

# The Synagogue Journal

## 1856-2006

December 15, 2006

HistoricalJournal@KaneStreet.org

Shabbat Vayeshev

### Issue 50 Chanukah

#### In this issue ...

Chanukah is a holiday of freedom. While it has been caricatured as a simple, miraculous victory of the Jewish Hasmoneans over their Greek oppressors, in fact it represents a broader triumph of human rights. In refusing to assimilate, the Hasmoneans protested against the hegemonic imperialism of the Greeks who violently and nonviolently, militarily and culturally, sought to subjugate all people to their identity and ambitions. The lights of Chanukah remind us that political freedom is the right to be different and to pursue holiness and righteousness according to one's heritage and hopes.

Each year at Chanukah the congregation rededicates its commitment to protect human rights. The Journal provides several historical articles from *The Brooklyn Eagle* and *The Scroll*, which recall the significance of the holiday. Earlier this month a scholarly discussion led by Philip Gourevitch, author of "We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families" put the atrocities committed during our generation in Rwanda, Darfur, Zimbabwe and Burma into historical context and raised our collective consciousness about international humanitarian laws and strategies of intervention against genocide.

Newspapers of the day record the many aspects of Chanukah observance. In the nineteenth century the congregation attended the Sunday school's holiday programs, lit candelabra, bestowed gifts and attended charity balls. A mid-twentieth century reminder by Rabbi Goldfarb focused on "giving charity to needy individuals and institutions, by giving gifts to family and friends, by feasting and entertaining." The congregation has continued its traditions by reciting the Al Hanissim prayer found in the prayerbook which begins, "We thank You for the miraculous deliverance, for the heroism and for the triumph of our ancestors from ancient days until our time." We light the menorah, feast on latkes and *sufganiyot* (doughnuts), play dreidel games and sing Chanukah songs. The singing invariably includes the old children's favorite "My Dreidel". Surprisingly, the song was written by Samuel E. Goldfarb, Rabbi Goldfarb's brother and the congregation's choral director in the 1910s. An article about the song's origins by the lyricist's granddaughter Susan Wolf gives the background.

This year, as in the past, the Hebrew school began its Chanukah preparation with two fundraisers to support the school and shul. Orders for Israeli candles were due in November; the book fair at Book Court was held December 3<sup>rd</sup> at Book Court bookstore. The synagogue will light the first candle before sundown on December 15<sup>th</sup>. A community dinner follows services. On Shabbat afternoon at 1PM Rabbi Weintraub leads an open discussion for interfaith couples about "The December Dilemma". We say goodbye to Shabbat at 5PM with "Saturday Night Spice!" a family Havdallah program with songs, storytelling and pizza. On Sunday at 3PM, the theater troupe "Storahtelling" presents "Who Stole the Light?" retelling the Chanukah story with live music, puppets and audience interaction.

Special thanks to: Rabbi Sam Weintraub; the Brooklyn Public Library "Brooklyn Daily Eagle Online™" and "The Brooklyn Collection"; Brooklyn Paper Publications, *Being Jewish* magazine, Susan Wolf.

Happy Chanukah,  
Carol Levin, Editor  
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Provides details about the history of the holiday, the Daughters of Israel Benefit Society and the holiday program  
Credit: Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn Daily Eagle Online™

**“Hebrews Who Kept Christmas. How Baith Israel People Surprised an Old Friend”**

December 27, 1885

Teachers, officers and Sunday school students surprise the assistant school superintendent with a gift and party.  
Credit: Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn Daily Eagle Online™

**“A Chanuka Festival. Celebrating an Event of Historic Interest at the State Street Synagogue”**

December 23, 1889

This program at the Boerum Place Synagogue included the candle lighting of the large brass candelabrum, a number of essays about the holiday and musical offerings.

Credit: Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn Daily Eagle Online™

**“Sees Jews Growing Weaker in Faith”** December 19, 1927

Rabbi Goldfarb urges stricter observance of Orthodox customs at Chanukah celebration.

