?  
אמרין לה מגירתא: כדו את אזלת ורוקת באנפיה, ותשרי לבעלך, כיון דיתבא קמי אידחילת מיניה.  
אמרה ליה: רבי! לית אנא חכימא למילחש עינא!  
אמר לה: אפילו הכי, רוקי באנפי שבע זימנין, ואנא מינשים עבדה הכין.  
אמר לה: איזילי אמרי לבעלך, את אמרת חדא זימנא, ואנא רקית שבע זימנין.  
אמרו לו תלמידיו: רבי! כך מבזין את התורה?  
לא היה לך למימר, לחד מינן למלחש לך?  
אמר להו: לא דיו למאיר להיות שוה לקונו!

### 3. Who is a Hero? Mishna Pikei Avot 4:1

בן זומא אומר: איזה הוא גיבור?--הכובש את יצרו, שנאמר "טוב ארך אפיים, מגיבור" (משלי טז, לב).

Ben Zoma said: Who is mighty? One who conquers their impulse to evil, as it is written, "*One who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and one who rules over their spirit than one who conquers a city*" (Proverbs 16:32)

### Epilogue: The Pluralist Manifesto of Hanukkah and its Mission - Rav Abraham HaKohen Kook

Everyone must know and understand that within burns a candle/lamp.

There is no one's candle is like his/her fellow's and no one lacks their own candle.

Everyone must know and understand that it is their task to work to reveal the light of that candle in the public realm

And to ignite it until it is a great flame, and to illuminate the whole world



*Female runner bears the Hanukkah torch lit at Modiin, the ancestral home of the Maccabees, and carries it on foot to Jerusalem for the official lighting of the national menorah. (December 1948, Central Zionist Archives)*



*Israeli Youth movements gather for a torchlight parade for Hanukkah in downtown Jerusalem. (December 1958)*