

MACCABIYADA: OIL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

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Hannukah

Channukkah

Hanukka

Chanukka

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Hanukah

HISTORY: Maccabees and Antiochus IV

Hanukka - known as Holiday of Rededication -celebrates the successful revolution of the Hasmonean family - the priest Mattathias and his five sons - against the oppression of the Seleucid King of Syria. Antiochus IV who becomes king in 180 BCE, loots the , massacres Jews and seeks to outlaw Judaism and replace it with paganism.

In 167 BCE, under the leadership of the oldest son, Judah Maccabee, (The Hammer) the revolt begins. In 165 BCE the is recaptured and rededicated. The festival of Hanukka was instituted by Judah Maccabee and his brothers to celebrate this moment. When the fire had been kindled anew upon the altar and the lamps of the candlestick lit, the dedication of the altar was celebrated for eight days with sacrifices and songs (1 Macc. iv. 36). This leads to the name, Festival of Lights.

What are Maccabiyada games?

Held in every four years, the Maccabia Games is named for Jewish warrior Judah Maccabee who fought against the ancient Greeks. The original modern Maccabia Games was held March 28 to , and they have a wonderful history.

History of the Modern Maccabia Games

The Maccabia Games are quadrennial Jewish Olympics, held in the year following the Olympic Games. Every four years, the best Jewish athletes from throughout the world compete in Open, Masters, Juniors, and Disabled competitions.

The Maccabia is staged under the auspices of the Maccabi World Union (MWU), a worldwide youth and sports organization devoted to furthering Jewish identity and traditions through cultural, social, and educational activities. The MWU is headquartered in Israel.

The concept of the Maccabia Games was the brainchild of 15-year old Russian-born Yosef Yekutieli. The Eretz Yisroel teenager so energized by news of the 1912 Olympic Games that he conceived the fanciful notion of a worldwide Olympics for Jewish athletes in . With little encouragement, and not a small amount of ridicule, Yekutieli spent the next ten years developing details of his unique idea.

In 1928, Yekutieli presented his far-fetched proposal to the Jewish National Fund, with the notion that the Maccabia Games be organized to commemorate the 1800th anniversary of the Bar Kochba Rebellion (Jewish revolt against the Romans). Coincidentally, the Maccabi organization was, at the same time, formulating ideas to provide a means of participation by athletes living in the British Mandate of Palestine in important international sporting events; one that would also act as a form of international recognition of as the Jewish National Home.

Yekutieli's Maccabiada, as the Games were originally called, was the right idea at the right time. With the hecature of the Eretz Israel Soccer Association, other sports groups fell in line to give the proposed Games their blessings. But approval of the ruling British Palestine High Commissioner was the final hurdle to realization.

In the Fall of 1931, appointed Sir Arthur "Andy" Wauchope High Commissioner of . Contrary to previous High Commissioners, Sir Arthur admired the achievements of Zionist Palestine, including the burgeoning Jewish sports movement. The new High Commissioner gladly extended his patronage to the Maccabiada, on condition that it host Arab

and official British Mandate athletes, as well as Jewish sportsmen. The Maccabiada was scheduled for March 1932.

With approval came the next conundrum: reaching the world Jewish community with news of this unique sports extravaganza. So, in a world absent television, the internet, significant radio, and common language print media, two delegations of Jewish motor-bikers set off from Tel Aviv on an epic promotional tour to the Jewish communities of , where most Jews lived.

The first troupe of promoters hit the road in 1930, biking from Tel Aviv to (). The second set of riders left Tel Aviv a year later for . Yekutieli, himself, rode with one of the delegations.

On the second tour, May 10 to , the intrepid Maccabia bikers covered 5,825 miles (9,375 kilometers). From Tel Aviv, they traveled across the Sinai desert through Cairo and Alexandria (Egypt); hopped a ship to Salonika (Greece); then on to Gorna, Sofia, (Bulgaria); Belgrade, Novy, Sad (Serbia), Osijek and Zagreb (Croatia)*; through Vienna and Linz (Austria) to Nuremburg and Frankfurt (Germany); through Metz to Paris (France); and by ferry to Brighton and the English cities of London, Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds; to Glasgow (Scotland); and then home via Beirut (Lebanon). Wherever they went, they announced the “Jewish Olympics”, the Maccabia, taking place the following spring in Eretz (the). (*, and merged as in 1929.)

The original Maccabia was held March 28 to . Its overwhelming success guaranteed its permanent future. Originally conceived as a quadrennial event, Maccabia II was moved up a year to 1935 because of the rising tide of Nazism in . The rumblings of World War II forced postponement of the third Maccabia. The delay was 15 years. The Games were reborn in 1950 in the new State of Israel, and Maccabia #4 was held in 1953. Thereafter, the Maccabia established its current quadrennial formula, held the year following the Summer Olympic Games.

