**Small Acts, Bright Flames:**

**Chanukah’s Timeless Message**



**#1**

**Hanukkah (Chanukah) Aish.com**

Hanukkah (Chanukah), the Festival of Lights, begins Wednesday evening, December 25, 2024.

It celebrates the Jewish victory over the Syrian-Greek regime of Antiochus.

The Greeks attempted to Hellenize the Jews and abolish many Jewish practices, and many Jews willingly complied.

But a small band of the devout, led by Matitiyahu the Priest and his son Judah Maccabee, led a successful rebellion against them.

When they recaptured the Temple and relit the Menorah, a vial of pure oil sufficient to burn one day burned for eight days straight – the eight days of Hanukkah.

We light the menorah for the eight days of Hanukkah to commemorate the miracle.

A menorah is lit in every household, and also in the synagogue. Special blessings are recited when we light the menorah.

**Midrash Tanchuma, Behaalos’cha 5**

*A small light can dispel much darkness.*

**Question: The Maccabees didn’t wait for widespread support to act; they started with a small group. What does this teach us about the power of small, determined efforts to create change?**

**#2**

**Rabbi Israel Salanter (founder of Jewish Ethical Mindfulness Movement)**

When I was a young man, I wanted to change the world. But I found it was difficult to change the world, so I tried to change my country.

When I found I couldn’t change my country, I began to focus on my town. I discovered that I couldn’t change the town.

As I grew older, I tried to change my family.

Now, as an old man, I realize the only thing I can change is myself.

I’ve come to recognize that if long ago I had started with myself, then I could have made an impact on my family.

And, my family and I could have made an impact on our town. And that, in turn, could have changed the country and we could all indeed have changed the world!

**Questions:**

 1. **Do you believe an individual’s actions can make a difference in a world where problems often feel overwhelming? Why or why not? Give examples.**

 **2. Have you ever seen an individual in your life take a stand that inspired others to follow? What made their actions so impactful?**

 **3. What are some small, everyday actions you can take to create positive change?**

 **4. The Maccabees acted despite overwhelming odds. What lessons can we draw about personal responsibility when faced with seemingly insurmountable challenges?**

 **5. How does the menorah’s growing light inspire us to make consistent efforts over time, even when we start small?**

 **6. The oil for the menorah was thought to be insufficient, yet it lasted eight days. How can we find strength to persevere even when our resources seem limited?**