Credit: Brooklyn Public Library, The Brooklyn Collection

### *The Scroll*

**“Chanukah Reflections”** 1939

Rabbi Goldfarb offers the healing rays of the Chanukah lamp “to illumine the darkness of our present era and to bring consolation and cheer to our sorely tried generation.”

**“The Miracle of Chanukah – Symbol of Jewish Immortality”** December 1959

Rabbi Goldfarb gratefully acknowledges the stars who kept our sacred “National Menorah” filled with oil. “May we dedicate our lives ... to G-d’s law and to disseminate its moral teachings among the Nations.”

**“Chanukah Party”** December 1985

For a number of years the congregation partied at members’ homes.

**“The Rabbi’s Message”** January 1986

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**“Kane St. Synagogue greets Russian Jews”** January 11-17, 1990

Leaders at the synagogue’s Chanukah party address the plight of refugees.

Credit: *Brooklyn Paper Publications*

**“I Have a Little Dreidel – The True Story”** Winter 2001/5762

Composer Samuel E. Goldfarb, head of the Music Department of the New York Bureau of Education and Kane Street’s Music Director in the 1920s wrote the old-time favorite “My Dreidel.” Goldfarb’s granddaughter Susan Wolf gives details about the song’s origins.

Credit: *Being Jewish* [www.beingjewish.org/magazine/winter2001/article4.html](http://www.beingjewish.org/magazine/winter2001/article4.html).



## CHANNUCCAH.

### **The Daughters of Israel Celebrating the Event With a Grand Ball.**

Of the many means that have been devised for the maintenance of benevolent and charitable organizations, none are found to be so successful as the balls. In the Jewish calendar this season of the year is set down as a social one and is maintained for the purpose of recreation and enjoyment. It is called the Feast of Channuccah, and commences with the twenty-fifth day of the month Kislev, and lasts eight days. It is intended to commemorate the glorious deeds of valor accomplished by the priestly family of the Hasmonaens, and especially by their greatest hero, Judah, surnamed Maccabeus, who after a severe struggle of many years succeeded in effecting the freedom of his people from the Greek tyrant Antiochus Epiphanes, who was then the ruler of Judea. The triumph in this victory consisted in the restoration of the Jewish religion, which Antiochus had endeavored to exterminate, for when the immortal Judah entered Jerusalem his first care was to repair the Temple which had been profaned by the tyrant, to rededicate it and to illumine it. This event gave rise to the name of the Feast-Channuccah, signifying, Feast of Dedication. The various incidents connected with the wars between the Maccabees and Antiochus, together with all the events of the victory, the restoration and rededication are to be found in the Apocrypha, in the Books of the Maccabees.

This event differs from the Feast of Purim, which is celebrated on the fourteenth day of the twelfth month, Adar. It commemorates the happy deliverance vouchsafed to the Jews, in the ancient Persian Empire through the medium of Esther and Mordecai, when the wicked Haman planned the destruction of the Hebrew race throughout the entire dominion of the Persian monarch. These are the only two events in the Jewish calendar which sanction the enjoyment at this season of the year of the sons and daughters of Israel.

Last night, the first annual Channuccah Ball of the Daughters of Israel Benevolent Society, was given at the City Assembly Rooms. It

ECLIPSED THE MOST BANGUINE EXPECTATIONS

of its ardent lady promoters. They had no idea that their efforts in the ball line were going to be so successful, else they would have given one long ere this. Their picnics have always proven to be very fine, and the event of last night in its equipments and appointments was excellent. The hall was brightly illuminated and handsomely decorated for the occasion. At every point flags and bunting were to be seen tastefully arranged. Some fine selections of flowers were also used to adorn the scene. Nothing seemed to be lacking but a few canaries to finish the enchanting picture. The floor was thoroughly waxed and looked like a looking glass. In fact it was almost too thoroughly polished, for it was the occasion of two or three falls, but those who were the victims of these mishaps looked upon the matter as a good joke.

The sons and daughters of Israel of this city were very largely represented. They had a twofold object in coming to the ball, namely, to enjoy themselves and to help a society which has for its aim the relieving of the poor and sick in distress and the burying of the dead.

