

5 Themes of Chanukkah

Rabbi Bonnie Koppell

1. Light in the face of darkness- at the darkest time of the year, we affirm our faith that light will be renewed. This metaphor speaks to the difficult times in our lives.
2. Victory when it had seemed improbable- The Maccabees were out resourced and outnumbered, yet they were triumphant. We are reminded to maintain hope even at moments of challenge.
3. More than enough when there had been too little- There was insufficient oil to light the menorah in the Temple, and yet our ancestors had the faith to move forward. We pray for strength and courage when we think that we can't go on.
4. Victory of the few against the many- The Maccabees were successful because they believed so fervently in the cause of religious freedom. Even though we may be small in number, we can accomplish great things.
5. Freedom to practice Judaism- Had the Maccabees not persevered, Judaism as we know it would have ceased to exist. As American Jews, we are so grateful for the freedom of religion we enjoy in the United States.