

Chanukah 2011/5772:

A Time for War, a Time for Peace



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
The Israeli Army Peulah (Ofarim/Tsofim).....	3
All You Need for Your Party (Ofarim/Tsofim).....	8
December Dilemma Peulah (Bogrim).....	10
Israel, the IDF and Justice Peulah (Bogrim).....	12
Popcorn Peulah (Bogrim).....	15
Limmud: Vayishlach – Wrestling Israel (Bogrim).....	16
Appendix and Background Information Resources.....	19

****For internal Young Judaea distribution and use only****

Compiled and Created by:
Andrew Fretwell, Manager of Youth Leadership & Education
Hannah Greenwald, National Bogrim Programmer
Aviva Weinstein, National Ofarim and Tsofim Programmer



November 22, 2011

Shalom Chevre!

So as the days get shorter, the weather gets colder and suddenly every other commercial now features Christmas motifs, we know what that means...Chanukah is on the way!

This year, Chanukah begins the evening of Tuesday, December 20th, coinciding well with Christmas. Chanukah is one of the best known of the Jewish Holidays, with traditions that include the Hanukiah (eight branched menorah) reciting a special prayer each of the eight nights, playing dreidel, exchanging gifts, eating sufganiyot and eating potato latkes.

The story underlying the miracle of Chanukah surrounds the successful military campaign of the Maccabees thousands of years ago against the occupying Greek power and its leader Antiochus, as well as Jews who preferred Hellenism to Jewish tradition and belief. The campaign lasted for decades and concluded with what would be the final attempt at Jewish autonomy and control over Jerusalem for thousands of years. The tradition of lighting the hanukiah was inspired by the story of how a small amount of oil was sustained by G-d to light the Menorah in the Temple, which was being rededicated, for eight days, which is the amount of time that was needed back then to get additional oil from northern Israel.

This holiday is one of the few that allows us to celebrate the military history of the Jewish People which goes back as far as Abraham (who was a successful military strategist in Canaan) and is exemplified today in the strength, modernity, discipline and morality of the Israeli Defense Forces. However, activities included challenge us to not only admire the strength we achieve through war, but also the strength we summon in making peace and preserving life, from Jacob's reconciliation with Essau to the high moral code of the IDF. This is exemplified from the Book of Ecclesiastes Chapter 3, verse 8, "a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace."

In this kit you will find a number of activities that relate to Chanukah as well as the Israeli Defense Forces. This includes peulot about the IDF, a checklist for a Chanukah party, suggested movie viewings and sicha questions, and a Limmud (text study) that looks at *Parshat Vayishlach*, which we will read this month, where Jacob wrestles an Angel and prepares for war with his own brother, Essau.

I hope this kit provides as an excellent resource to all of you who use it.

B'Hatzlacha

Andrew Fretwell
Manager of Youth Leadership and Education

The Israeli Army

Written By: Leora Frankel

Revised by: Aviva Weinstein, November 2011

Age: Ofarim (grades 2-5) / Tsofim (grades 6-7)

Goal: To introduce the chanichim/ot to the concept of the Israeli Defense Forces and to teach them some of the Hebrew IDF terminology.

Essential question: What is it like to serve in the IDF?

Jewish Values:

- Eretz Yisrael (The land of Israel)
- Medinat Yisrael (The State of Israel)
- Tikvah (Hope)
- Shalom (Peace)

Time: 50 minutes

Materials:

- IDF shirt (one)
- Attached information pictures of army insignia

Pre-Peulah Setup:

In order to prepare for this peulah you must cut out enough insignias (can be found below) so that each chanich can have one. If you chose to show the video clip you should have this set-up and loaded already.

Part Aleph: Trigger (5 Minutes)

List the following words/values for the chanichim/ot and ask them to guess what organization in Israel they might describe. (Hopefully, they'll figure out that you're talking about the army.)

Values:

- Discipline
- Preservation of Human Life
- Loyalty
- Comradeship
- Personal Example (in Hebrew called *Dugma Ishit*)
- Professionalism
- Responsibility
- Trustworthiness

Part Bet: Implementation (35 Minutes)

Step one: (10 minutes) Ask the chanichim/ot if they know what "Tzahal" is (acronym for "tzva havana l'Yisrael," meaning Army of Defense for Israel). Let them share any information they know about the IDF. Then, explain the basic structure of the army, and its role in Israeli society. Be sure to talk a little about the values you listed at the beginning and discuss why they are important. (Use the attached background information and be sure to show them the insignia examples.)

Step two: (15 minutes) Cut out the insignia sheet and have each chanich chose one to wear. Tell them that they are now in the Israel Army, so they must begin to talk and act like it.

Dress up as a “*mefaked*,” or commander and teach the chanichim/ot the following Hebrew army terminology. As you teach them the word, have them do the position/activity you are describing. (For example, if you teach *Amod Dom*, tell them to word in Hebrew and English and then show them the stance).