The first couple arrived about 10 o'clock. They acted quite strangely. They looked in the ball room and in the dressing rooms, and, and finding no one in either of those places, the lady said to the gentleman, "I guess we're in the wrong place, for I can't see any of the folks." Just at that moment another couple arrived and the first couple were soon convinced when they saw half a dozen more couples that they were in the right place and so they went to get ready for the dance. From 10 o'clock until long after eleven a steady stream of guests came pouring in. Now and then a carriage brought a couple or two and as soon as it deposited its load on the sidewalk it was off again. The ushers at the door were very attentive and obliging to the people who passed in and out. The ball room contained as fine an array of

#### BEAUTIFUL WOMEN

as could be met with anywhere. The dresses were not at all extravagant but consisted for the most part of walking costumes. Some of the ladies had their hair powdered. The gentlemen were neatly and comely attired. By 12 o'clock the ball was at its height and hundreds of couples were dancing. Everything worked like machinery till intermission, when good appetites lead them away to the dinner table. After the collation dancing was resumed and did not cease until the stars had set.

#### THIS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

was organized about three years ago, and during its short career it has done some noble work. The organizer was Mr. H. Matthias, a gentleman of large benevolence. The meeting was first held in the vestry room

of the Synagogue Beth Israel, which is located on the corner of Boarum place and State street. As soon as the society was founded Mr. Matthias intrusted it to the care of Mrs. Amelia Lamm, who is now President. At first the growth of the organization was slow, but as soon as it became well known to the Hebrews throughout the city, a number of noble and pushing ladies enlisted in the cause. As coworkers Mrs. Lamm selected Mrs. C. Bass, Vice President, and Mrs. M. Jacobs, Treasurer. The Secretary is Mr. L. Bass. By the combined energy of Mrs. Lamm and her assistants the Society grew rapidly and *flourishingly*, and to-day it has a membership of seventy-five ladies, and has \$1,500 in the treasury. It has rendered assistance in many ways to thousands of poor Jewish families in the city, and as its name becomes better known its sphere of labor increases.

The Society meets every month in Beth Israel, to report its condition and to tell what it has done in the way of relief during the month past.

Among those who attended the ball were: Mr. H. Matthias and lady, Mr. Julius Corn and lady, Mr. J. Cohen and sisters, Mr. Adolph Cohen and lady, Mr. Louis Jacobs and lady, Mr. Jacob Goldechmidt and lady, Mr. L. Levy and lady, Mr. M. Bass and daughters, Mr. J. Franklin and family, Mr. William Morris and wife, Mr. Charles Gluck and wife, Mr. P. Coffee and lady, Miss Rachael Barnett, Miss Rosa Barnett, Mr. Jacob Larkowitz and lady, Mr. S. Miller and family, Mrs. Wider and daughters, Mrs. Lovy and daugh-

ters, Mr. Albert M. Bly and lady, Mrs. Sellar and daughters, Mrs. Rosenstein, Mr. S. Rosenstein, Mr. M. Taylor and family, Mr. Joseph Harris and daughter, Miss Hannah Corn, Mr. and Mrs. Levison, Mr. A. Becher and lady, Mr. P. Simmons and lady, Mr. M. Bernstein and lady, Mr. Henry Bick and lady, Mr. Carrant, Mr. and Mrs. Rosenthal, Mr. Henry Levy and family, Mr. F. Mildenberg, Rev. Dr. Salwitzki, Miss Mary Coleman, Miss Cornelia Coleman, Miss Ida Cohen, Miss Esther Cohen, Miss Lena Cohen, Mr. Isaac Coleman, Mr. Judge and lady, Mr. L. Lyman and lady, Mr. S. Lyman and lady, Mr. M. Lyman and lady, Mr. Behlers, Mr. Julius Matthias and lady, Mr. Charles Hyman and lady, Mr. L. Sanfieldd and Rev. Dr. Moritz Tintner.

