

**Reach for Higher Ground: Renewing the Sanctity of Your Synagogue's Purpose**  
**Sulam Texts: Hanukkah 2018/5779**

**1. Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 21b.**

<p>מאי חנוכה דתנו רבנן...וכשגברה מלכות בית חשמונאי ונצחום בדקו ולא מצאו אלא פך אחד של שמן שהיה מונח בחותמו של כהן גדול ולא היה בו אלא להדליק יום אחד.</p>	<p>The Gemara asks: What is Hanukkah? The Gemara answers...when the Hasmonean monarchy overcame the Greeks and emerged victorious over them, they searched and found only one cruse of oil that was placed with the seal of the High Priest, undisturbed by the Greeks. And there was sufficient oil there to light the candelabrum for only one day.</p>
<p>נעשה בו נס והדליקו ממנו שמונה ימים לשנה אחרת קבעום ועשאו ימים טובים בהלל והודאה.</p>	<p>A miracle occurred and they lit the candelabrum from it eight days. The next year the Sages instituted those days and made them holidays with recitation of hallel and special thanksgiving in prayer and blessings.</p>

- *Why do we celebrate Hanukkah, according to this passage in the Talmud?*
- *For what purpose did the rabbis make the remembrance of the miraculous oil a yearly observance?*

**2. Meor Einayim, in *Speaking Torah*, Volume 2, ed. Arthur Green, 194-195.**

God searches for ways that we not be utterly cut off from Him; he miraculously brings the divine presence down...right to where we stand, so that He might restore us and bring us back to YHWH. The oil of the candles refers to wisdom...teaching us with higher mind, enabling us to serve God in a more mindful and contemplative way. All this takes place through the mitzvah of lighting the Hanukkah candles; just as it was then, so it is in every generation when the time for this commandment arrives.

- *What is the symbolism of lighting Hanukkah candles every year, according to the Meor Einayim?*
- *What ways can Hanukkah serve as an opportunity to increase our mindfulness as leaders?*

**3. Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, in *The Light That Unites: A Chanukah Companion*, ed. Aaron Goldscheider.**

Rabbi Soloveitchik taught, "It is not always necessary for an event to be miraculous in order to be great, and not every miraculous event is a great event."

- *How might you connect Rabbi Soloveitchik's teaching with developing increased gratitude as a leader?*

**4. Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey, *How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work*, 194.**

...A ritual can be a vessel in time by which we remember what is important to us. Inspired leadership helps the members of a group to "re-member," to once again take out membership in what the group values and stands for; to "remember," to bring the members back to one cooperating whole.

- *How do Kegan and Lahey use the terms "re-member" and "remember" as an object lesson about leadership?*
- *Describe a time when you needed to remind people why daily work has a larger purpose. How did you handle it?*

**Final Question: How might you use Hanukkah as an opportunity to remind your leadership team about the larger purpose behind the daily grind of management in your congregation?**