

Chanuka - Light Up My Life!

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There was a number one hit song in the '80s by Debbie Boone called "Light Up My Life". Was she singing about the Chanuka lights?

Chanuka is the symbol of the Divine Light in the human soul, as Shlomo HaMelech says in Mishlei, "The candle of G-D is the soul of the human being." We are part of G-d's Endless Light - the EIN SOF.

Why does Rambam call Chanuka the most precious Mitzva? After all, it's not even a Torah Mitzva, only Rabbinic. The answer is because the Chanuka miracle happened through SHEMEN (oil). The word SHEMEN is an acronym for Shabbat, Mila and Nida, which sum up the entire Jewish religion, which is all about sanctifying time, place, and our body. On Shabbat we sanctify time by making Kiddush and Havdala. We light the Menorah in our home, thereby sanctifying our place. Through the Mitzvot of Mila and Nida we sanctify our bodies.

The Mishna in Avot teaches, "There are three crowns: The crown of Torah, the crown of Kehuna and the crown of monarchy." Corresponding to these three, with which Israel was crowned, there were three crowns on the Temple vessels. The crown of Torah corresponds to the gold crown, which was set on the Ark of Testimony (containing the Two Tablets). The crown of Kehuna corresponds to the

incense altar, for only regarding the Kohanim does it say, "They shall place incense in Your Presence, and consume sacrifices on Your altar" (D'varim 33:10). Finally, the crown of monarchy corresponds to the table in the Mishkan, for the table is a symbol of wealth and royalty (Tehillim 23), also represents the economic and political power of the state.

However, the Mishna adds that there is yet another crown, "the crown of a good name", which "surpasses them all." This crown is not enumerated among the others. Rather, it is kept separate from them and it stands on its own. To what does this crown correspond in the Temple?

The Maharal MiPrague associates this crown with the fourth vessel of the Temple - the pure-gold Menorah. The Menorah has no gold crown encompassing it. Neither is it made of acacia wood inlaid with gold. Rather, the whole Menorah is like a pure golden crown, embellished with golden cups, spheres and flowers. The crown of the Menorah is not something extrinsic to it. The Menorah itself is a crown.

It is the same with a person's good name. It is not an external crown that is placed upon his head. A person's good name touches on his very essence. It includes his whole personality in all its components. It is not an external image, fashioned by public relations professionals, photographers, and journalists.

A person's good name is the reputation that he earns for himself through his

whole life's work, all his deeds, and ventures. That is why this crown of a good name surpasses all the others.

As we light the Menorah on Chanuka, that is the time to focus and reflect on the Light of G-d, which is our eternal soul. 🕯️