

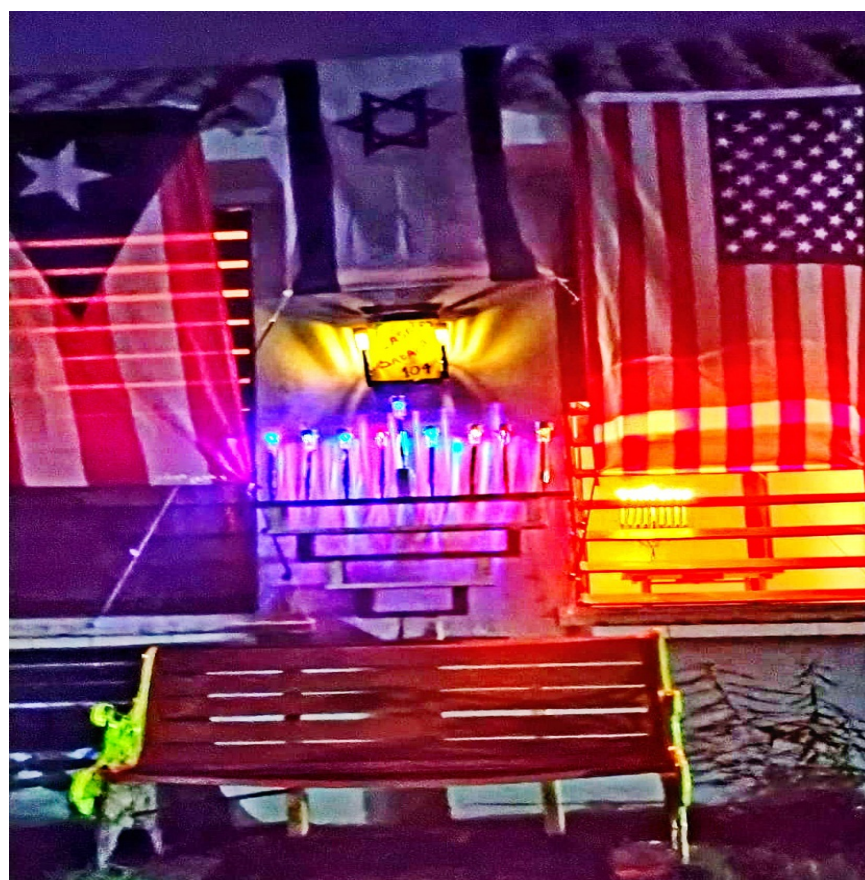
בס"ד

The Eighth Day

of Chanukah

or

**What To Do When The World
Goes The Wrong Way**



Jerry Waxman

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From The Desk Of *Jerry Waxman*

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January 8, the eighth day of 2025

Artificial Intelligence was not used in any portion of this report.
Not a whole lot of any intelligence was available, for that matter.

Happy 2025, all year!

New Year's Day is a single day. So I won't cut you short by wishing you a happy new year.

Preface

I had a dream about you. That is why I am writing to you today. Something is telling me this moment cannot be complete until I tell you all about my dream.

In my dream, you are always smiling. Always. Because for you there is no longer a cause not to smile. In my dream, you have let go of all the wedges that have come between you and other people in your circle. One day they will let go of the same wedges. It may be sad to think such wedges stayed around so long, but now that they are gone, the pains they caused are gone with them. In my dream you have not only come to terms with who you are and where you are in the scheme of things, you have actually achieved peace.

I don't remember what we said, or if we said anything at all, in my dream. I don't have any idea where we were, the location seemed to be arbitrary. I don't even recall doing anything in particular. I just remember that you found peace and happiness when you allowed yourself to find it, and ever since, you have been smiling without effort. And it all came about when you took the time to read a report called, "The Eighth Day Of Chanukah," and then took its message to heart.

Part One

Out From The Darkness

A few nights ago, it was New Year's Eve. It was also the eve of a new moon, a monthly holiday on the Hebrew calendar called Rosh Chodesh. I think it is pretty rare that both the sun and the moon are celebrated on the same day.

The night of a new moon is, of course, dark. In Puerto Rico, an island-wide blackout amplified the darkness somewhat, making us even more appreciative of the stars...and the quiet. Were it not for late night fireworks, we might have entered the seventh day of Chanukah, the first day of the month of Tevet, and the first day of the year 2025 under just the light from the stars and the sound of the sea. And that would've been just fine with me.

In Aguadilla, the lights came back on early in the morning of January 1st. They

went off again early that afternoon. The eighth night of Chanukah was beautifully dark, and quiet. Mine was the only house in the neighborhood with eight candles and a shamash (the middle candle) showing in the window. On the outside of the house, there was also a large display menorah with multi-colored solar-powered candles.

