

Israel Connection

AN AIPAC HOLIDAY PUBLICATION FOR SYNAGOGUES

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 2 HANUKKAH 5775

Preserving Miracles

THERE IS AN OFT-REPEATED QUIP that “we Jews don’t believe in miracles, we depend on them.” From the earliest days, it seems the Jewish people have survived only through divine miracles. Even in our time, the rebirth of a modern, sovereign and Jewish state of Israel has appeared nothing short of miraculous.

And yet, our sages caution, “*Ain somchin al ha-nes* – We don’t depend on miracles.” (Pessachim 64b).

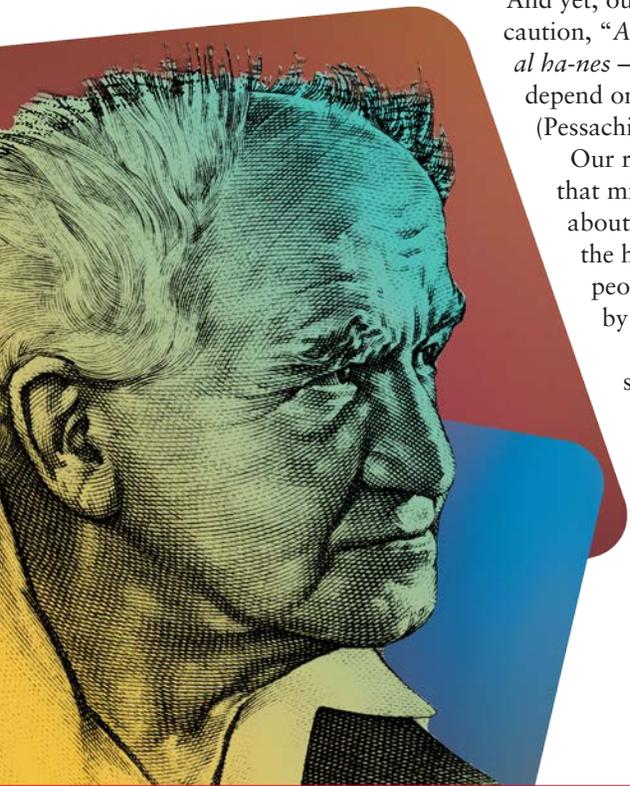
Our rabbis teach us that miracles come about only through the hard work of people inspired by the Divine.

There is a story, perhaps apocryphal, told about professional

golfer Gary Player. According to the tale, Player was out practicing bunker shots one day, when another golfer spotted him sinking each shot with remarkable consistency. “You sure are one lucky guy,” the onlooker said admirably. “Sure am,” Player replied. “And the more I practice, the luckier I get.”

Put another way, we help to create our own luck – our own miracles. As the great philosopher, physician and rabbi Moses Maimonides wrote, “A miracle cannot prove what is impossible. It is useful only to confirm what is possible.” When Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern political Zionism, envisioned a Jewish state in his 1902 book, *Altneuland*, it seemed that only a miracle could make it happen. Through the hard work of many people – some famous, others anonymous – our dream, the state of Israel, came true.

Israel’s first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, once said, “In Israel, in order to be a realist you must believe in miracles.” Ben-Gurion knew that the miracle of the state of Israel came not simply from the hand of God, but equally, or maybe even more so, from the work of our hands. As we celebrate the miracle of Hanukkah, let us each recommit ourselves to keeping the miracle of Israel strong and vibrant.



“In Israel, in order to be a realist you must believe in miracles.” —David Ben-Gurion

Strength in the Bond

FOR GENERATIONS, the Jewish people were forced to confront enemies alone, outnumbered, and overmatched in strength. Indeed, while our celebration of the Hanukkah miracle commemorates the oil that lasted eight days, it also honors the resolve of the small

Maccabees who outlasted a far-superior army to preserve their existence.

In many ways, Israel’s enemies of centuries past remain relevant today—terror armies amassing dangerous weapons on its borders and decreeing its destruction. Thankfully, the Jewish people no longer have to face this threat alone.

Today, Israel looks to the West and finds a trusted partner committed to its enduring security. It finds an America ready and willing to fund technologies like Iron Dome, which helped save countless lives last summer. And it finds a strategic ally committed to the common

advancement of democracy, innovation, freedom and the betterment of the entire world.

To learn more about the many facets of the U.S.-Israel relationship, visit www.aipac.org.

8 ELEMENTS TO AN ENERGY PARTNERSHIP

Among the interests shared by the United States and Israel is a mutual quest for energy security and independence. The two countries collaborate on an array of energy initiatives and work to leverage Israel's vast natural gas discoveries off the Mediterranean Coast. As both allies seek to shake their dependence on foreign energy imports, American and Israeli leaders are working to find innovative solutions that promote long-term energy security.



Expanding Energy Horizons

In August 2014, Tulane University hosted a two-day U.S.-Israel Energy Summit featuring premier American and Israeli academic institutions. "This summit is a big step forward in our work to enhance [our] energy partnership," said Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA), who along with Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) has championed U.S.-Israel energy collaboration. The event launched a first-of-its-kind U.S.-Israel Center of Excellence in Energy and Water, a major provision of the U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014.



The U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperation Program

In July 2014, the House of Representatives passed the Energy and Water appropriations bill for fiscal year 2015, including \$2 million for continued cooperation in areas such as renewable technologies, natural resource development, and alternative fuels. The United States has provided \$9.7 million for this program to date, which is matched dollar-for-dollar by Israel and has set the stage for a long-term strategic energy partnership.



