

Taste the Joy!

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December 24, 2014



Chanukah is such a pleasure—every child’s (and adult’s) dream: you get to eat delicious (and fattening) food, play games for money (or chocolates), there are gifts...what more could you ask for in a holiday? But where is the soul of Chanukah? Childlike, I can enjoy the physical delights of Chanukah, but I also yearn to taste the spiritual delight of this special time. How can I access it? Through prayer. Rav Shmuel Shapira, one of the leading Breslover chassidim of this past generation, would spend a great deal of time and energy during Chanukah begging G-d to open the door for him so that he wouldn’t lose the precious opportunity afforded by the holiday.

There’s no need to be sophisticated about such prayers. Among earlier Breslover chassidim, seekers would make use of the mantra-like prayer recommended by Reb Nosson. At each festival, he suggested repeating over and over—allowing oneself to feel the yearning within the words—“*Hat’imeini taam Chanukah*”—“Help me taste the true essence of Chanukah.”

Master of the world: please help me take advantage of these special days. Help me to feel and know that if I’ll just take care, the light of the Chanukah candles can light my way throughout the year. Please, please, I beg of you: let me taste the spiritual delights and joy of Chanukah!