Standing Positions:

- *Amod Dom*- (attention) Standing upright, straight and stiff, feet together, hands and sides
- *Amod Noach*- (at ease) Release of previous position, knees slightly bent, hands clasped behind you—held at mid-back, feet slightly apart
- *Hakshev*- (attention) Straight and upright again, but feet slightly apart in a V, hands clasped and held down behind you

Marching:

- *Smol, smol, smol, yamin, smol*, etc. (Left, left, left, right, left)
- *P'zatzta*- (an acronym for *Pol*-fall, *Zchal*-crawl, *Tzfay*- look out, *Tvach*- look around peripheral range, and *Esh*-fire) Called while marching to hide/camouflage- must drop straight down to floor on one side of line, silent, covering your head

Crawling:

- *Lizchol*- To crawl
- *Zchila Indianit* (Indian crawl)- crawling forward with elbows
- *Zchilat Arba*- Crawl on all fours

Other:

Shkivot Smicha- Push-ups

Part three: (10 minutes) Read chanichim the story of a real IDF soldier experiencing Chanukah with his unit. If you would like, show the youtube video attached. See below for the story as well as the link.

Part Gimel: Sicha (10 minutes)

- From everything that we have talked about, what do you think it's like to serve in the Israeli Defense Force?
- Why do you think the IDF has the Spirit of the IDF? (ask someone to remind everyone what this is)
- What did you think about the IDF when you were learning all the stances and terms? Did it seem like it would be hard?
- What did you think about the IDF when you heard the story of the soldier's Chanukah? Did you think about the IDF differently here than you did when you did the drills?
- Do you think it's important that everyone in Israel serves in the army, or should people be allowed to chose?

Part Daled: Sikkum (5 minutes)

Ask if chanichim have any follow up questions about the IDF.

General Information about the IDF:

- The army is required for Israeli youth- after high school graduation both boys and girls serve (There are some exceptions for health or religious reasons.)
- Every year men are called back for a few weeks for a volunteer period called “Miluim”
- The IDF has a hierarchical structure. All soldiers begin in basic training and over the course of their time in the army may ascend to higher positions of leadership in the various units.
- Boys serve for three years and girls serve for two
- The values we listed before are part of what is called “The spirit of the IDF”. All soldiers in the IDF work to keep and follow these values during their time in the army. Soldiers in the IDF behave, educate, and evaluate themselves based on The Spirit of the IDF

IDF Mission:

To defend the existence, territorial integrity, and sovereignty of the State of Israel, To protect the inhabitants of Israel, and to combat all forms of terrorism which threaten the daily life.

In simpler words:

To defend the existence, actual territory, and ownership/rule of the State of Israel, to protect Israel’s citizens, and to fight all forms of terrorism which threaten daily life.

IDF Insignia (symbols): Everyone in the IDF is in one of these parts of the army.

General



Army



Infantry



Medical

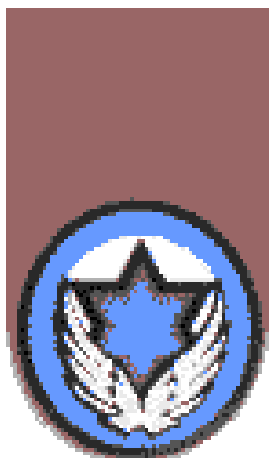
Armor



Artillery



Air Force



Intelligence



Education



IDF soldier's reflections on Chanukah in the army:

The rhetoric thrown around was that the IDF is a "bad place for religious Jews." They liked to say that it's hard to be religious there, that it's hard to keep your level of faith, and that there are too many bad influences. At the time I didn't have any other information; I didn't know what it's like to be orthodox in the army, so I just took it for what it was worth: hyper-religious Jerusalemites judging what they had no experience in in the first place. I didn't know what to think, but I assumed that they were being slightly dramatic.

And now I know just how wrong they were. I have become even more observant of Torah law in the army. I pray three times a day, as required in Judaism, I'm kosher without condition, and I celebrate all the holidays and cultural events to the max. It's just so easy to be religious in the army. We wake up in the morning, do a gun safety check, and then we are promptly given nearly an hour for the morning prayers. It's either pray or clean the rooms...

Easy choice. Shabbat and the holidays, as well, are just kind of thrown in your face. For example, for Shabbat the entire base eats a festive and special meal together on Friday night. In the beginning we say the kiddush, a sanctification of the sabbath day, with the entire base standing with heads covered in the Jewish fashion. We all say *amen* together, and inevitably hundreds of soldiers are singing and dancing to Jewish songs. There's also a *dvar Torah*, or a saying from the Torah - similar to a sermon, but usually a highly specific and interesting tidbit on an aspect of a Bible story.

