



Hanukkah

It is December again! I asked each person in our family what they think of when they hear the word "Hanukkah". The responses were as expected; bright candles, happiness, cleansing of the Temple, dreidels, and wait...WHAT...Christmas?

We have been celebrating Hanukkah (Chanukah), since 2010. Every year, there is such excitement in the air surrounding it. We look forward to playing the traditional Dreidel game and making gelt chocolates. We tease each other to claim who will win the rounds of dreidel each night we play. We love to read about and watch videos on the history of the Maccabees with how Hanukkah came to be. And I can't forget the foods! Latkes, sufganiyots (jelly doughnuts), and chocolate coins.

So, why is Christmas still associated with our celebration of what the Maccabees did in history?

Traditions. They are important acts and events in every culture. It is the handing down of beliefs from one generation to the next. They can bring meaning to one's reasons of life. They are powerful. They are heartstrings that emotionally attach us to the way we believe and live.

If you think about it, really, the only thing the two celebrations have in common is the time of year. You would think that after 5 years, my children would not have given me the answer of Christmas. But, what surprised me more than anything was not the answer, but "who" it came

from. It was my youngest! He is the one that has no memories of Christmas celebrations.

His association just shows how much of an influence the world has on us and our children. As parents, we need to remember the high calling upon our lives with a responsibility of training our children in Yah's ways.

There are many families right now going thru torn emotions with the celebration of Christmas at hand. We have many different dynamics represented within each family unit. Maybe you have a husband that differs from your understanding, extended family that rocks the boat considerably bringing division and lack of love, or children whom you see are confused and can not understand you taking away their memories of the traditions that your family enjoyed together.

No matter the issues anyone is dealing with, it is HARD. Our hearts long after Yah's ways and to be separate from the world but we are constantly being thrown into the midst of it by various means.

This time of year is when families tend to connect more. With that, I believe that is why we see Hanukkah becoming more and more like a Jewish Christmas. It has become a bridge for many families to help them cross over from one tradition to another.

Tradition; very powerful.

There are many mixed emotions on how to celebrate Hanukkah. We all have our opinions. Some do gift giving and decorating with blue and white lights while others may not. Whatever traditions are decided within the home, they are heartstrings that will associate this feast in remembering what YHWH has done for His people.

Though Hanukkah is not a commanded feast that Yah has spoken to us to observe. It does appear it was observed in Yeshua's day. Yet, what is it all about? What is the significance that it represents? What is it that in Yeshua's day they wanted to remember even though it was not

commanded?

Let's review the basics of how Hanukkah came to be. Summing it up, Antiochus killed over 40,000 Jews and tried to Hellenize (making them live according to Greek customs) those who were left. After the desecration of the temple with a statue of a Greek god and sacrifices of pigs on the altar, Mattityahu, an Israelite, killed a priest who was sacrificing a pig in his town. He then formed a 4000 or so army to fight the Greeks. They fought for three years and won with Yah's help against a 47,000 troop Greek army. He lost his life but his 5 sons took lead and Yehudah the Maccabee (Hammer) led the way to regain Jerusalem and the Temple again.

Hanukkah is a word that means "to dedicate". When they regained the temple, they got rid of the idols and all that profaned Yah's name. It was an act of cleansing.

YHWH brought victory and Israel was able to re-dedicate Yah's temple. They dedicated the Temple over an 8 day period as in the first dedication located in 1 Kings.

1Kings 7:51 Thus all the work that King Solomon did on the house of YHWH was finished. And Solomon brought in the things that David his father had dedicated, the silver, the gold, and the vessels, and stored them in the treasuries of the house of YHWH. 1Kings 8:1 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the fathers' houses of the people of Israel, before King Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of YHWH out of the city of David, which is Zion. 2 And all the men of Israel assembled to King Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. 1Kings 8:3 And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark

1Kings 8:65 So Solomon held the feast at that time, and all Israel with him, a great assembly, from Lebo-hamath to the Brook of Egypt, before YHWH our God, seven days. 1Kings 8:66 On the eighth day he sent the

people away, and they blessed the king and went to their homes joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that YHWH had shown to David his servant and to Israel his people

Today , as we celebrate Yah and what the Maccabees did, during this Feast of Dedication, we focus on us being His temple. We are the Temple of His Holy Spirit. What have we placed in our hearts and minds that needs to be removed? Needs to be purified? It is a time of reflection and an opportunity to get out all that is in our lives that profanes YHWH's name.

I encourage you in our traditions we choose to use, make it a point to bring meaning to Yah's ways with the things that belong to Him. The world around us has been saturated in false gods and so many can not see the demarcation line between His ways and pagan god traditions. Remember, traditions are powerful. I believe that is why YHWH instructs us to observe his Holy Days and "how" to keep them. He created us and knows how we are made up. Imagine that!

This Hanukkah, may you rededicate your life and encourage others to be guided towards our hope we have in YHWH.

Growing in Him,
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