When I looked at my home from the outside, I had what you might call a moment of zen - a revelation of sorts. In the midst of a world in turmoil, continuing strife in Israel, wars in Africa, Ukraine, and Israel, and a divided America that had just elected a convicted felon and adjudicated rapist to the highest office in the land, at Casa Sababa (my name for my home) on the eighth night of Chanukah, the Chanukah candles were the only things you could see . . . and the only things that mattered.

How To Escape - That's The Question

If you board a city bus that is going the wrong way, you can get off at the next stop a few blocks down, and cross the street.

If you get on a train that is going the wrong way, you will have to wait a little longer and farther away from your destination before you can get off the train and find one going in the right direction.

If you board an airplane that goes the wrong direction, your problems are even bigger, and correcting them will take more time.

If you're on a world that is going the wrong way . . .

In a way we are kind of trapped. In another way, we don't have to be trapped. As I told you above, outside my house is a big Chanukah menorah, the only one in my neighborhood. Above the menorah is a flag of Israel. The front of the house is shouting, "A Jew lives here!"

I am aware of Jews in America who, out of fear, will not display anything that would give them away. I am also aware that a thread of antisemitism extends to the island I am on. I don't know if the threat is real or not in my neighborhood. Which means that with the display in front of my house, I know I am taking a risk, I just don't know how big a risk. And it doesn't matter. I chose this path independently of the direction the world is going.

When the world is going the wrong way, the best way I can think of to escape it, is to go the right way.

Where To Go

In the physical world there are six directions to look - leftward, rightward, forward, backward (or rearward), upward, and downward - six wards of the physical universe.

We people have a seventh direction, inward. This ward is like an invisible layer of our existence. It is the mind, where we examine the intricate aspects of who we are and where we are going and the meaning of it all. It is not part of the physical world. I guess you could call it a metaphysical layer.

The mind is where signals from the brain, heart, and gut all collide, collude, and try to figure things out. Through different combinations of thought and knowledge, emotions and feelings, intuitions and basic needs, we reach decisions about our lives. The mind, though it is not a physical thing, is kind of like the engine that mobilizes our physical selves.

On the Hebrew calendar there are six days in a week to interact in the physical world. We get six days to work, drive, travel, draw, paint, cook meals, clean the house, write stories, and do all sorts of mundane tasks and creative things. Then the seventh day is dedicated to inward journeys, a day to sit back, relax, and reflect, and grow in wisdom. Not that you can't do these things on the other six days. You can. But the seventh day is specifically set aside for meditation and introspection. That's the Hebrew calendar.

The Hebrew calendar does not have an eighth day of the week. It does have an eighth day of Chanukah. It does not have an eighth day of the week because the eighth layer of existence is way beyond the realm of human experience. The seventh layer, our metaphysical mind, is hard enough to comprehend, and we are using our minds all the time.

The eighth layer is beyond metaphysical. It is where supernatural events, otherwise known as miracles, happen. I am not well-equipped at all to talk about the eighth layer of our existence. But I think there is a story that illustrates how we connect with it.

How We Connect With The 8th Layer

It is a story of the Maccabees, the Jewish zealots who eventually defeated the Seleucid army and took over control of Judea in the 2nd century B.C.E. There are many stories of the Maccabees' conquests, and they are all miraculous. But the only miracle that got attention was the miracle of the candle.

The Maccabees took control of the Great Temple, and immediately went to work to clean it up thoroughly, and rededicate it to serve the Jewish people as it was intended. After getting rid of all the Greek gods and remnants of unkosher sacrifices, and after repairing things that had been damaged, the last thing they needed to do to dedicate the Temple was also the most important. They had to light the eternal flame. They could not use any old oil for it. They had to use olive oil that was specially prepared for this purpose. That kind of oil takes about a week to prepare. Miraculously they found a jar of certified kosher temple oil, and they didn't hesitate to use it right away.

But there was a problem. The amount of oil they found was only enough to keep the flame lit for one day. The Maccabees decided to light the flame to complete the dedication of the Temple. I can only suppose that their plan was to re-light it a week later, when they had more oil. But then something happened. The eternal flame kept going more than one day. In fact, it kept burning eight days total, enough time to process more oil to keep it burning longer.

This was a certified miracle, and an annual celebration, Chanukah, was proclaimed. All Jews already know this story. We all learned it like a fairy tale back when we were kids. What we didn't learn was what it has to do with us today.

There is no Temple today. Most Jews do not live in Israel today. Those who do live in Israel are having a terrible time right now. Antisemitism is on the rise all over the world, so times are not especially great for us either. The story of the candle is a nice story, but how does it apply to us, in the real world, today?

My answer is that it applies to us today as much as ever because the world is going the wrong way. As a small, but significant sample of what I'm talking about, look at what is happening in America right now.

How Things Are Shaping Up

At the time of this writing, Joe Biden is still president, and I am confident he is doing all in his power to provide protections for us against what is coming. However, if we recall what happened eight years ago (Interesting how the number eight comes up again.), we should realize that what is coming is actually worse than what we are now expecting.