In fact, the army is such a *good* place for religious people that I have actually wondered if the secular soldiers are often uncomfortable or offended. We say prayers together, we have to listen to a religious sermon from a rabbi, there is a large synagogue in the middle of the base, the meals are mandatory, and the commanders made it very clear to not disturb the Shabbat observant crowd - i.e., electronics playing music, excessive use of the lights, etc.

I'm constantly surprised at the religiosity of this organization. So when Hanukkah came around I was happily surprised as we were gathered each night to light the candles, say the prayers, and join in on singing and dancing to celebrate the victory that the Maccabeans had over the powerful Greeks. Here we were, a group of Jewish soldiers celebrating the most unlikely of upsets by our Jewish brothers 2000 years before. For so long we had no state, much less no army, and consequently we had no security. Our people were thrown from land to land, abused and led like sheep to the slaughter. But finally we've returned, and I'm a part of that.

As we sang "Al HaNisim" I couldn't help but feel the hand of divine assistance; the Maccabean War and the 1948 War of Independence seemed like one and the same. Hanukkah is a celebration of the Jews overcoming the Greek oppressors, a regime that attempted to destroy the Jewish people, faith, and state. We overcame them then, and we will overcome the attackers of our state again. Hanukkah is a celebration of the physical strength to be found in faith, and I think what the charedi yeshivas are missing is that the IDF's fist is steeled only because its other hand is grasping a Torah.

We know where our strength comes from, just as Joshua and David knew, just as Judah The Maccabee knew.

All You Need for Your Chanukah Party!

Compiled by Aviva Weinstein, November 2011

Decorations:

- Cut-out paper dreidels all attached on a string like a banner
- A chanukiah
- Chocolate Gelt
- Life size drawings of the Maccabis
- Candles
- Drawings of jelly donuts and latkes

Music:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSJCSR4MuhU>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFodbrlqbJI&feature=related>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apDnHFELYjM&feature=related>
- "CChanukah medley" station on Pandora

Activities:

Play dreidel!

Instructions:

- Give everyone 20 M&Ms (or really anything small)
- Each player puts 2 m&ms in the pot (middle)
- Spin the dreidel! The letter facing up when the dreidel stops does the following:
 1. Nun - do nothing
 2. Gimel - take everything
 3. Hey - Take half of the pot
 4. Shin - Put one penny in the pot

Make sure the chanichim know: the four letters of the dreidel correspond to the Hebrew expression A great miracle happened there. In Israel, the dreidels have a Peh, instead of a shin. This is because the shin is for the word sham, which means "there" and peh is the first letter of the word "poh," which makes the expression "a great miracle happened here!"

CChanukah Magic Trick!

- See link to learn a great CChanukah trick that will amaze everyone!
- <http://babaganewz.com/activities/the-hanukkah-prediction-0>

Bake sufganiot (jelly doughnuts)! Yum!

Recipe: <http://babaganewz.com/activities/get-em-while-theyre-hot>

Light the Candles!

Light the candles for whatever day of CChanukah it may be. This is also a great time to teach chanichim the blessings

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-Olam, asher kiddeshanu b'mitzvotav, vitzivanu, lehadlik ner shel Hanukkah.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who has sanctified us with Your commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the lights of Hanukkah.

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-Olam, she-asah nissim la-avotaynu bayamim ha-hem bazman hazeh.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who wrought miracles for our fathers in days of old, at this season.

CChanukah Trivia!

Give chocolate gelt for each answer that chanichim answer correctly!

1. How many days does last? (Eight)
2. How many sons of Matisyahu (also called Mattathias) fought the Greeks? (5)
3. How many candles does the Hanukkah candelabra (chanukkiah) hold? (nine)
4. What do we play on Hanukah? (sevimon)
5. What are the letters that are written on the Sevimon? (nun, gimel, hey, shin)
6. What do they mean? (nes gadol haya sham- a great miracle happened there)
7. What do dreidels in Israel say? (nes gadol haya poh- a great miracle happened here)
8. What traditional Hanukkah dish is the Jewish version of potato pancakes? Latkes
9. What does the word CChanukah mean? (Dedication)
10. Where is the best place to put your Channukiah and why? (in your window so that you can publicize the miracle)
11. According to Jewish law, how many presents must be given on CChanukah? (Zero)
12. What were the Maccabees looking for in the Temple that they needed to use right away? (Oil to light the temple Menorah)

The December Dilemma

From the 1999 Young Judaea Club Companion
Revised by: Hannah Greenwald, November 2011

Age: Bogrim (8th – 12th graders)

Goals

- Chanichim will discuss the yearly challenge of celebrating under the overpowering influence of Christmas
- Chanichim will clarify their relationship to

Essential Question: How do you celebrate without conforming to the ideas of Christmas?