Your Local Maccabiyada Games

This is not a Carnival with which we celebrate on Purim. Rather, it is a series of games or contests conducted at “participation stations” for the most part in which you challenge yourself, compete against others. At the same

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time, these are really “learning stations” where contestants are participants who review the meaning and message of Hanukka.

1. **Set up “game areas”** or activity areas throughout the building. Don't restrict yourself. Restrict food and drink to appropriate areas - social hall, kitchen and catering areas.
2. **Dreidel games**, including contests between 2-4 persons or teams. It is recommended that you use a modern dreidel with the message that a “Great Miracle Happened Here” as opposed to a “Great Miracle Happened There.” This is also an opportunity to teach.

The Driedle (Sevivon)

Dreidel is a game of luck played with a spinning top called a dreidel, or Sevivon in . The dreidel is a four-sided spinning top with a different Hebrew letter on each side.

Outside of , dreidels have the letters nun, gimel, hay, shin. These stand for "Nes Gadol Haya Sham" which means, "a great miracle happened there." In , dreidels have the letters nun, gimel, hay, pay. These stand for "Nes Gadol Haya Po" which means "a great miracle happened here."

The Dreidel Tradition

The Dreidel is the most traditional game played on Hanukka. The dreidel goes back to the time of the Syrians. The Syrians prohibited the Jews from studying Torah. When the Syrians saw a group of Jews together, they checked to see that they were not studying. The Jews would hide their books and take out their dreidels and trick the Syrians into thinking they were just playing a game

How to play.

It is a gambling game so some stakes are needed! Anything can be used, but it is often chocolate coins (Hanukka gelt). All players get an equal amount of chocolate coins. All players put one coin in the pot in the center.

Then players take turns spinning the dreidel. The player acts according to the letter, which is facing up when the dreidel stops spinning.

If the dreidle lands on the letter, follow the “Yiddish:”

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- **nun:** Player does nothing “nisht” or “nothing”
- **gimel:** Player takes pot “ganz” or “everything”
- **hay:** Player takes half “halb” or “half”
- **shin:** (outside of) Player must put one coin “shtel” or “pay”
- **Pay:** (in) Put one coin in “Pay” or pay one coin

The winner is the person with the most coins at the end of the game.

3. **Name that tune.** One person at a time or a contest between 2-3 participants tries to identify Hanukka tunes and also different Jewish music. Don't hesitate to include Nusach and Trup melodies. Each melody is played one note at a time after each contestant claims to be able to “name that tune.” An alternative approach is to play the melody one note at a time and whoever thinks that they can name the tune will speak up or “buzz in.” For assistance, perhaps your Hazzan will prepare a CD with all of the relevant music played or sung slowly for review – driving to school, playing individually or downloading from the synagogue website.
4. **Design a Poster.** Let each person create a poster on 11x22 poster paper with a message for Hanukka – either the synagogue selects the message or the contest is open-ended for any message. At the end of the Maccabiyada, a panel of artists and educators will select the winners whose works will be mounted on poster board, displayed and ultimately returned to the winners for display in their own home. Photographs should be made of each and displayed on the synagogue website.
5. **Questions and Answers** – facts, dates, words, names, events – on the history of Hanukka can be asked of contestants in any game format based upon television game shows: Jeopardy, 10,000 Pyramid, Wheel of Fortune, etc.
6. **“Athletic Games.”** If you live in an appropriate climate, consider an Outdoor component for your Maccabiyada. Form teams ala Color War with participants from every age/grade, youngest to oldest. Each contest will be for a different age: thus every team has to include everyone to “play.” For example, “Six year old/ Pre-K” 30 yard run. Also you can have “creative events” each one related to

Hanukka, e.g. one from each age “tagging up” to “light the hanukkiya,” but I would caution against real torches: consider flashlights or chemical lights.

7. Send a “**Hanukka-Gram**” to friends and family through (1) physical messages for anyone present at the Maccabiyada using pre-pinted forms/messages and having volunteers deliver them; and (2) through emails using the synagogue computers. One can also provide the URLs from which each person can download or use on-line convenient Hanukka messages to family and friends via the computer.
8. **Treasure Hunt** in the Library. Set up “topics” and award a win to the participant who can first find a book in which the topic is mentioned, or a “pun” on the topic.
9. **Arts/Crafts**. The classic “Make a Dreidel” and/or “Make a Hanukiya” based upon a variety of craft books.
10. **Take-Home Education**. Provide the necessary Hebrew / English /transliterated texts to take home for the Home Service with which to light the Hanukka Neiroi (candles or oil) and also the additional songs and kavvanot (directed spiritual readings). Be sure that they include instructions for lighting, reading and singing. Once again, a CD can be distributed by the synagogue prepared by the Hazzan of this material in addition to appropriate music.

Blessings and Prayers

Before lighting the candles, special blessings are said:

**Baruch Atta Adonai Eloheynu Melekh Ha-olam Asher
Kiddeshanu Be-mitsvotav Ve-tsivanu Lehadlik Ner Shel
Hanukka**

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe,
who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has
commanded us to kindle the lights of Hanukka.