The Committees were represented as follows: Committee of Arrangements—M. Coleman, J. Franklin, I. Coleman. Floor Manager—M. Cohen. Assistant Floor Manager—H. Celler. Floor Committee—M. Grochinske, J. Brenner, A. Cohen, H. Bick, C. Gold, S. Franklin. Reception Committee—Wm. Morris, Chairman; A. Cohen, M. Lamm, M. Lehman, P. Coffey, W. Bass, S. Lamm, A. Jacobs, I. Lewisson.

A petition is being circulated among the members of the Cotton Exchange for making holidays of Monday, December 24, and Monday, December 31, preceding Christmas and New Year's Day, respectively.

## **HEBREWS WHO KEPT CHRISTMAS.**

### **How Baith Israel People Surprised an Old Friend.**

Counselor Michael Furst, who in addition to being an active lawyer, was until lately the active assistant superintendent of Baith Israel Hebrew Sunday school, was greatly astonished last evening by the appearance at his door of a very large body of teachers and officers of the school, with many of the older pupils. He was still more astonished when a couple of draymen carried a handsome embossed leather easy chair into his parlor and set it down as if it belonged there. Then Superintendent Corn stepped to the front and made a presentation speech in which he said many kind things about Mr. Furst's zeal and activity in work in the Sunday school.

Mr. Furst replied briefly but with considerable warmth. His sister, Mrs. Lissner, seemed to have received a private hint, for she had a collation ready in the dining room before the guests had been half an hour in the house. Among those present were Mr. and Mrs. S. Furst, Mrs. Hulda Lissner, Miss Nina Lissner, Mr. and Mrs. S. M. Manne, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Rothschild, Mr. and Mrs. Augustus Dreyer, Mrs. Sarah Bramm, Mr. and Mrs. A. Rossmann, Mr. and Mrs. S. Berendson, Miss Berendson, the Hon. J. Lott Nostrand, Mr. Henry Manne, Miss Manne, Mr. Charles L. Lins, Miss Lins, Mr. Max Indig, Miss Indig, Miss R. Indig, Mr. Joseph Manne, Mr. L. Harris and the officers and teachers of Baith Israel Sunday school in a body as follows: The superintendent, Mr. Julius Corn and Mrs. Corn, Miss Bettie Corn, Mr. Emil Citron, Miss Rose Citron, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Jacobs, Mr. David Harris, Mr. Alfred Newman, Mr. James Alexander, Mr. B. Raphael, Miss R. Martin, Miss Taylor, Miss Levy and Miss Seldenberg.

## A CHANUKA FESTIVAL.

### **Celebrating an Event of Historic Interest at the State Street Synagogue.**

One of the most prominent epochs in the history of the Jewish church was celebrated last night in the synagogue, corner of Boerum place and State street, in the presence of a congregation which filled the edifice to the very doors. The exercises were designated as a Chanuka festival given by the Baith Israel Sunday school and consisted of an excellent programme aside from the religious ceremony. Shortly before 8 o'clock the orchestra, under the leadership of Professor J. Franklin, rendered an excellent overture, after which the children of the school sang a hymn. Then followed the lighting of the chanuka lights by Rev. M. Friedlander, rabbi of the synagogue. The ceremony, which is the commemoration of the re-establishment of the first Hebrew temple, chanuka, itself meaning dedication, is one of eight days' duration. On the platform was placed a large brass candelabrum, upon which were eight candles, symbolic of that number, and as yesterday was but the sixth day that number only were lighted. Taking an extra, or service, candle, Rabbi Friedlander ignited the six tapers, the accompanying service being sung by him in Hebrew.

Miss Bella Miller and Mr. Henry Sellner then delivered two essays, reciting the history and significance of the occasion. Miss Miller in part said:

The festival which we celebrate this evening reminds us of the most important events in the annals of our race. It turns over that historic page which spreads a gloomy cloud over the history of our nation's splendor. It presents to us a mighty volume of suffering which Israel underwent, such as language is too feeble to describe. All possible means were used to induce our nation to worship idol gods; and were it not for the mercy of God and the great enterprise of the heroic Maccabees, the seed of Israel would have been entirely rooted out from the face of the earth. In the year 167, before the present era, at the time when the Jews enjoyed their own country's government, laws and customs, the great Syrian King Antiochus Epiphanes made an expedition against Jerusalem and, gaining possession of it, slew hundreds of the inhabitants, plundered the government treasure and returned to Syria. On his return some two years later he made a violent attempt to abolish the religion of



the Jews and to place in its stead that of the heathens. Every observance of the Jewish religion was forbidden, and many there were who listened to this command. Those who refused to forsake their religion were subjected to all manner of torture, cruelty and destruction. Among these martyrs was a woman, Hannah, the mother of seven sons, six of whom were murdered for refusing the worship of this idolatrous king. When the last was brought before the tyrant he bravely refused to forsake his religion, as had his brothers, saying: "We have long since vowed never to change our God for any other god; likewise has our God, Creator of heaven and earth, promised us never to change our nation for any other." This bravery moved not the heart of the king, and the boy was ordered to execution. In his last moments the mother said: "Thou hast offered upon God's altar one sacrifice, but I have offered seven." This story should impress upon the minds of all that to our religion and to our God we owe a like loyalty and zeal.

Mr. Sellner then took up the history from this crisis of persecution and oppression as follows:

At this time there lived among the Jews a man whose name was Mattathias, having five sons, the bravest of whom was Judah, called Judah Maccabees. This father, with his sons, when commanded by the king to worship the idol of the heathen, rushed upon the officers of the tyrant and slew them, after which they appealed to their countrymen for aid and soon gathered together a small army with Judah at its head. Though this band was but a small one, led on by their desperation and fervent trust in God, it gained many victories over its adversaries. When Antiochus learned of the triumph of Judah he gathered together a mighty army of 50,000 men and gave his general, Lysias, orders to destroy Jerusalem and abolish the entire nation. Against this vast array Judah led his little band, after fervently

praying for God's help and exhorting his people to place their hopes in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and taking them by surprise routed his adversaries and gained a complete victory. Judah then returned home singing hymns to God for their success. Had Judah lost this battle, nothing of the Jewish nation would have remained. Returning to Jerusalem and finding the temple deserted, the gates burned down and all destroyed, the Maccabees at once built a new altar, brought in new vessels, new candlesticks, and on the 25th day of Kislove, on the very same day on which their divine worship had been disturbed, Judah Maccabees dedicated the temple, lighted the eternal lamp, offered sacrifice and sang his hymns of praise. This festival of the dedication was kept for eight days, and from that time we celebrate this festival and call it Chanuka.

The programme was then resumed as follows: Prayer, Miss Bertha Levysohn; piano solo, Master Rudolph Jacobs; recitation, Miss Garcia Diamond; song, Madame Strakosch; humorous recitation, Mr. J. Frank Graham; violin duet, Masters S. and D. Alexander; recitation, Mr. Garcia Diamond; song, Miss R. Franklin; recitation, Miss B. Folkart; violin solo, Mr. J. Miller; humorous recitation, Mr. William Coleman; song, Madame Strakosch; mandolin solo, Mr. E. J. Heddeman; and a humorous selection by the Bennett Brothers.

# SEES JEWS GROWING WEAKER IN FAITH

4 DEC 1927

## Rabbi Urges Stricter Observance of Orthodox Customs.

"Jews today are growing weaker in their Jewish observances, and the young people, in their mad rush to follow the cheap tendencies of the day, are losing sight of what real Americanism is," asserted the Rev.

Dr. Israel Goldfarb, rabbi of the Congregation Bait Israel Anshei Emes, last night in making a plea to Jews to "become more Jewish." Rabbi Goldfarb spoke at a service celebrating Chanukah, the Jewish feast of lights, commemorating the victories of the ancient Maccabees, held by the Sunday School, of which he is principal, in the school auditorium, Harrison and Court sts. He said:

"The people are mad with the desire for pleasure and they have thrown overboard the ancient values of morality and spirituality which made our race capable of standing up against our great foes during the ages. We need a return to the spirit of the Maccabees. We need a return to the spirit of our forefathers. Jews must become more Jewish. When they do, they will certainly make a wonderful contribution to real Americanism, and Americanism stands for everything that is worth while in Judaism. There is much in common between Judaism and Americanism."