Jewish Values:

- *Kol Arevim Ze Le Ze* (All Jewish People are Responsible for Each Other)
- (The Holiday of Chanukah)
- *Masoret Yehudi* (Jewish Tradition)

Time: 45-60 minutes

Materials:

- Two signs total (one reading “Agree” and the other reading “Disagree”)
- 1 text from the Art of Jewish Living per chanich
- 8 line cards total

Pre-Peulah Setup: Put up “agree” and “disagree” signs on either side of the room

Part Aleph: Trigger (5-10 minutes)

Step 1: Have one person volunteer and ask them to leave the room.

Step 2: Ask six or more volunteers come to the front of the room.

Step 3: Explain to these six volunteers that the peulah leader is about to perform a conformity experiment on the volunteer that left the room. Explain how there will be a card that has a line drawn on it and three choices of other lines drawn underneath it. They will have to choose which line looks most like the first line. The first person will answer and everyone else will say the same thing even if it's wrong, but the one volunteer that left the room won't know anything.

Step 4: Have the six volunteers sit in seats 1-5 and seat number seven.

Step 5: Invite the first volunteer back inside and seat them in seat number 6.

Step 6: Perform the experiment. Go through each of the eight cards, with the 6 volunteers all saying the same (A,B, or C) even if it is the wrong one.

The idea of this activity, is to see if the person in the 6th seat will conform to saying the wrong answer because everyone else is saying it, and the rest of the group is thinking one way that they aren't. This relates to the fact that Jews have started turning into a “lesser Christmas” because “everyone” seems to be getting presents etc. around the time of December and we have felt that we should too.

Part Bet: Implementation (15 minutes)

- A. Tape signs that say “agree” and “disagree” on opposite sides of the room.
- B. When the group arrives, have them sit in a circle. Instruct the group that after reading a particular statement from The Art of Jewish Living:, they are to go to whichever sign expresses their opinion.
- C. Read out one of the statements and have everyone walk over to the signs for either “agree” or “disagree”.
- D. Ask some people to comment on why they walked to a particular site.
- E. After some debate and discussion ask the chanichim/ot if anyone was convinced and wants to trade sides.
- F. Then move on to the next statement.
- G. This continues until all the statements have been read.

Part Gimmel: Sicha (20 minutes)

Sit back in a circle for a discussion. Have all the statement written on pieces of paper so everyone can see. *The quotes are all related to the issue of assimilation. In the discussion, you may want to point out the relationship between and Christmas. For instance, raise the point that was not a big deal in North America until it becomes associated with Christmas. In Judaism, is not one of the major holidays. It is not like Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur or the Shalosh Regalim (the three holidays in which the Jews were commanded to make a pilgrimage to the Temple: Sukkot, Pesach, and Shavuot). is not even mentioned in the Bible. So, how did gain so much significance? One may argue that became increasingly important in secular countries because of its juxtaposition to Christmas. Gift giving only became a significant element of so that Jewish children would not feel over shadowed by the elaborate Christian tradition.*

- How does being a minority affect the way we connect to and celebrate Jewish holidays?
- Should Judaism always be compared to other religions? Does have its own merits to celebrate?
- How can North American Jews focus on the inherent values of without turning to other religion’s traditions for validation?
- Is there any merit in adapting Jewish practice to our modern surroundings?
- How can we adapt to our surroundings without losing the beauty of our own traditions?

Part Daled: Sikkum (5 minutes)

Talking Points:

The challenge of celebrating in North America revolves around the fact that the holiday always falls within a few weeks of Christmas and sometimes even within the same week. The secularization and commercialization of Christmas has changed a profoundly religious, Christian holiday into a national, American celebration. This has made it a very attractive framework in which to get together with family and friends, even for many Jews.

Israel, War, and Justice

Written by: Noah Ginsburg

Revised by: Hannah Greenwald, November 2011

Age: Bogrim (8th-12th graders)

Goals:

- Chanichim will learn about Israel's wars
- Chanichim will raise moral questions about Israel's wars
- Chanichim will learn about the Halakhic classifications of war (Milchemet Mitzvah (commanded war) and Milchemet Reshut (optional war))

Essential Question: How is a war morally just?

Jewish Values:

- A man's body is worth a lot even if dead (IDF principle)
- *Shalom* (Peace)
- *Kol Arevim Ze Le Ze* (Every Jew is responsible for one another)

Time: 55-75 minutes

Materials

- 1 summary of each Israel war per group
- 1 text per chanich (Noah has them..?)

Pre-Peulah Set Up:

Before starting this peulah, split up Bogrim into groups of about 30/room; this will allow us to run the peulah without having two groups learning about, discussing, and presenting the same war within a room

Part Aleph: Trigger (10-20 minutes)

Step 1:

Go around in a circle and have each chanich share their name, where they live, and their favorite war Israel has participated in.

