

THE MACABEES FOR TODAY

Warriors of the L-rd

Rabbi Mayer Schiller

The Maccabees fought and, in large numbers died, to preserve our faith in its undiluted purity.

They battled against an oppressive paganism which sought to deny the Divine election of Jewry and substitute the amoral hedonism of Greece for the monotheistic morality of Torah. The war they waged was, of course, physical, but its source was spiritual. It was from the deep and passionate wellsprings of their own *emunah* – belief that strength was derived to challenge and ultimately defeat numerically superior forces.

In order for the Maccabees to exist today, with the courage of their convictions intact, they would have to nurture their spiritual life via attachment to G-d as He is to be found in His Torah and the practice of commandments. This nurturing would yield the Maccabean love of G-d and conviction that the only questions really worth answering in our lives are those which concern the state of our souls and loyalty to Him. Everything else, including, if need be, physical survival, is merely background scenery. And, as the original Maccabees were not deterred by the threat of social opprobrium, military might and possible death, so too would our hypothetical contemporary warriors of the L-rd exhibit a pious fearlessness. Of course, today there are other powers in society which are as capable of destroying the Good as was Greek coercion and licentiousness, namely, capital and media. Doubtless, a contemporary Maccabee would have to ignore and, occasionally bravely confront these forces as well.

And so the question emerges with whom and how would a Maccabee today cross swords?

Essentially our warrior would oppose those people and social forces who seek to weaken or destroy faith in G-d and His laws. He would yearn to see the final defeat of secularism and heterodoxy in all their incarnations. Indeed, this defeat will, in fact, be the final outcome of the war of Gog and Magog at the “end of days”. In the meantime, the Maccabean goal would be to reverse the two hundred year old desacralization of reality (with its roots in the Reformation/Enlightenment and medieval nominalism) despite no guarantee of pre-Messianic final victory.

HOW IS THE STRUGGLE TO BE JOINED?

First, we must make G-d's service the focus of our existence via passionate prayer, study and mitzvah practice. This *avodah* will allow an awareness of the Creator's proximity to permeate the depths of our souls thus fortifying us for the Maccabean war against evil. One cannot fight against overwhelming odds without a certain impractical devotion. From Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch to Reb

Shraga Faivel Mendlowitz the sense that the "the L-rd is with me, I will fear no evil" has formed the core of those latter day Maccabees who rescued so many from the fires of G-dlessness.

Second, we must proclaim the truths of Torah clearly to all Jews. This may be done with whatever combination of firmness and love we find effective. The real enemy within is our own indifference to the spiritual plight of the vast majority of Klal Yisrael, long since captured by the forces of secularism and heresy. The battle is to persuade and inspire them back to their Creator's warm embrace.

Third, we must proclaim the existence of G-d and His claims upon all mankind. This should be done together with like minded Gentiles, remnants of whom still exist throughout the ruins of European civilization. Their battle against globalist secularism is ours as well. They are, after all, our monotheistic and cultural "brothers".

GREEK CONFUSION

The ancient Greeks did not demand that we totally surrender Jewish practice. They asked that we simply combine it with paganism. Only isolated mitzvos were to be abandoned. Temple sacrifices went on, provided they were accompanied by idolatry.

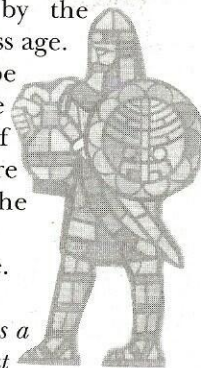
This is precisely the crossroads we face today. The "freedom" offered by leftist democracies allows us to declare ourselves Jews. Yet, their vast mind control apparatus of education, media and the courts demand that we submit in mind and, at times, in deed to the regimen of disrespect and perversion, to "pop" emptiness digested by faceless masses of consumers all manifestations of a philosophy at war with faith and dignity. To this vast force, whose dark embrace surrounds us, our Maccabean response is unconditional. It is, "never submit and never surrender."

Part of the soft decadence which dominates society is an endless succession of clichés concerning

"pluralism", "tolerance" and "democracy". These terms represent legitimate philosophical stands for those who maintain that we can never know the truth about ultimate matters. If truth be inaccessible then no belief is any better than any other and all views have equal claims, hence, "pluralism" and "tolerance". Further, if there is no truth then the will of the majority is the only means to govern society. No objective standards may take precedence over the latest poll or election result.

For a Torah Jew to embrace any of the above is illogical and clear evidence that the contradictions which existed in the mind of the classical Hellenists continue to plague us to this day. A contemporary Maccabee would fearlessly teach and, if need be do battle, to maintain the clarity of our faith, the absolute truth of Torah and a sense of empathy, love and concern (not tolerance) for those smitten by the errors of a G-dless age.

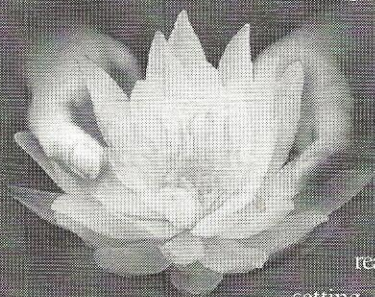
May we be worthy that the holiness of Chanukah inspire us to join the contemporary Maccabean cause.



Rabbi Schiller is a Talmud instructor at Yeshiva University High School for boys in NYC, author of "The Road Back", and a frequent lecturer on numerous topics throughout the United States.

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Chanukah*