The celebration last night consisted of a Chanukah play given by the pupils and the alumni of the school, selections by the school choir, the lighting of the Chanukah candles and community singing. A dance for the alumni and the teaching staff and their friends concluded the celebration. Miss Gertrude Noveck was in charge of the program. Harold L. Turk is superintendent of the school.

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### CHANUKAH REFLECTIONS

Once more do the little Chanukah lights bring us a cheering message of courage and hope.

Once again do the faint rays of the Chanukah lamp light up for us the dark corridors of our checkered past and afford us a glimpse into the broad and deep vistas of our people's history.

In the flickering and darting flames of the tiny Chanukah candles we see our immortal historic figures pass in review before our mind's eye. We see a long train of warriors and priests, heroes and scholars, simple folk and humble men and women, suffering and struggling, bleeding and dying so that they may preserve for posterity the eternal verities of our glorious heritage.

Like a galaxy of dazzling stars in a dark night do these heroes flash across our mental vision to illumine the darkness of our present era and to bring consolation and cheer to our sorely tried generation.

For in the hoary past as in our own generation the world was ruled by brute force. Then as today injustice and intolerance filled the hearts of men. Then as today jealousy and hatred, lust and cruelty strutted brazenly about, freely and unchecked. Then as today our people were facing the threat of extinction by overwhelming and merciless adversaries. Yet our fathers did not succumb to despair. But with hope, courage and faith they withstood every onslaught and faced every hardship until victory was theirs.

May the Chanukah lamp continue to shed its wonderful healing rays. May the warm glow of its tiny flames cheer and gladden the hearts of our people everywhere, and may this feast of dedication inspire us to rededicate ourselves to the noble principles and ideals for which Judaism stands.

A HAPPY CHANUKAH TO ALL.

ATTEND OUR  
SERVICES  
SEND YOUR  
CHILDREN  
TO OUR  
RELIGIOUS  
SCHOOL



JOIN OUR  
CONGREGATION  
AND  
SISTERHOOD

בית ישראל אנשי אמת

## The Mother Synagogue of Brooklyn

Vol. XXVIII

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No. 2

### THE MIRACLE OF CHANUKAH — SYMBOL OF JEWISH IMMORTALITY



לחג חנוכה שמח

*"Oh you tiny lights, so bright,  
You recall our fame and might,  
Glories of days long ago  
Come and cheer us today once more,  
Raise our spirits, our hopes restore,  
The flame of our Faith keep aglow!"*

—ISRAEL GOLDFARB

(Translated from Morris Rosenfeld's "Oy Ihr Kleine Litchlech")

It is rather strange that the Talmud, in discussing, "What is Chanukah," glosses over the historic events of the brave Maccabees, their heroic battles and glorious victories over the superior armies of Antiochus Epiphanes and, instead highlights the Miracle of the Cruse of Oil.

"When the war of liberation was over," so the Talmud relates, when the priests triumphantly re-entered the Temple to light the perpetual lamp, they could find no holy oil with which to light it. All the sacred oil had been defiled by the enemy. After a long search, they discovered one cruse of oil that still bore the unbroken seal of the High Priest. This cruse seemed to contain enough oil to burn for one day only, but, miraculously, it burned for eight days until a fresh supply of sacred oil could be prepared.

Thus it seems, according to the Talmud, that the high point of interest in the Chanukah story lies not in the potentiality of the Jewish people as great warriors or conquering heroes, but, rather in their spiritual power and moral strength. "Not by might nor by physical strength, but by my spirit, saith the Lord."

The miracle of Chanukah has become the symbol of the immortality of the Jew and his indestructibility. It served us through all the ages as an inexhaustible source of faith, courage and hope.

"And the bush burned with fire, but the bush was not consumed."

How often in our long and checkered history has it appeared as if the last hour of our National existence has struck! How often has it seemed as if the last drop of holy oil in our historic lamp was about to be consumed, leaving us in total darkness of extinction!