Step 2:

Have a volunteer read the two halakhic classifications of war (in ancient Israel); commanded war (milchemet mitzvah) and optional war (milchemet reshut):

-Milchemet Mitzvah (obligatory war) - war fought to fulfill commandments; war such as the conquest of Canaan (according to most rabbinic interpretation, this only applied to the Israelites after they left Egypt and were conquering Canaan under the rule of Joshua), fighting against Amalek, or a war fought to "deliver Israel from an enemy who has attacked them" (Maimonides).

** Every mentally stable and able bodied person is required to fight*

-Milchemet Reshut (optional war) – not fulfilling any commandments; war for increased territory, or in order to "diminish the heathens so that they do not march against them" (Sotah).

** If people did not want to fight because they were "soft of heart" they did not need to.*

**If a person was in the middle of something (newly wed, building a new home, planting a vineyard...) then they were not obligated to fight because it would be tragic if they were to die without enjoying the fruits of their labor.*

**There are times when we must fight war, and times that we may fight war... what about times when we are forbidden to fight war?*

Step 3:

Ask the chanichim:

- Which of these types of war is the most justifiable?
- Second?
- Least?

Step 4:

Explain war in modern times, and then have the chanichim apply the Halakhic classifications of war to modern times.

Commanded War = Just War

Optional War = Questionably Just War

Forbidden War = Unjust War

Part Bet: Main Implementation (15-25 minutes)

**Now we will be evaluating some of the wars fought by Israel and discuss whether or not the war was just.*

1. Break up into groups of 6
 2. Each group will be given a sheet about one of the five wars fought by modern Israel
 3. Have someone in the group read the sheet about the war aloud
 4. Hand out Jewish quotes/short texts that relate to war, one per person
 5. Everyone needs to take a stance on whether the war they read about was just, questionably just, or unjust.
- *Stance does not need to reflect on what they truly believe, but must draw upon their quote/text.*
6. Go around the circle, each person stating their stance on whether the war was just, questionably just, or unjust, while using their material to support their stance
 7. Assign these six positions to participants, one per person in the group;

War
*(will give a quick
background of the war)*

Unjust
*(must argue that
the war was unjust)*

Just
*(must argue that
the war was justified)*

Unjust
*(must use the quotes and
texts provided to prove
that the war was unjust)*

Questionable
*(must argue that war could
have been both just and
unjust using quotes
and texts for proof)*

Just
*(must use the quotes and
texts provided to prove
that the war was just)*

**Give "war" to a small person, we will be making human pyramids!*

**Groups will each present the war they looked at by making human pyramids in front of everyone and playing the roles they are given (see diagram above).*

8. Explain the roles of each part in presenting, and explain how the pyramid is structured
9. Group does a trial run of the human pyramid
10. All of the groups come back together
11. Each group presents the war they talked about in chronological order; (1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982)
12. Split up again; this time new groups with 12 people in each one

Part Gimmel: Sicha (15-25 minutes)

- What war did you represent in your pyramid group?
- Do you believe that the war was morally just?
- In your own opinion, when is war justifiable?
- When is war wrong?
- In Israel, everyone is required to fight in the army; what would you do if you were in the army and you thought that Israel was fighting an unjust war? (refusniks)
- In ancient Israel, one did not need to fight in an optional war if she/he was in the middle of something or was “soft of heart” and did not want to fight. Should a similar law apply to the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) today? Why or why not?
- The Jewish State needs to make the moral decision about when to fight wars, while the Jews have not had the power to make decisions like these in thousands of years. How has Zionism and power changed the face of the Jewish people?
- If by killing civilians during a war, the war is shortened and this ends up saving lives, is it just?
- Can a just war become unjust due to tactics used in battle?

Part Daled: Sikkum (5 minutes)

Talking Points: As Zionist's it is important for us to look at Israel and it's war's as just vs. unjust, and evaluate the IDF. It is also complicated to determine if a war is just or unjust and to think about what you would do if you were in that situation.



Popcorn Peulah



Adam Sandler's Eight Crazy Nights

From IMDB.Com

Adam Sandler invites you to share some holiday cheer in the new, no-holds-barred musical comedy Adam Sandler's 8 Crazy Nights. Davey Stone, a 33-year old party animal, finds himself in trouble with the law after his wild ways go too far. In keeping with the holiday spirit, the judge gives Davey one last chance at redemption-spend the holiday performing community service as the assistant referee for the youth basketball league or go to jail.

Davey thinks he's gotten off easy until he meets Whitey Duvall, the eccentric, elf-like head referee. The mismatch between Whitey's good heart and never-ending optimism and Davey's constant troublemaking soon have them both wondering if going to jail wouldn't have been easier! In this new, full-length animated feature about basketball, old girlfriends, holiday spirits, and the mall, Adam Sandler voices the three lead characters of Whitey, Davey, and Whitey's fraternal twin sister Eleanore!



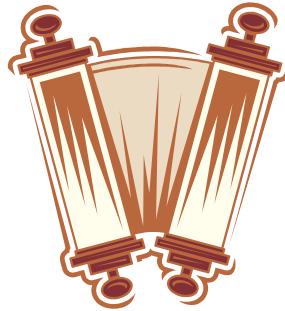
Defiance

137 minutes

Jewish brothers in Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe escape into the Belarussian forests, where they join Russian resistance fighters and endeavor to build a village in order to protect themselves and about 1,000 Jewish non-combatants.

While not a fun Chanukah themed movie, few films have ever captured the spirit of Jewish courage, strength and resistance (sound like the original Chanukah story?) better than Defiance.

Limmud: Vayishlach – Wrestling Israel



By Andrew Fretwell, November 2011

Parshat Vayishlach is a fascinating account of one of the most in-depth characters of the Torah: Jacob. In the parshiot leading up to this, Jacob is not cast in a very flattering light. During his childhood we see him more as a pawn of his mother Rebecca and a manipulator of his father Isaac, and his brother, Esau. After he secured his father's birthright from Esau, in lopsided dealings with Esau and deceptive interactions with Isaac, Jacob then runs away, fearing the wrath of his brother. After being the beneficiary of some shady dealings, Jacob is then the victim of Laban's deceptiveness in gaining his wives through indentured servitude...None of this bodes well for him.

It is in Vayishlach however, that Jacob grows out of his immaturity into manhood, like the protagonists of novels and films. When he is forced to confront his brother Esau, he readies for war by dividing up his camp (in anticipation that he loses, at least half of his camp will escape) he relies on prayer to G-d for protection, and then he tries to placate his brother by sending him gifts...not exactly a heroic set of actions.

However, something happens to Jacob. He meets a "stranger," which is commonly thought of as an angel, and unlike before, Jacob did not run away, nor did he pray for help or try to buy him off. He wrestled the angel and refused to release him until he received a blessing from him. The angel relented and blessed him with the name Israel, which means "he who wrestles with God."

Israel, formerly Jacob, decides to send away everyone in his camp and meet Esau by himself, finally showing the strength to take responsibilities for his previous wrong doings and confront his brother and his past, for better or for worse. This was the true act of courage, and it was rewarded with a peaceful reconciliation.

The message is clear. Struggle and war are happening on multiple levels simultaneously. Jacob is preparing to fight his brother over a matter of wealth and pride, and at the same time is fighting within himself to discover his true strength. From Cain and Able to Joseph and his brothers the Torah identifies a common source of war and hatred: pride. In *Vayishlach*, the Torah also shows us that it is possible to cast off this human tendency and to struggle our way to a deeper inner strength, and in doing so, find peace.

At this time of year we celebrate Chanukah, a holiday which commemorates one of the great military achievements in Jewish history. This parsha serves as a reminder that even when we are successful militarily, war is a curse and those of great strength are not just those who succeed in it, and certainly not those who flee from it, but those who have found peace with themselves, and can therefore make peace with others.

Key Quotes

Chapter 32

7. Jacob became very frightened and was distressed; so he divided the people who were with him and the flocks and the cattle and the camels into two camps.

8. And he said, "If Esau comes to one camp and strikes it down, the remaining camp will escape."

12. Now deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I am afraid of him, lest he come and strike me, [and strike] a mother with children.

25. And Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn.

26. When he saw that he could not prevail against him, he touched the socket of his hip, and the socket of Jacob's hip became dislocated as he wrestled with him.

27. And he (the angel) said, "Let me go, for dawn is breaking," but he (Jacob) said, "I will not let you go unless you have blessed me."

28. So he said to him, "What is your name?" and he said, "Jacob."

29. And he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, because you have commanding power with [an angel of] God and with men, and you have prevailed."

31. And Jacob named the place Peniel, for [he said,] "I saw an angel face to face, and my soul was saved."

Chapter 33

3. And he went ahead of them and prostrated himself to the ground seven times, until he came close to his brother.

4. And Esau ran toward him and embraced him, and he fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.

ח. וַיִּירָא יַעֲקֹב מְאֹד וַיִּצְר לוֹ וַיַּחַץ אֶת הָעָם
אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ וְאֶת הַצֹּאן וְאֶת הַבְּקָר וְהַגְּמְלִים
לְשְׁנֵי מַחֲנֹת:

ט. וַיֹּאמֶר אִם יָבֹא עֲשׂו אֶל הַמַּחֲנֶה הָאֶחָד
וְהִכֵּהוּ וְהָיָה הַמַּחֲנֶה הַנִּשְׁאָר לְפָלִיטָה:

יב. הֲצִלֵנִי נָא מִיַּד אָחִי מִיַּד עֲשׂו כִּי יָרָא
אָנֹכִי אֶתֹּ פֶן יָבֹא וְהִכֵּנִי אִם עַל בְּנֵים:

כה. וַיִּתֵּר יַעֲקֹב לְבַדּוֹ וַיִּאֲבֹק אִישׁ עִמּוֹ עַד
עֲלוֹת הַשָּׁחַר:

כו. וַיִּרָא כִּי לֹא יָכֹל לוֹ וַיִּגַע בְּכַף יָרְכוֹ וַתִּקַּע
כַּף יָרֵךְ יַעֲקֹב בְּהֶאֱבָקוֹ עִמּוֹ:

כז. וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁלַחֲנִי כִּי עֹלָה הַשָּׁחַר וַיֹּאמֶר
לֹא אֲשַׁלְּחֶךָ כִּי אִם בְּרַכְתָּנִי:

כח. וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מַה שְּׁמֶךָ וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב:

כט. וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא יַעֲקֹב יֵאמָר עוֹד שְׁמֶךָ כִּי
אִם יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי שָׁרִיתָ עִם אֱלֹהִים וְעִם
אֲנָשִׁים וַתִּוְכַל:

לא. וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב בְּשֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם פְּנִיאֵל כִּי
רָאִיתִי אֱלֹהִים פָּנִים אֶל פָּנִים וַתִּנָּצַל נַפְשִׁי:

ג. וְהוּא עָבַר לְפָנֵיהֶם וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה שִׁבְעַ
פְּעָמִים עַד גִּשְׁתּוֹ עַד אָחִיו:

ד. וַיִּרְץ עֲשׂו לִקְרָאתוֹ וַיַּחְבְּקֵהוּ וַיִּפֹּל עַל
צוּאָרוֹ וַיִּשְׁקֵהוּ וַיִּבְכּוּ:

Text Study Quotes

- What do we know about Jacob from before this Parsha?
- Before he meets and wrestles the angel, on a scale from 1-10, how brave is Jacob?
- After he finds out that Essau is coming for him, how would you describe his actions?
- Are there other sets of sibling rivalries in the Torah? *Cain and Able, Joseph and his brothers*. How is Jacob and Essau's the same or different?
- How does Israel act differently than Jacob?
- Looking at those differences, how was wrestling the angel a transition for him?
- Why was it important that Jacob wrestle the angel? Why not argue, barter or do something else?
- What is the importance of changing his name? Who else has had a name change in the Torah? *Avram becomes Abraham in Lech Lecha after he makes the covenant with God*.
- Does anyone know what Israel literally means in Hebrew? *He who wrestles with God*. How do you think that name, and its meaning, is important to us as the Jewish People and our history?

Appendix

A. Israel and Its Army

Ashkenazi: IDF – Still World's Most Moral Army

Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi addresses serious allegations of IDF misconduct, says Israel's army “the most moral in the world.”

By Maayana Miskin

First Publish: 3/23/2009, 6:56 PM

Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi has affirmed that he sees the IDF as “the most moral army in the world” despite recent allegations of human rights abuses in Gaza. Addressing new recruits this week, Ashkenazi said the army will investigate all claims of improper behavior, but that if there were such incidents “they were isolated.”

Ashkenazi confirmed that any soldier found guilty of violating the IDF's moral code would face trial.



He rejected claims that soldiers had killed civilians in “cold blood,” saying, “We must remember where we were operating: in a place where Hamas turned a residential neighborhood into a battleground, public facilities into weapons storehouses.”

Allegations that soldiers killed civilians were made last week by two soldiers who graduated one of Israel's few non-religious pre-military academies. The soldiers said they witnessed fellow soldiers shooting civilians who accidentally strayed into closed military zones.

The founder and director of the academy at which the soldiers studied, Danny Zamir, opposed the recent Cast Lead operation in Gaza before the allegations surfaced, and in January accused soldiers who participated in the operation of killing children.

Other soldiers have publicly accused the two finger pointers, whose names have not been revealed, of lying. Several commanders came forward to say their troops had scrupulously avoided harming civilians, and had gone out of their way to protect private property.

UN Reveals New Accusations

Meanwhile, the United Nations has released a series of new accusations. In a report published Monday, UN experts who visited Gaza to take testimony from locals accused IDF soldiers of shooting Arab children, using a child as a human shield, bulldozing a home with civilians inside, and shelling a building used as a civilian shelter.

Radhika Coomaraswamy, the UN's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, said the incidents in the report were “documented and verified.” The report concludes that Israel must open Gaza crossings and allow Gaza residents to travel freely to Judea and Samaria.

The UN was unable to verify reports that Hamas had abused civilians in Gaza during the fighting, because the terrorist group refused to cooperate. Coomaraswamy said.

Taken from Jerusalem Center on Public Affairs Website:

The IDF Code of Conduct

The IDF has developed a code of conduct that is a combination of international law, Israeli law, and the IDF's own traditional ethical code - *ruach tzahal*, "the spirit of the IDF." Reserve units and regular units alike are taught the following eleven rules of conduct:

1. Military action can only be taken against military targets.
2. The use of force must be proportional.
3. Soldiers may only use weaponry they were issued by the IDF.
4. Anyone who surrenders cannot be attacked.
5. Only those who are properly trained can interrogate prisoners.
6. Soldiers must accord dignity and respect to the Palestinian population and those arrested.
7. Soldiers must give appropriate medical care, when conditions allow, to oneself and one's enemy.
8. Pillaging is absolutely and totally illegal.
9. Soldiers must show proper respect for religious and cultural sites and artifacts.
10. Soldiers must protect international aid workers, including their property and vehicles.
11. Soldiers must report all violations of this code.

Picture a 19-year-old soldier commanding a checkpoint. He has two or three other soldiers with him and there is a long line of cars waiting to get through. According to intelligence information he has been given, an ambulance is expected to arrive with a wanted terrorist in it carrying an explosive belt for a suicide attack against innocent Israeli civilians. Suddenly an ambulance arrives, and inside is a woman who is seemingly pregnant. It has happened at checkpoints that not everybody who appears to be pregnant is truly pregnant. The woman appears to be in pain and her husband is also highly anxious. But the soldier has been warned of an ambulance bearing a pregnant woman who is not really pregnant and that underneath the stretcher in the ambulance is a terrorist. It is a hot day and there is a long line of cars. His commanders are yelling at him on the two-way radio, "Do not let ambulances go through because there is a terrorist in an ambulance!" To complicate the picture, a news video crew is present.

The soldier has to make an incredible number of decisions in a very short time. First of all, he's 19, he's not a physician, and he is probably not even a medic. He knows that if he lets the ambulance go through and it contains a terrorist, then innocent people will die and he will have failed in his mission. On the other hand, if there is not a terrorist in this particular ambulance but rather a truly pregnant woman and she is delayed, the fetus may die. This has also happened.

B. December Dilemma

Texts from The Art of Jewish Living: Chanukah

Compiled by Dr. Ron Wolfson

I grew up in Chicago in a not very Jewish neighborhood. I remember feeling that if I sang “Silent Night” that I was absolutely giving up my Jewish identity. I felt it was a major sin and I felt like I betrayed the Jewish people

--Beverly Weise

Like it or not Christmas has become a national holiday. We are living a Christian nation. There is no getting around it. You can say the theory of the constitution is that church and state are separated, but the United States of America is a Protestant country. It always has been.

-- Ira Goldberg

It's so tough to see all the hoopla around Christmas and not want to be part of it. I remember wanting Christmas as a child, even though I knew it wasn't mine and I couldn't have it. My mother distanced us from Christmas to make it easier on us. Now that I am doing the same, I can appreciate how helpful it is.

--Carol Mills

For them, Christmas is not a religious thing. It is more about gifts and the good feeling of the season.

--Eric Mills

If you celebrate Hanukkah enthusiastically and have your Jewish life throughout the year (it will) be vibrant enough to outshine Christmas's once a year dazzle...

--Juuly Personk & Jim Remsen, authors of [The Intermarriage Handbook](#)

We have some close friends who live a block away. They are Christian and we go to their house usually every Christmas and I help them decorate their Christmas tree and we have party with them. We recognize that it is just a way of helping them celebrate. I don't think there is anything wrong with helping them sing Christmas carols or trimming their tree...they come to our seders and to our succah, too.

---Adam Kirsch

The miracle of is the ability of the Jewish people to survive as a people and to preserve age-old customs and traditions which are constantly challenged by “new” and more “modern” ways of living.

--Gidon Elad [Israeli living in Israel]

1. http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/About_Holidays/Non-Jewish_Holidays/Christmas.shtml
2. <http://recomparison.com/comparisons/101174/christmas-vs-hanukkah-festive-time-of-year/>
3. <http://www.israelibyday.com/2009/01/hanukkah-in-jewish-army.html>

C. Israel, the IDF and Justice

The Tanakh. Union of American Hebrew Congregations, NY. 1981.

The Book of Jewish Values. Telushkin, Joseph. Bell Tower, NY. 2000.

Teaching Hot Topics. Freeman, Susan. A.R.E Publishing inc. Denver, CO. 2003

Just and Unjust Wars. Walzer, Michael. BasicBooks, USA. 1977.

<http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/email/israels-attack-on-gaza-an-unjust-war>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism/jewishethics/war.shtml>