

DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

Metaphors are a powerful tool we use to accurately capture and communicate ideas to each other. One of the most powerful metaphors we employ in our lives is that of darkness and light. It is perhaps the Metaphor most used by mystics from the beginning of time.

Sometimes we feel the world around us is a dark place and its forces are gathering strength. Yes, we are naturally inclined to be optimistic and to believe that in the end good will prevail. However this hope seems sometimes to be somewhat esoteric and that in the real world it is those who employ the darker side of their characters that come out on top.

It is this ongoing battle that is the story of Chanukah. It is this continuous struggle between the forces of darkness on the one hand, that seem so powerful and ruthless, and the deeper inherent forces of good that exist inside each and every one of us. Each generation is presented with a unique challenge with the forces of evil taking on a unique form and shape. However at the core is our belief, that inherent in all darkness lay the seeds of light with which we can ultimately transform darkness into light

It is for this reason that when the Maccabees returned victorious to the temple and wished to rededicate its service by kindling the Menorah, they searched for pure uncontaminated oil, even though regular (contaminated) oil was permitted. They did so because they knew, that just as the Jew, however indifferent or estranged he or she might be to his or her people or tradition, deep down the soul remains pure and uncontaminated. So too they knew that even though a determined secular force had succeeded in contaminating the temple and its oil, the Jewish people would certainly find pure oil with which to light the Menorah which was infinitely more powerful.

This theme of transforming darkness into light sums up Jewish life throughout the ages, particularly in challenging times. What is imperative to remember is that we are not observers in this most important endeavour; but each and every one of us are players on whom the rest of the team depend. Playing the most important game of all - a game which we can't afford to lose - the game of life.

Warm regards
Yosef Vogel

14th December 2012

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Shabbat Begins: 3:36 pm

Shabbat Ends: 4:46 pm