



WHAT'S THE REAL MIRACLE?
FAITH, COURAGE AND INCREASING LIGHT
A Second Nurture Resource for Hanukkah



Talmud Bavli Shabbat 21b

מאי חנוכה?

שֶׁשָּׁנִכְנְסוּ יוֹנִים לְהִכָּל טְמֵאוֹ כָּל הַשְּׁמָנִים שֶׁבְּהִיכָל. וְכִשְׁגָּבְרָה מַלְכוּת בֵּית הַשְּׁמוֹנָא וְנִצְחָוּם, בָּדְקוּ וְלֹא מָצְאוּ אֶלָּא פֶּה אֶחָד שֶׁל שֶׁמֶן שֶׁהָיָה מוֹנֵחַ בְּחוֹתָמוֹ שֶׁל כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל, וְלֹא הָיָה בּוֹ אֶלָּא לְהַדְלִיק יוֹם אֶחָד. נַעֲשֶׂה בּוֹ נִס וְהַדְלִיקוּ מִמֶּנּוּ שְׁמוֹנֶה יָמִים.

The Gemara asks: What is Hanukkah?

When the Greeks entered the Sanctuary they defiled all the oils that were in the Sanctuary. And when the Hasmonean monarchy overcame them and emerged victorious over them, they searched and found only one cruse of oil that was placed with the seal of the High Priest. And there was sufficient oil there to light the candelabrum for only one day. A miracle occurred and they lit the candelabrum from it eight days.

Hanukkah Liturgy

עַל הַנִּסִּים, עַל הַפְּרָקָן, עַל הַגְּבוּרוֹת, עַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת, עַל
הַמַּלְחָמוֹת, שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזֶמֶן הַזֶּה.

We thank you also for the miracles, for the redemption,
for the mighty deeds and saving acts, wrought by you,
as well as for the wars which you waged for our fathers
in days of old, at this season.

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"



In the Hanukkah blessing we thank God for the miracles or the small overcoming great powers. The Maccabean fighting force overcame the Greek army and the tiny drop of oil overcame the laws of physics. Such seemingly impossible feats are credited to God in our recollections and our worship. Rabbi Laura Geller sees another kind of miracle—the spark of human vision and courage.

- Are those two kinds of miracles mutually exclusive?
 - Why or why not?
 - If they are linked, how is that so?
- There are many stories in which we "activate" God. We reach out and God responds.
 - Why do we need to be the agent in order for God to actualize a miracle?
 - Why does God wait for our engagement?
- How might this idea of human beings activating God apply to kids in foster care?
 - If we "jump in" might we activate the divine potential within them?
 - How might that play out?
 - Why also here does God wait for our engagement?





Our community can be a place in which fostering and adoption are a norm. Whether you want to foster, adopt, or be part of our community support system, there is a role for you.

- Families are supported before, during, and after the licensing and adoption processes
- Foster and adopted children have peers in our community with similar backgrounds
- The values of foster and adoption are integrated into our community culture
- Our whole community wraps around the families in support as they become foster and adoptive parents
- We will partner with the best and most well-aligned local social service partners
- We are all enriched—both by our new, young members and our growing capacity as a synagogue to support our foster and adoptive families



Second Nurture creates a community within our community — and expands our vision of what family and belonging truly mean.
- Cohort Member