



UP N' COMIN

**SATURDAY, DEC 16TH
GLOW PARTY FOR TEENS**

**10PM - MIDNIGHT
ANISE TAPAS - LAS VEGAS**

**NEW YEAR'S WEEKEND
WINTER RETREAT
BRYCE CANYON**

**SEASON 2
EPISODE 13
DEC 16th, 2017**

Candle Lighting:

Las Vegas 4:09
Lake Tahoe 4:21
San Diego 4:26
Los Angeles 4:27
Phoenix 5:04

have a Nageela Shabbos

Parshas
Miketz
Chanukah
5778

A Kid Friendly Weekly Publication of Nageela West Coast Joyfully Jewish Experiences

Happily Ever After? NOT!

by Rabbi Dani Locker

The Maccabees were awesome, right? Really, they were! They were the heroes fighting the forces of darkness. It seems that a large portion of our Chanukah focus is on these brave champions of our faith. Nachmanides (Genesis 49:10) goes one step further in asserting that were it not for the Hasmoneans (the family name of the "Maccabees", which was their Twitter handle), Torah would have been forgotten from the Jewish people. He labels them "pious ones of the divine." That's pretty cool. Nobody has ever called me a pious one of the divine (although I have been called "Hey, Jewish guy!" which is a close second).

Where is this remarkable family now? What has become of these heroes? After their stunning victory and the miraculous oil burning marathon, the Hasmoneans spent their lives trying to repair our nation, acting as the new royal family. Several generations of Hasmonean kings ruled in Israel, until the last members of their line were assassinated by the usurper Herod (Talmud, Bava Basra).

They had been such an inspiring group of leaders, how could they have met such a horrible end? Nachmanides explains that despite their great deeds and goodness, they made a big booboo (the technical term for a critical error in judgement). The Jewish monarchy was supposed to only



survive through the family of King David, a descendant of Judah. Despite their good intentions, the Hasmoneans, as Kohanim, descendants of Levi, had no right to rule. This isn't just some kind of old fashioned hierarchy, there is a good reason for it.

A Kohen has an incredibly valuable position as a spiritual leader among our nation. They were our teachers and

spiritual guides. Doing a different job, even an important one, leaves their main job incomplete. The Torah study and teaching would obviously suffer.

I see two important lessons in the Maccabean downfall: One is that there are no free passes, and there's no retirement age for goodness. If you're an NFL quarterback and you win a Super Bowl, you can retire and get into the hall of fame. In real life, doing something awesome doesn't guarantee you success, unless those good deeds continue and grow. Even the greatest of people must continue to raise the bar for themselves until their final day.

There's another lesson hiding in these words of Nachmanides (supported by the Jerusalem Talmud, Horeyos):

The Hasmoneans were not unfit to rule because they weren't good enough or worthy. On the contrary, the Kohen is the most respected of all Jewish bloodlines. It was precisely because ruling hurt their main mission that they failed. G-d has granted each person with a purpose, and the talents to fill that purpose. Doing something else that's also "good" might take away from that purpose. It's important to know what we're built for; what our mission is, and of course, know how to make a really good latke.

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Holidaydreams

Greek Yogurt

ramblings about
the holidays

I found myself at the local supermarket buying ingredients for our Chanukah cookoff. One of the recipes called for Greek yogurt, so I headed to the refrigerator section and picked up one with a Kosher symbol on the container. Then I noticed the name of the brand, "GREEK GODS." I started to put it back, thinking it might be inappropriate to use this yogurt for a Chanukah recipe. This wasn't just a knee jerk reaction to reject anything with the word Greek in it. The truth is that our enemies during the time of the Chanukah story weren't even Greek, they were Syrian! The battle of the Maccabees was not against the Greeks.

It was, however, a battle against Greek religion, philosophy and culture, which the Syrians followed. The Greek gods were the popular belief of the time, and it was this that the Maccabees fought against. So it was precisely these GREEK GODS that I had trouble considering for a Chanukah menu component.

Then something struck me (no, it was not a Zeus hurled lightning bolt). YOGURT (and no, I don't mean that yogurt struck me, either. That would have been wayyy messy). YOGURT! The great and powerful culture of Ancient Greece has been reduced to yogurt (and Rick Riordan books). The Greek gods have become an entertaining

ON CHANUKAH WE CELEBRATE OUR
VICTORY OVER THE GREEKS.



SO WE CAME UP WITH OUR OWN
VERSION OF THE OLYMPICS

fictional experience for young readers and dairy lovers. As much as I love me some Camp Half Blood, it's entertaining precisely because it's faded to mythology. And spoiled milk products. We're still here! We're lighting the Menorah, the same exact way we did 2,200 years ago. We're playing dreidel and eating oily food as they did millennia ago. And we can do it with Greek gods yogurt, because it's the greatest example of how relevant we still are in contrast to the culture and theology of the ancient Greeks. So go ahead, use Greek yogurt on that donut glaze- I dairy you!



This past Thursday may have been the third night of Chanukah, but it was an incredible first for the Jewish community of the West Coast.

Some hundreds of Jewish families call the neighborhoods surrounding Lake Tahoe their year round Home. Spanning California and Northern Nevada, Lake Tahoe is a beautiful, secluded vacation spot.

Thursday, Tahoe experienced a different kind of beauty as Nageela West Coast held our first event in the area. Over 50 people, including 30

children joined Rabbi Locker and local volunteers for a night of dreidel, singing, Torah and candle lighting at a Home overlooking the famed lake. A leadership group of committed families have already begun discussions about bring Nageela programs to the area on a more consistent basis.

We hope to engage many previously ambivalent Jewish families in exciting and meaningful programs.

To quote one child, "I had no idea there were so many Jews in the whole Tahoe!"

Nageela West breaks the mold of old school Jewish outreach by providing out- of- the- box social and educational programs for Jewish children across the west coast.

Our "questions encouraged" mindset makes Nageela a comfortable learning and growing environment for Jewish children of all backgrounds.

