



## Torah for Turbulent Times

### "Hanukkah Gifts & Lots of Lights!"

*Your presence!* It's been a joy to see so many people coming out for our Zoom Community lightings. Whether you've been able to make it to a gathering, or not yet, we have one more opportunity to exponentially expand the light in our community and in the world tomorrow night at 5:30. [\[Zoom link\]](#) Let's maximize the light and enjoy all of the community candles dancing on the screen together. Our lighting will connect household to household, and be a beautiful display of the unity of community - a true light in the darkness. Your presence is a wonderful gift.

*Your presents!* Hanukkah wouldn't be complete with just lights and latkes. We've grown accustomed to also giving gifts. In the spirit of giving, UVJC has a gift for you! With much appreciation for the community's talented musicians, we share these shiny new and unique recordings with you and your family.

[\[3 music links\]](#)

Along with "Hanukkah O' Hanukkah" you'll hear "*Maoz Tzur*" and "*Al Hanissim*." Here's how I poetically translate these Hanukkah classics. *Ma'oz Tzur* - "Holy One, Rock and Redeemer, a steadying presence in the moment and an inspiration for the future, we offer our gratitude and praise for overcoming the destructive forces and the darkness of our past until today." *Al Hanissim* - "For the miracles and heroic acts of courage and bravery of our ancestors, and for the continuation of the miraculous in our lives today, we thank the Source of Life."

*Multiple Lights, Multiple Meanings* Hanukkah saturates us, not just with its oil but with a plethora of meanings. Its symbols are both particular to the Jewish people and universal in hope. On the one hand: "This story is an epitome of the story of the Jewish people. Our whole history is a fantastic legend of a single day's supply of oil lasting eight days; of a flaming bush that is not consumed; of a national life that in the logic of events should have flickered and gone out long ago, but is still burning on. (Paraphrased from Herman Wouk) On the other hand: Light is a necessary element for almost all living and breathing creatures. It helps us to grow and thrive. The candles of Hanukkah radiate the life giving power and potential we all have to shine a light of hope in the darkness.

Our light has been expanding and growing over the last week. Tomorrow night we reach the pinnacle of the 8th night of Hanukkah. One way that we can expand the light in our community and world is by doing more acts of *hesed*, loving-kindness. As we approach the final night of Hanukkah let's be like the *shamash* by expanding and spreading the light, love, and loving-kindness into the winter months. May our kindling of the flames shine a light on the miraculous in the everyday rhythm of our lives.

Rabbi Mark