Hanukkah Legacies & Miracles:
A Honeymoon Israel conversation guide

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Hanukkah is more than ancient Jewish history about survival and miracles. It's an opportunity to make meaning of our legacies as both Jews and folks who are Jewish adjacent. This activity will inspire HMI participants to learn a bit about the Hanukkah story, and to center their own ancestors into the narrative of the Maccabees. By seeing our own family members as active creators of miracles and legacies, we can connect more intimately with values and freedoms fought for during the rededication of the Great Temple.

Pre-work (to do before your event):
Invite your HMI family to participate in this event! Ask them to bring with them a family heirloom (could be photos, jewelry, art, etc. from their ancestors, living or passed on). You will use these heirlooms (or photos of heirlooms if they can't bring the actual item) during the event.

Scaffolding (15 minutes):
- As a group, do a brief overview of the story of Hanukkah, just to make sure everyone at the event can participate from shared understanding about the meaning of Hanukkah. If your event is virtual, you can simply share this deck on your Zoom screen. If you are in person, you can ask everyone to bring this link up on their phones. Ask for volunteers to read aloud the text written on each slide.

- Discuss as a group the following prompt: "*OK, but what exactly were these Maccabees fighting for?*" (Potential responses might include: family, tradition, faith, freedom, preservation of holy space, religious sovereignty)

- As the host, wrap up by reading the following:
"Something I notice about the Hanukkah story is that it's a celebration marked by both intangible themes and physical artifacts. We have tangible things like menorahs, oil, a holy temple, candles, light, etc. We also have intangible imagery like legacy, miracles, rededication, restoration of faith in a time of anxiety, the idea of fighting for what you believe in, the idea that miracles actually increase in intensity as time passes. What all this boils down to is the preservation of the sacred, and the preservation of family and legacy. That's really what Hanukkah (and most holidays, to be fair) is all about! As we prepare ourselves as families to experience Hanukkah this year, I invite us all to explore some of intangible themes and tangible artifacts from our own families' legacies. In this way, we can see our own family members as active creators of miracles and legacies, and we can connect more intimately with values and freedoms the Maccabees fought for."

Activity (30 minutes, depending on the size of your group)
- As an HMI community, invite each participant to:

1. Share your family artifact and talk a little bit about the family member to whom it belonged/belongs
2. A sacred value you think your family member may have believed in and/or fought for
3. A miracle from your family member's life and/or legacy

If you are on Zoom, you can post these prompts in the chat so people can read them. We recommend no more than 8 people in a group for this activity, so split up into smaller groups if you have more people than that!

- Come back together as a large group. Thank everyone for sharing, and invite them to reflect on the link between the ancient story of the Maccabees and their own family's legacy. Some good debriefing prompts are listed below, but you can also close this activity in any way that feels meaningful to you!

Debrief prompts (5 minutes)
- How did it feel to publicly call your ancestors/family members into this space?
- How would your ancestor/family member have felt about you sharing their memory with this group?
- Whose family heirloom caught your eye during this activity? Which ancestor did you love hearing about?
- In what ways are you continuing the legacy of the Maccabees in your own family? As a family, what feels important to fight for? What feels worth protecting?

Light the Hanukkah candles together! (5 minutes)
Click here for a step-by-step guide for all your candle lighting needs!