

Hanukkah: Miracles and Hidden Light

prepared by Rabbi Josh

1)

מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ, שְׂאֵתָהּ הוּא, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ... נוֹדָה לָךְ וְנִסְפָּר תְּהִלָּתְךָ, עַל חַיֵּינוּ
הַמְּסוּרִים בְּיָדְךָ, וְעַל נְשְׁמוֹתֵינוּ הַפְּקוּדוֹת לָךְ, וְעַל נְסִיךְ שְׁבָכְל יוֹם עִמָּנוּ, וְעַל
נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְטוֹבוֹתֶיךָ שְׁבָכְל עֵת, עֶרֶב וּבֹקֵר וְצַהֲרַיִם...

We give thanks to you that you are THE ALL-MERCIFUL our God...We acknowledge you and declare your praise, and thank you for our lives entrusted to your hand, our souls placed in your care, for your miracles that are with us every day, and for your wonders and your goodness that are with us every hour, morning, noon, and night...

(Amidah, "Modim")

2) Rabbi Arthur Green, *Judaism for the World*

"..the word *nes* really means 'banner.' The miracle is a 'banner moment,' one that sticks out, rising above the rest, and calls out: 'Here I see the divine presence! Let me wave its banner!'"

3) Wendell Berry, *The Art of the Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays*

"The miraculous is not extraordinary but the common mode of existence. It is our daily bread. Whoever really has considered the lilies of the field or the birds of the air and pondered the improbability of their existence in this warm world within the cold and empty stellar distances will hardly balk at the turning of water into wine — which was, after all, a very small miracle. We forget the greater and still continuing miracle by which water (with soil and sunlight) is turned into grapes."

4) "There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle."-Albert Einstein

5) "Instructions for living a life. Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it." -Mary Oliver

6) Rabbi Shalom Noach Berezovsky, the Slonimer Rebbe (1911-2000)

The essence of the Greek war to destroy the Jews was by means of darkening the eyes of Israel. The Greeks knew that they would not be able to successfully defeat the Jews by military means--rather only by darkening their eyes...

There are people who, despite the fact that they involve themselves with Torah and the service of God, walk in darkness. These people do not perceive light and are considered [spiritually] dead. The purpose of human beings is that they see with a clear

lens the Divine light which shines within all Creation. As we find in the origins of Creation, 'and the earth was unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep...and God said, Let there be light; and there was light. God saw that the light was good...' (Gen. 1:2-4) This light was not physical light, but rather Divine light...

Within a glimpse of this light, a person sees the power of the Creator within all of Creation. [With this vision] a person does not perceive "the world of separation" in which all things in the world are separate. Rather, [a person sees that] everything is One through the supernal power that enlivens everything. [When a person sees with this vision] there is no longer any place for 'unformed and void and darkness.' And this is the essence of the Greek war--that they darkened the eyes of Israel...

(Translation mostly by R. Jacob Fine)