

1. An 11th century *Yotzer* poem of Chanukah, **אודך כי אנפת בי ותשב**, translated by Dr. Sara Reguer
<http://opensiddur.org/prayers/lunar-cycle/commemorative-days/hanukkah/odekha-ki-anapta-hymn-first-shabbat-of-hanukah-yosef-bar-shlomo-of-carassone-circa-11th-c>

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| סְכַכְתָּנִי בַלַּיְלָה הַיָּא יְהוּדִית | But during that night, Judith came to my defense. |
| סוּדָה בְּרוּךְ וְשַׁעֲמָה עֲדִית | Her secret project was blessed and her reasoning excellent. |
| סוּחֲרָה לַעֲמָה וּלְיָוֶן לַפִּידִית. | She encouraged her people and was a torch of fire against Greece. |
| עִיר וַיִּשְׂחֶיָּהּ בְּלִשְׁרָה בְּחֻזְתָּהּ | Content that the city and its citizens were on the right path, |
| עֲלָצָה וְתוֹלָדָה עֲמָה שְׂפָתָהּ | She was very happy and went with her slave, |
| עַל ד' הַשְּׁלִיכָה יְהִבָּתָהּ. | And putting all of her hope in G-d |
| עֲמָדָה בְּרֹאשׁ מַחֲנֵה הָאֹיֵב | She stopped at the entrance of the enemy encampment |
| עֲלִיצוּתָיו לְהַפֵּךְ וְתִלְלוּ לְדֵיב | In order to undo their happiness and make them suffer |
| עַל רֹאשׁוֹ גָּמוּלוֹ לְחַיֵּב. | And feel the punishment for the sins of their leader. |

Question 1: The Story of Judith: Is it a Chanukah story?

2. Prof. Deborah Levine Gera, *The Jewish Textual Traditions* (<https://books.openedition.org/obp/986?lang=en>)
 The book opens with the successful campaign waged by Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Assyrians, against Arphaxad, king of the Medes. Nebuchadnezzar then sends his chief of staff, Holofernes, on an ambitious and punitive military campaign directed against those who did not join him in his earlier, successful war. All nations give way before Holofernes until he approaches the Jews, who decide to resist. The Jews of Bethulia must block the Assyrians' path to Jerusalem and its temple. Holofernes, who is unacquainted with the Jews, learns something of their history and religious beliefs from his ally, the Ammonite Achior. Despite Achior's warning that G-d may well defend His people, Holofernes places a siege on Bethulia. When water supplies run low, the people of the town press their leaders to surrender to the Assyrians and Uzziah, the chief leader, promises to capitulate if there is no relief within five days. It is at this point that the pious, beautiful widow, Judith, steps on stage. Judith, who leads an ascetic and solitary life, summons Uzziah and his fellow leaders to her home and reprimands them for their lack of faith in G-d. She then takes matters into her own hands. Judith prays, bathes, and removes her widow's weeds. "Dressed to kill," Judith leaves Bethulia for the enemy Assyrian camp, accompanied only by her faithful maid. The glamorous Judith charms and deceives Holofernes – as well as his trusty eunuch Bagoas – and promises to deliver the Jews to the Assyrians with G-d's help. In her dealings with Holofernes, Judith is not only beautiful, but sharp-witted. Her exchanges with the enemy commander are ironic and two-edged and her subtle, duplicitous words are one of the chief charms of the apocryphal book. Holofernes invites Judith to a party in order to seduce her, but he drinks a great deal of wine and collapses on his couch. Judith then seizes Holofernes's sword and cuts off the head of the sleeping general. She returns to Bethulia with Holofernes's head in a bag (and his canopy as well). Achior the Ammonite converts to Judaism when he learns of Judith's deed and sees the actual dead man's head. The Jews of Bethulia, following Judith's advice, subsequently take the offensive, attacking the Assyrian army and defeating them. Judith, praised by all, sings a victory song and then goes back to her quiet life at home. She lives until the ripe old age of 105 and is mourned by all of Israel when she dies.

3. Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein (19th-20th century Lithuania), *Aruch haShulchan Orach Chaim* 670:8

ועוד בהמשך הזמן נעשה גם ע"י יהודית שהשקתה את האויב חלב ועל סמך זה יש מדקדקין לאכול גבינה בחנוכה אף שלא היה זה בזמן גס חנוכה
 Also, later on a miracle happened via Judith, who fed the enemy milk. Based on this, there are those who are careful to eat dairy on Chanukah, even though this did not happen at the time of the miracle of Chanukah.

Question 2: What does Judith have to do with the Menorah?

4. Talmud, Shabbat 23a

אשה ודאי מדליקה, דאמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: נשים חייבות בנר חנוכה, שאף הן היו באותו הנס.