Dramatic Discoveries

In December 2010, drilling off Israel's northern coast uncovered a major natural gas field named Leviathan, containing enough natural gas to power Israel for a generation. These finds hold tremendous market value, offer geopolitical benefits, and raise new potential for Israel to become a net exporter of natural gas. U.S.-based Noble Energy has been the driver of Israel's energy exploration, partnering with Israeli firms to develop these resources.



Geopolitical Possibilities

In September 2014, a letter of intent was signed that could bring 1.6 trillion cubic feet of Israeli natural gas to energy-starved Jordan over the next 15 years. Israeli officials hailed the roughly \$15 billion deal's potential to lift the nation's regional standing as a central energy source and help stabilize a vital neighbor.



TO BE A LIGHT

HANUKKAH'S MEANING IS MULTIFACETED, its content complex and diverse. For some, it commemorates the Jewish people's victory over assimilation and assimilators. For others, it symbolizes a war against religious oppression. The foundational ritual of the holiday – the lighting of candles – generates a core image which today comes to define its meaning – light.

Hanukkah reminds us that there is much darkness in the world and that it is our job to combat it and to transform it."

What do we want to light, light up, or enlighten? Traditionally, the light was meant as a spotlight on God and God's love and care for us in times of difficulty. As Hanukkah became a major calling card of Judaism in modern, Western societies in response to its proximity to Christmas, light became a symbol of enlightenment, openness, and religious pluralism.

The common denominator is the aspirational quality. Indeed, the purpose of holidays is not self-congratulation, but rather, to commit to a

mission. There is darkness in our world, and when we light our candle, when we set aside a time in our year to bring light into our lives, we are committing ourselves to improving our world.

Hanukkah reminds us that there is much darkness in the world and that it is our job to combat it and to transform it. When we do that, we ourselves become an *ohr l'goyim* a light unto the nations.

That is the same challenge and responsibility of Israel, and I would argue, the core identity of the country. The Israel that I love, the Israel that is capable of rallying Jews and friends around the world, is an Israel of light, an Israel that works and aspires to a moral and spiritual enlightenment.

In our tradition, everyone is obligated to light their own candles, for Hanukkah is not a collective celebration of achievements, but rather an individual commitment to work to achieve. A nation which lights is a nation of light. It defines its mission as an ongoing journey to bring to itself and to others the light that our world needs. It is from within this light that our greatest strength emerges.

By Rabbi Dr. Donniel Hartman

President of the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem



Transforming Transportation

Israel is at the forefront of researching, developing and deploying innovative solutions to reduce dependence on gasoline and petro-cartels that are often hostile to U.S. and Israeli interests. The Jewish state is slated to become a global hub of alternative fuel technologies, aiming to reduce its gasoline reliance by 60 percent in 2030.



Solar Symbiosis

Israeli solar energy company Arava Power has pioneered the world's first self-cleaning solar park in southern Israel. Nearly 100 autonomous robots clean the field's solar panels each night—without water—increasing the field's efficiency by roughly 35 percent.



World-Renowned Water Technology

Israeli innovation is world-renowned for its effectiveness in combating water shortages. The Jewish state recycles upwards of 80 percent of its water and is partnering with American companies to implement desalination technologies in drought-plagued regions such as California. Israel has also shared its innovative drip irrigation methods with arid countries around the world.



Oil Shale Opportunities

Deposits of oil shale, organic matter found in sedimentary rock that releases a petroleum-like liquid when heated, can be found in several locations throughout Israel. The largest and highest grade resources lie in the Shfela basin in south-central Israel, as well as in the northern portion of the country. Altogether, Israel could hold as much oil as Saudi Arabia if the production process proves successful.

The AIPAC Policy Conference

Each Hanukkah, we light the menorah in recognition of a miracle—that oil meant to last only one night lasted eight. The AIPAC Policy Conference lasts only three days, but the **experience stays with you for a lifetime.**

March 1-3, 2015

Washington, D.C.



You can make a difference.

Register for Policy Conference and be inspired.

Dan Webb, a paraplegic father of two girls, thought he would never use his legs again after his accident. But at the 2013 AIPAC Policy Conference, more than 12,000 pro-Israel activists watched with tears in their eyes as Dan walked across the stage wearing his Israeli-made ReWalk suit. The audience rose to its feet, cheering not just for Dan's personal victory, but also for the Israeli spirit of innovation that improves lives for so many people around the world.

You can make a difference.

Register for Policy Conference and start the conversation.

Last spring at Policy Conference, delegates attended meetings at all 535 congressional offices to talk about the important bond between the United States and Israel. Just a few months later, Congress passed eleven pieces of legislation stating its support for Israel's right to self-defense—including \$225 million in emergency funding for Iron Dome, which saved countless lives this past summer.



You can make a difference.

Register for Policy Conference and stand with Israel.

The 2014 AIPAC Policy Conference was the largest gathering of pro-Israel activists in America. Bringing together 14,000 people of different religions, races, political parties, and backgrounds, Policy Conference is the central address for uniting our voices in support of a strong U.S.-Israel relationship.



Register today at
www.aipac.org/pc
Join more than 14,000
pro-Israel activists from around
the country for three of the
most important days affecting
Israel's future.