



Hanukkah





Candle-Lighting with Kavanot

As we bring forth light among families & friends, here are some kavanot to shine light on kids in the foster system.

The shamash' flame does not decrease when it lights other candles. Similarly, love increases when shared.

Look at the different Hanukkiot (menorahs). What is the origin story of each?

How do you tell the Hanukkah story? Your own story? How might we help a child tell their story?

What makes this moment special to you? How might we bring this story to our response to the foster care crisis?

What is the power of a spark in our souls? Can we bring that spark to a stranger who needs it?

The candle blessing talks of the miracles in our days. What are some **miracles** in your life?

Dreidl is a game of chance. What role has chance played in your life? How do you respond to randomness?

Could you imagine having a foster child here with you, their face flickering in the light?

A Covenant of Miracles

Shabbat 21b

What is Hanukkah, and why are lights kindled on Hanukkah? When the Greeks entered the Sanctuary they defiled all the oils. And when the Hasmoneans emerged victorious they searched and found only one cruse of oil that was undisturbed by the Greeks. There was sufficient oil there to light the candelabrum for only one day. A miracle occurred and they lit the candelabrum from it for eight days.

מאי חנוכה? דתנו רבנן: בכ"ה בכסליו יומי דחנוכה
תמניא
אינון דלא למספד בהון ודלא להתענות בהון. שכשנכנסו
יונים 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

Rabbi Laura Geller

"The miracle wasn't that the oil lasted an additional seven days, but rather that those ancestors lit the first wick at all, without being certain that the light would last long enough to complete the rededication of the Temple. The miracle was that they took the chance, a risk, a leap of faith. They took the first step even though they were not sure they had enough resources to succeed. What is the real miracle of Chanukah? It is the miracle of human courage that empowers us to take risks for the future even in our imperfect, uncertain world. It is the courage, even in the darkest of times, to create our own light"

Questions for Discussion

- How might these interpretations of the Hanukkah miracle shed light on each other?
- What does it mean that God waits for our engagement?
 - What does it mean to "activate" God?
- What is my "small jar of oil" — something good and pure that I carry even through difficulty?
- How might we understand foster kids and families through the lens of these views of Hanukkah?