A woman definitely lights, for Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Women are obligated in the lamp of Chanukah, for they were also in that miracle.

5. Rashi (11th century France), Comment to Megilah 4a

שאף על הנשים גזר המן "להשמיד להרוג ולאבד... מנער ועד זקן טף ונשים וגו'."

Even upon the women, Haman decreed "to destroy, kill and eliminate... from young to old, children and women..."

6. Rashi (11th century France), Comment to Shabbat 23a

שגזרו יוונים על כל בתולות הנשואות להיבעל לטפסר תחלה, ועל יד אשה נעשה הנס.

Because the Greeks decreed that all women who were to be married for the first time would be taken by the general first, and because the miracle happened via a woman.

7. Tosafot (12th-13th century Western Europe), Comment to Pesachim 108b

היו באותו הנס - פ' רשב"ם שעל ידם נגאלו וכן במגילה ע"י אסתר ובחנוכה ע"י יהודית

"Were also in that miracle" - Rashbam explained that via them, they were redeemed. So, too, re: megilah via Esther, and Chanukah via Judith.

8. Talmud, Shabbat 21b

מאי חנוכה? דתנו רבנן: בכ"ה בכסליו יומי דחנוכה תמניא אינון, דלא למספד בהון ודלא להתענות בהון, שכשנכנסו יוונים להיכל תמאו כל השמנים שבהיכל, וכשגברה מלכות בית חשמונאי ונצחום בדקן ולא מצאו אלא פך אחד של שמן שהיה מונה בחותמו של כהן גדול, ולא היה בו אלא להדליק יום אחד נעשה בו נס והדליקו ממנו שמונה ימים. לשנה אחרת קבעום ועשאום ימים טובים בהלל והודאה.

What is Chanukah? Our sages taught: On the 25th of Kislev, there are eight days of Chanukah, when we neither eulogize nor fast. For when the Greeks entered the Sanctuary, they contaminated all of the oil in the Sanctuary, and when the monarchy of the house of the Chashmonaim mustered strength and defeated them, they searched and could find only one jug of oil marked with the seal of the kohen gadol. There was only enough to kindle for one day, but a miracle occurred and they kindled from it for eight days. The next year, they established them and made them festivals, with Hallel and thanks.

9. Rambam (12th century Egypt), Mishneh Torah, Laws of Megilah and Chanukah 3:1-2

בבית שני כשמלכו יון גזרו גזרות על ישראל ובטלו דתם ולא הניחו אותם לעסוק בתורה ובמצות, ופשטו ידם בממונם ובבנותיהם ונכנסו להיכל ופרצו בו פרצות וטמאו הטהרות... עד שריחם עליהם אלקי אבותינו והושיעם מידם והצילים וגברו בני חשמונאי הכהנים הגדולים והרגום והושיעו ישראל מידם והעמידו מלך מן הכהנים וחזרה מלכות לישראל יתר על מאתים שנה עד החורבן השני.

וכשגברו ישראל על אויביהם ואבדום בחמשה ועשרים בחדש כסלו היה ונכנסו להיכל ולא מצאו שמן טהור במקדש אלא פך אחד ולא היה בו להדליק אלא יום אחד בלבד והדליקו ממנו נרות המערכה שמונה ימים עד שכתשו זיתים והוציאו שמן טהור.

In the second Temple, when the Greeks reigned, they issued decrees upon Israel and eliminated their religion and did not allow them to involve themselves in Torah and mitzvot, and they extended their hand against their property and their daughters, and they entered the Sanctuary and broke through its structure and contaminated that which was pure... Until the Gd of our ancestors had mercy upon them and rescued them from their hand and saved them, and the Hasmoneans, the high priests, triumphed and killed them and rescued Israel from their hand and set up a king from among the priests, and monarchy returned to Israel for more than 200 years, until the second destruction.

And when Israel defeated their enemies and destroyed them, it was the 25th of Kislev, and they entered the Sanctuary and did not find pure oil in the Temple, only one jug. It contained enough to light for only one day, and they lit the ritual lamps with it for eight days, until they crushed olives and produced pure oil.

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10. Rambam (12th century Egypt), Mishneh Torah, Laws of Megilah and Chanukah 3:3

ומפני זה התקינו חכמים שבאותו הדור שיהיו שמונת הימים האלו שתחלתן מליל חמשה ועשרים בכסלו ימי שמחה והלל, ומדליקין בהן הנרות בערב על פתחי הבתים בכל לילה וליילה משמונת הלילות להראות ולגלות הנס, וימים אלו הן הנקראין חנוכה והן אסורין בהספד ותענית כימי הפורים, והדלקת הנרות בהן מצוה מדברי סופרים כקריאת המגילה.