We faced such dangers time and time again. From ancient Egypt to modern Nazi Germany, from the cruel Pharaohs to the ruthless Hitlers we looked a thousand times into the jaws of death and gazed through the open gates of Hell whose infernal fires were fed with the bodies of countless Jewish martyrs. Persecution and exile, hatred and humiliation, were the allies that constantly drive us to the brink of extinction.

Yet, the miracle of Chanukah re-occurred again and again in every generation. "The Lord hath indeed chastened us, but hath not given us over into death," declared the Psalmist.

The sacred oil in our National Menorah never failed us. Miraculously, it burned on through the dark night of persecution and hatred. It burned on until a new morn was at last born, when, in the glaring sunshine of a new era, Israel was re-born as a Nation and came back to his own homeland. It burned on until, when, after lying in a coma for two thousand years, the Jewish people awoke again to a new life and a new hope!

When we stand before our Chanukah lamp this year and look into the bright and cheerful flames of the tiny, flickering candles, may we recall with gratitude and admiration the galaxy of saintly and heroic stars that straddled our National skies through the dark night of centuries of struggle and pain. It was their wisdom and saintliness, their courage and faith, their devotion to G-d and Torah, their love of freedom and humanity, that overcame the dark forces of human cruelty.

May we dedicate our lives to these same noble principles, which have singled us out as a chosen people; chosen to carry aloft the banner of G-d's law and to disseminate its moral teachings among the Nations. May we, in cooperation with all men of good will of every race, creed and color, help to hasten the coming of that era of universal peace of which all men pray and hope.

Happy Chanukah.

ISRAEL GOLDFARB

CHANUKAH PARTY

Just a reminder that the Chanukah Party (for Adults only) is scheduled for Saturday, December 14th at 8:30 P.M. It will take place at the Lichtman and Macklis homes. (We would like to thank these members in advance for opening up their homes for this joyous occasion.) All those whose last names begin with A to L are asked to go to the Macklis home (399 Union Street) and all those whose last names begin with M to Z, to go to the Lichtman's (401 Union Street). Everyone is welcome to circulate from house to house once you have made your initial appearance (and dropped off your food/gift).

Everyone is asked to bring a wrapped, \$2.00, unisex, gift for a grab bag, along with any games -- e.g. Trivial Pursuit, Monopoly, dreidl, etc. that you may have.

Since the food must be kosher, we are asking everyone with a kosher home to provide the food that is either cooked or baked. Others are asked to prepare a cold dish (containing no food prepared in an oven or on the stove and no foods containing regular gelatin or marshmallows). Please indicate on the form what dish you would like to bring.

We ask that the form be returned with a check (\$5.00/person) NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 9th. This reservation form is imperative so that our hosts will be know how many people to expect, and the committee will know what extra foods will be necessary. Thank you.

If you cannot bring food, please bring liquor -- scotch, whiskey, etc. and so indicate on the form. Other liquid refreshments (wine, coffee, soda) will be provided.

Finally, the Synagogue has adopted a Refusenik family. If you would like to make a Chanukah contribution, which will be used for clothing and other articles, please make checks payable to the synagogue --- bring them with you or send them to the office marked -- Vaynerman.

We look forward to seeing you at the party ready to carouse in the spirit of the holiday. If you have any questions, please call Bernice Rosenthal (day: 212-682-2100, evening: 0718-875-1686).



Chanukah Party Reservation Form:

Please return to Synagogue Office  
by December 9th

\_\_\_\_\_ will attend. Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ I/we have a kosher home and would like to bring \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ I'm/we're bringing the following cold dish: \_\_\_\_\_  
and its a[n] (check one):

appetizer\_\_\_, side dish\_\_\_, entree\_\_\_, dessert\_\_\_, liquor\_\_\_

No. of persons \_\_\_\_\_ at \$5.00/person = \_\_\_\_\_ enclosed.

# Kane St. Synagogue greets Russian Jews

By Ken Ficara

Brooklyn Paper Publications

Alla Katsnelson and her husband Viktor Vigdorčik, recently arrived Russian Jews, have made many American friends at the Kane Street Synagogue in Cobble Hill.

They, along with their three-year-old daughter, Juliya, and Katsnelson's mother, are Jewish emigres from Russia who arrived in the United States a month ago, and are staying at the St. George Hotel in Brooklyn Heights while preparing to move into an apartment.

Members of the Kane Street congregation have been meeting many of the recent Russian immigrants who have been staying at the hotel, assisting them where they can and inviting them to social events at the synagogue.

A Hanukkah party at the synagogue on December 27 attracted more than 300 people, according to congregation member Geraldine Gross, who said about half were Russians, "including some who have moved out of the area."

"It helps us, because we know only a few people here, yes," Katsnelson said in accented, tentative English. "If you want to ask something, it's nice that someone can help you."

Katsnelson said she learned some English in school in Leningrad, where she grew up, but her husband Viktor speaks almost none, and she said her daughter wants to speak "normally"—in Russian.

Katsnelson said she does not speak Yiddish, although her mother does.

"When I was a girl, my parents spoke Yiddish, but they didn't teach me," she said, adding that when she was growing up it could be dangerous to speak Yiddish. "But people of other nationalities could speak their language all they want, of course."

The family arrived in America on a four-hour flight to JFK Airport on November 27, after spending seven months in Italy waiting to be granted refugee status, Katsnelson said. They came to Italy from Vienna, their first stop after leaving Leningrad April 23.

When they left Russia, she said, they had to pay a fee in order to give up their citizenship and were only allowed to take out \$140 per person. Now, with assistance from the NY Association of New Americans (NYANA), they will move into a Bensenhurst apartment at the beginning of January, she said.

Katsnelson was a heating and ventilation engineer in Leningrad, and worked for an ar-



Over 300 people, including many Russian emigres, attended a Hanukkah dinner at the Kane Street Synagogue in Cobble Hill.

Brooklyn Paper Publications / Tom Callan

chitectural concern, while her husband is an electrical engineer who worked on building public housing.

"I can't say how I feel" in English, she said. "I like that I'm here, of course. It's very different now."

While waiting to see if they would be granted refugee status, she said, "We didn't know what would happen to us. But now, there are a lot of everyday problems."

With Katsnelson translating, Vigdorčik said that the initial denial of refugee status brought them "from the skies to the earth," a Russian expression of having one's hopes deflated.

People who have been granted such status receive financial assistance, such as Medicaid, when arriving in the United States, she said.

Jeff Macklis, a member of the Kane Street congregation, said that he became involved with the Russian Jews at the St. George when he met an immigrant family during the high holidays in September, and heard there were about 500

such people living at the hotel, referred by NYANA.

"(The congregation) had been supportive of getting the Soviet Union to open its doors, and now the doors are opened and the people at the St. George are in our community," he said. "Even though the people at the St. George are in transit, it's imperative for ourselves to do what we could."

Katsnelson said the family left Russia to escape official discrimination and a wave of nationalist anti-Semitism that has cropped up in the wake of perestroika.

In Russia, she said, the "Jewish" designation for nationality on one's passport could lead to denial of jobs and other benefits.

"If I wanted, I could change my nationality," she said. "But I am proud that I am a Jew."

"I don't want to say that it was too bad," she said of life in Russia. Being Jewish "is a special life, and they don't like it. Maybe it is easier to have another nationality in Russia, but I am a Jew," she said.

Gross said she and others were "sort of just putting out a friendly hand, mostly to give them a feeling that they're not unique. My parents came from Russia—it's just by the grace of God that I am where I am and they are where they are."

"When my parents came over here it was rough," she said. "They lived in hovels, but there was the hope that things would be better. They are coming here with the idea that it will be a better life for their children."

She said some of the Russian families found it hard to adjust to the range of choices available in this country. Macklis gave a family \$50 from the synagogue to buy grocery staples, she said, but the family came back from the store with \$50 worth of chicken.

"Jeff looked at them in great astonishment," she said, and asked, "Why did you spend it all on chicken?" They said, "They just delivered fresh chicken—who knows when they'll have it again!"