Followed by:

**Baruch Atta Adonai Eloheynu Melekh Ha-olam She-asa
Nissim La-avoteynu Ba-yyamim Ha-hem Ba-zzman Ha-zze**

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe,
who wrought miracles for our fathers in days of old,
at this season.

**On the 1st night or 1st first time you kindle the Hanukka
lights, recite:**

**Barukh Atta Adonay Eloheynu Melekh Ha-olam She-
hekheyanu Ve-kiymanu Ve-higgi'anu La-zzman Ha-zze**

Blessed are You, the Lord our G-d, King of the
universe, Who has kept us alive, sustained us, and
brought us to this season.

**After kindling the lights, Hanerot Halalu prayer is
recited**

Ha-nerot ha-lalu anach-nu mad-likin
Al ha-nissim vi-al hanif-laot
Al ha-tshu-ot vi-al ha-milchamot
She-asita la'avo-teinu
Ba-yamim ha-heim, ba-zman ha-zeh
Al ye-dey kohan-echa haki-doshim.
Vi-cho'l shmonat ye-mey Hanukka
Ha-nerot ha-lalu kodesh heim,
Ve-ein lanu reshut li-heesh-tamesh ba-hem
Ela leer-otam bilvad
Kedai le-hodot u-li-hallel li-shimcha
Al ni-secha vi-al niflo-techa
vi-al yeshua-techa.

We kindle these lights
For the miracles and the wonders
For the redemption and the battles
Which You performed for our forefathers
In those days at this season
Through Your holy priests.
During all eight days of Hanukka
These lights are sacred
And we are not permitted to make ordinary use of
them
But only to look at them
In order to express thanks and praise to Your great
Name
For Your miracles, Your wonders, and your salvations

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Traditional Hanukka Songs

Maoz Tzur

Maoz tzur yeshua-si
Lecha na-eh li-sha-beyach
Tikone bais ti-fee-lasi
Vi-sham todah ni-za-beyach.

Li-ase ta-chin mat-beyach
Mee-tzar ham-na-beyach
Az eg-more vi-sheer meez-mor
Hanukkat ha-meez-beyach
Az eg-more vi-sheer meez-mor
Hanukkat ha-meez-beyach.

O Rock of my salvation, with delight we praise You.
Restore the where we will bring offerings.
When You will eliminate our enemies,
Then I shall sing at the rededication.

Sivivon, sov, sov, sov

Sivivon, sov, sov, sov Hanukka, hu chag tov
Hanukka, hu chag tov Sivivon, sov, sov, sov!

Chag simcha hu la-am
Nes gadol haya sham
Nes gadol haya sham
Chag simcha hu la-am.

Dreidel, spin, spin, spin.
Hanukka is a great holiday.
It is a celebration for our nation.
A great miracle happened there.

Hanukka, Hanukka

Hanukka, Hanukka
Chag yafeh kol kach
Ohr chaviv, mi-saviv
Gil li-yeled rach.

Hanukka, Hanukka Sivivon, sov, sov
Sov, sov, sov! Sov, sov, sov!
Ma nayim vi-tov.

Hanukka is a great holiday.
Surrounded with lovely light.
Fun for little children.
Dreidel, spin, spin, spin.
How wonderful!

11. **Collections.** Contact collectors in your vicinity – they don't have to be members of your congregation, and they can even be dealers in their respective speciality. There are those who collect – or deal in – (1) postage stamps with the theme of Hanukka or in general; (2) coins and medals; (3) antique or modern art oil lamps; (4) antique or modern art hannukiyot – candles or oil.

12. **The Gift Shop** should make available to Maccabiyada participants books, hanukkiyot, candles, oil equipment for hanukkiyot that can use oil. Similarly, it is a wonderful opportunity for the sale of Jewish gifts for Hanukka.

13. **Food** is a “must” – latkes, sufganiyot (doughnuts) can be sold or given free to participants – prepared as either a Maccabiyada “station” or by a synagogue arm – Womens League, Mens Club, USY group – or all of them working together. Participants can also put their own choice of jelly into the doughnuts, or they can fry their own latkes. Recipes should be available to take home, including creative recipes, e.g. squash latkes, sweet potato latkes, etc.

14. **Vendors** should be invited to make available gifts for purchase, especially books. Hanukka is generally Jewish Book Month. Make sure that catalogs are available – perhaps in the library in order not to conflict with the vendors too much – from United Synagogue Book Service, Jewish Publication Society and other Jewish publishers.

What Are the Prizes For Winning At The Maccabiyada?

It is suggested that “winning” is its own good. However, young people often want to “win something.” Consider using prize tickets that can be used in an auction for Jewish books, hanukkiyot, fancy candles, etc. at the end of the program. “Hanukka gelt” is another possibility. And, there is no end to your own creativity for rewarding individuals and families for participating.

Bibliography

The following are books which contain many ideas specifically directed toward Hanukka from which you can draw to conduct your program.

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