Because of this, the sages of that generation enacted that these eight days, from the night of the 25th of Kislev, should be days of joy and Hallel, and they light lamps in the evening at the entrances of houses on each night of the eight nights, to demonstrate and reveal the miracle. And these days are called "Chanukah", and one may neither eulogize nor fast on them, like the days of Purim. And lighting lamps on them is a rabbinic mitzvah, like reading the megilah.

11. Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (20th c. USA), cited by Rabbi Shlomo Pick, *Moadei haRav* (Eng.) pg. 126

The Rav explained that there is a difference between "to demonstrate" (*le-har'ot*) and "to reveal" (*le-gallo*). "To demonstrate" means "to show," but "to reveal" means to proclaim that which is unknown... Thus, there are two aspects to the *pirsumei nissa* of the Chanukah candle: to show and demonstrate, and also to reveal. (1) To show and demonstrate, in order to cause others to focus their attention upon the miracle. This is achieved by lighting candles in a place that is open to the public eye. (2) To reveal – one must explain to the people the meaning of Chanukah, what the holiday represents, and why we fought the Hellenists. It is our duty to analyze the meaning of the miracle, that is, to reveal it.

12. Book of Judith, Chapter 13, Revised Standard Version

Now Judith had told her maid to stand outside the bedchamber and to wait for her to come out, as she did on the other days; for she said she would be going out for her prayers. She had said the same thing to Bagoas. So everyone went out, and no one, either small or great, was left in the bedchamber. Then Judith, standing beside his bed, said in her heart, "O Lord Gd of all might, look in this hour on the work of my hands for the exaltation of Jerusalem. Now indeed is the time to help Your heritage and to carry out my design to destroy the enemies who have risen up against us." She went up to the bedpost near Holofernes' head, and took down his sword that hung there. She came close to his bed, took hold of the hair of his head, and said, "Give me strength today, O Lord Gd of Israel!" Then she struck his neck twice with all her might, and cut off his head. Next she rolled his body off the bed and pulled down the canopy from the posts. Soon afterward she went out and gave Holofernes' head to her maid, who placed it in her food bag. Then the two of them went out together, as they were accustomed to do for prayer. They passed through the camp, circled around the valley, and went up the mountain to Bethulia, and came to its gates. From a distance Judith called out to the sentries at the gates, "Open, open the gate! Gd, our Gd, is with us, still showing His power in Israel and his strength against our enemies, as He has done today!"

When the people of her town heard her voice, they hurried down to the town gate and summoned the elders of the town. They all ran together, both small and great, for it seemed unbelievable that she had returned. They opened the gate and welcomed them. Then they lit a fire to give light, and gathered around them. Then she said to them with a loud voice, "Praise Gd, O praise Him! Praise Gd, who has not withdrawn His mercy from the house of Israel, but has destroyed our enemies by my hand this very night!"

Then she pulled the head out of the bag and showed it to them, and said, "See here, the head of Holofernes, the commander of the Assyrian army, and here is the canopy beneath which he lay in his drunken stupor. The Lord has struck him down by the hand of a woman. As the Lord lives, who has protected me in the way I went, I swear that it was my face that seduced him to his destruction, and that he committed no sin with me, to defile and shame me."

All the people were greatly astonished. They bowed down and worshiped Gd, and said with one accord, "Blessed are You our Gd, who have this day humiliated the enemies of Your people."

13. Rabbi Yosef Rosen (19th century Poland), *Tzofnat Paneiach* to Laws of Megilah and Chanukah 3:3

יש בזה ב' נסים א' מהגרות וגם מה שנצולו מן העכו"ם...

There are two miracles [commemorated] here: One is the lamps, and also their rescue from the idolaters...

14. Rabbi Menachem Meiri (13th century France), Commentary to Shabbat 21b

ואף על פי שבגאולת מצרים אין גומרין את ההלל אלא יום ראשון ולא אמרו לגמור בה' ימים של חג אלא שהקרבנות חלוקים לעצמם בכל יום, חנוכה שאני שבכל יום ויום היה הנס מתרבה ומתחדש יותר ולילה הראשון שלא היה שם נס השמן מברכין על הגאולה ועל הודאת מציאת הפך, ושאר הלילות על נס השמן.

And even though we only complete Hallel on the first day regarding the redemption from Egypt, and they only said to complete Hallel for the eight days of the [Succot] holiday because the korbanot are each distinct, Chanukah is different, for on each day the miracle grew and was renewed more. And on the first night, when there was no miracle of the oil, we bless for the redemption and for the news of the discovery of the oil, and on the other nights for the miracle of the oil [in addition to the redemption?].