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HANNUKAH 5784 / 2023 -- A CLIMATE KAVANNAH

Hannukah this year overlaps with the global climate gathering, COP-28.¹ Even with eyes and hearts turned toward the holy land this Hannukah, key decisions affecting all life on Earth are now being made. With this kavannah² for the first few candles, as negotiators hold our future in their hands -- and after, by the ever-fuller hannukiyah's lights, when the focus shifts to what we ourselves can and should and must do -- may we rededicate ourselves to all that matters most.

Let's get Maccabean:

On ensuring a livable world for our descendants
On centering and protecting the most vulnerable among us
On being modern Noahs, for today's endangered species
On phasing out fossil fuels



What was the real miracle of Hannukah, nearly 2200 years ago?
Perhaps, the power of the people to effect real change
Coupled with the power of energy efficiency –
One unit of oil, humble and holy, burning 700% as long³ – being
Less dependent on finite liquid fire, and more on the light within



“In every age, a hero or sage, came to our aid”
Who will be today's Maccabee – not Judith or Judah, but you and me
To hammer out justice, and freedom, and life, for all
What songs will our great-grandchildren one day sing about us?
Are we being good ancestors? Good guardians of this flame?

The Maccabees fought for Torah, not creature comforts
They wished to build something sacred, and sustainable
Their vision was vast, but within an 'us-versus-them' world
May we harness their light, their passion, their energy
Even knowing, as now we must, that we're all in this together



By the flickering Hannukah lights, remembering the miracles of yore
Let's rededicate ourselves to a vision that will outlast us
Not to might or power, not to coal and oil, but to Great Spirit⁴
To intergenerational, inter-group, inter-species solidarity.
On fossil fuels, and other false idols – let's get Maccabean.

¹ The 28th “Conference of Parties” (COP) to the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), thru 12/12. Nothing in our world matters more -- follow the vital goings-on! And follow up: with Dayenu.org, Adamah.org, COEJL.org, etc...

² *Kavannah* means ‘intention’; it's also a reflection, offered just before an action (like candle-lighting), to help set our intention.

³ This is no new connection: see JTA, 2006, “[An \(Energy Efficient\) Light to the Nations](#)”. And older still: the Jewish law against wasting things, *Bal Tashchit*, insists that we know our naphtha from our oil, so lamps burn efficiently (Talmud Shabbat 67b).

⁴ After Zechariah 4:6, in the haftarah for Shabbat Hannukah:

לֹא בְחֵיל וְלֹא בְכֹחַ כִּי אִם-בְּרוּחֵי אֱמֶר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת