

A HANUKKAH SERVICE FOR THE FAMILY

by

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and

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(Revised, November, 1972 Reines)

Institute of Creative Judaism

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Creative Symbolism Series

1970

Institute of Creative Judaism (C)

SONG

Reader

The world about is a place of wonder. Whenever we pause to look, we see that it has become different. During the past months, something has been happening to our days and nights. We are all aware the weather has changed. The cool of fall and the cold of winter have replaced the warmth of spring and summer. Still, something else, something interesting, even important, has been happening to every day and every night. Yes, -- the days have become shorter, and the nights longer. During the summer, daylight would stay for work and play until very late. But now darkness comes all too quickly, before light's joys and day's pleasures are complete.

Group

At this time of year, the sun sets earlier than at any other time. Why is this so? Why do the days now become short and cold? Why does night so quickly fall?

Reader

The reason is that in its many changes throughout time, this is the way the universe has come to be. Out of the power of creation have come heaven and earth. Orbiting the sun, first one portion of earth, and then another, receives the rays of changing days and seasons. When the sun's rays come full and direct to our share of earth the days are long and the air is warm; when the rays become indirect and thin, the days grow short, and the air is cold. This is our season of the sun's thin rays, and all about it is darker and colder.

SONG OR DANCE

Group

Is it not sad that our world must change? The flowers die and the trees become bare. The warm days and green grass of summer were so pleasant. When the skies turn gray, how lonely we all can be.

Reader

Yes, it is true, there can be sadness and loneliness in the cold skies of winter. Yet, if we but think about it, we see there can be happiness, too. This is why we are delighted that Hanukkah comes just at this time of year.

Group

Hanukkah teaches us that we can bring the light and warmth of happiness out of darkness and cold. Hanukkah also teaches us, however, that this is not easy to do. Happiness is not a gift others alone can give us. We ourselves must have courage and work for it very hard.

Reader

This is the lesson of Hanukkah: If we have courage and work hard, we can bring happiness to ourselves and to others.

Reader and Group

Let us remember, too, we are not alone when we work to bring happiness. Nature gives us plants and animals, oceans, and stars. In the community of man, we find many who love us and help us with our task. Let us name together and think about some of those who are very important in our lives.

Parents

Family

Teachers

Friends

Reader

The lights of Hanukkah are very bright and very deep. They can bring us many messages, some private, for ourselves alone, others public, which we share with others. Can we not all share this message together?

Reader and Group

Just as the Hanukkah lights bring brightness to darkness and warmth to cold, so do they call us at the start of the winter season to bring happiness and gladness into our lives and the lives of others.

(Group rises)

Reader and Group

(Recite and then sing Hebrew together)

Barchoo et adonai ha'mevah-rach.

May we, each of us, be a blessing to one another.

Reader

Bahrooch adonai ha'mevah-rach l'olam vah-ed.

May all life be blessed by our kindness and our love.

(Group is seated)

Reader

Hanukkah is so special a holiday, it is always pleasant to tell about the way it began. There are many ways to understand the story of Hanukkah. But let us tell the story in such a way that we can learn one of its most important lessons.

A long time ago, -- over 2,000 years ago, the Jews lived in the land of Judah, which we now call Israel. Life was not very easy for them. Their country had been captured by the Syrians, and the Jews were forced to do whatever the Syrians commanded. The name of the Syrian king was Antiochus Epiphanes. Antiochus Epiphanes did many things the Jews did not like, and he also made the Jews do many things they did not want to do. One day especially he did something that made them very angry.

Group

The city in which the Jews had their great temple was Jerusalem. In this temple, the Jews of Judah practiced their religion. Their religion was different from the religion of Jews today, but they believed it was true, and they wanted the right to believe and act in their temple the way they thought proper. The right to believe and act the way a person wants to is freedom. The Jews wanted freedom, freedom to be religious in the way they thought true.

Reader

Antiochus Epiphanes, however, did not believe in freedom. What did he do? He took an idol that he liked, a great big statue, and he placed it in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. Antiochus then told the Jews they had to bow down to the idol and tell it how wonderful it was. No one, he said, would be allowed to refuse to do this. The Jews became very, very angry. They did not believe in the idol, and they did not think any statue should be told how wonderful it is. They only wanted to worship what they believed in.

Group

But Antiochus said the Jews had to worship the idol. With soldiers and spears he took away the Jews' religious freedom. So, to regain their freedom and their temple, the Jews saw they would have to go to war and fight against Antiochus. They fought very bravely. Among the leaders of the Jews was a family named the Maccabees, made up of a priest named Mattathias and his five sons. Judah Maccabee, the third son, became the chief leader of the Jews. After fighting very bravely, the Jews finally won the freedom to take the idol out of their temple, and to practice their religion as they believed it true.

Reader

A new altar was built in the temple, and all new ornaments were made. When they used the new altar for the first time, there was a great celebration, and the great candlestick of the temple was lit. The Jews were so happy with their freedom, they celebrated for eight days with songs and festivities. This was the first Hanukkah. We still celebrate Hanukkah at the season the Jews of long ago celebrated it, and we still find the lighting of candlesticks on Hanukkah very important and very beautiful.

SONG

Reader and Group

The story of the first Hanukkah shows there are different kinds of cold and darkness. There are the cold and darkness outside when the temperature falls and night comes. Also, there are the cold and darkness inside when our feelings are angry or hurt, and others do not share with us nor we with them. As we turn **now** to the lighting of the Hanukkah candles, let us open our feelings and thoughts to their flames, and think of the many wonderful things they can say and teach to our hearts and minds.

(Group rises)

Reader (recites)

Bahrooch atah adonai, elohenu melech ha'olam, asher
kidishanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivahnu l'hadleek nehr shell
Hanukkah.

Group

Blessed is the love of freedom and truth that inspired
our people to kindle the Hanukkah lights.

Reader

Bahrooch atah adonai, elohenu melech ha-oh-lam, she-
ah-sah neeseem l'avotenu ba ya meem ha heim ba'zman hazeh.

Group

Blessed is the power and courage of man to do great
and mighty things.

Reader

Bahrooch atah adonai, elohenu melech ha'olam, sh-hecheeawnu
v'keeyehmahnu, v'higeeahnu la'zman hazeh.

Group

Blessed is the holiday of Hanukkah, and may we again
enjoy its beauty and teaching next year at this very
same season.