Americans just elected a convicted felon, a fraud who is also an adjudicated rapist and serial liar, who, owing to his extreme narcissism, incited an

insurrection which, according to the Constitution, disqualifies him from holding office. To add to the dangers we face, the Constitution is not held in the esteem it once was by the political party that brought the incompetent, delusional president-elect to power. Neither is it held in the esteem it once was by a corrupt and politically-driven Supreme Court whose recent decisions have been to the detriment of the American people, and favorable to just one man, the one who just got elected to the highest office in the land.

The fact that a corrupt, deranged conman and threat to national security, with an agenda to rule with dictatorial powers, will occupy the office of president is not the most disconcerting thing about the world we are in right now. The most disconcerting thing is that so many Americans voted for him and support him. And they voted for him precisely because he has no morals.

That is the world we are in. We should expect antisemitism to rise. We should expect greater divisions and more turmoil.

In short, the world is going the wrong way, and we can expect it to keep spinning the wrong way, maybe even faster.

This is the same scenario that faced the Maccabees in the second century B.C.E.

Part Two

How To Escape While Staying Put

Step 1. Know who you are and be that person

A few days ago was New Year's Day. It was also a day following an evening of a new moon. That meant it was Rosh Chodesh, which is a monthly celebration for Jewish people. To everyone else within miles, it was the first day of the year 2025. To me, it was also the first day of the month of Tevet in the year 5785.

Moreover, that evening was the evening of the eighth day of Chanukah. The eighth night of Chanukah was beautifully dark, and quiet. Mine was the only house in the neighborhood with eight candles and a shamash (the middle candle) showing in the window. On the outside of the house, there was also a large display menorah with multi-colored solar-powered candles under an Israeli flag.

My home was the only one in the neighborhood with a Chanukah display. I was likely the only person in the neighborhood whose celebration of his holiday was dampened severely by the thought that 100 hostages in Gaza were unable

to celebrate these special days.

I admit that I was hesitant to display anything that might arouse the bad intentions of people who are against Israel and don't like Jews. I weighed the possibility that it may make my neighbors uncomfortable. Fortunately, my neighbors told me they were happy with what I created, and I received unsolicited compliments. So that made step 1 a bit easier for me.

Step 2. Remove the noise

For many years I have gotten news from sources on the internet. Sometimes the sources have been television networks that have streamed parts of their programming.

More recently, I added Social Media to my list of sources of information. There are, for instance, YouTube channels that are like news and information channels, each with their own take on what is going on in the world.

From the start of my news and information gathering, I ruled out networks like Fox News - agenda driven networks that specialize in misinformation. The fact was, I didn't need to watch Fox News to know what was on Fox News, because the reporters on the channels I did watch, regularly played clips from Fox News. I wished that they didn't, but they did.

About a year ago, I noticed something else. Joe Biden had been president for nearly three years already, and I hardly ever heard anything about him. In contrast to that, every news source played news about the former 45th president every day. Now I had hoped that after he was no longer president I would not have to hear his voice again, or see his image.

It wasn't just his callousness in bullying and berating and mocking people who were less powerful than him. It wasn't just the childishness of a grown man calling people names and picking schoolyard fights. It wasn't just the vast ignorance of a man who once held the highest office in the land, nor the immense stupidity of the people who surrounded and supported him.

All these things put together were more than enough reason to wish never to see or hear him or his supporters ever again.

However I could suffer these personality deficits for a few minutes per month if there was any substance to what he said. There wasn't. He was and is incapable of speaking two sentences without at least one of them being untrue, a

gross distortion, or intended misinformation. If the man ever has an original thought, it is a lie waiting to be told.

There is nothing to learn or gain from a liar like that. And yet after thinking about it, I discovered that this one aging and diseased figment of a man has been given a platform on every single news station and streaming service every single day for the last eight years, at least. That, together with all the nonsense from his sycophants and supporters, adds up to a lot of pure noise.

There is a lot more nonsense all over the media that is not connected to politics. It is just more noise - cyber pollution. To retain health and sanity, I decided to turn it all off. About six months ago, catalyzed by a traumatic event in my personal life, I removed myself from much of the noise. This was not just for reasons of health and sanity, but also, for personal reasons, to regain clarity and focus. I continued to listen to a few sources. I found that life was more bearable without the noise. I found that I was better able to find likeable things about life when my mind was less polluted.

After the election I went full throttle on eliminating the noise from my life. I stopped looking at all news and information sources. I stopped using the man's name in speech and writing. I even stopped watching late night comedy shows because I don't even want to see impersonations or hear jokes about the president elect.

For two months and counting, I have not heard the voice nor seen an image of the president elect. And you want to know something weird? Life smells a lot better now.

Step 3. Enjoy

When the Maccabees rededicated the Temple, and lit the menorah, I am pretty sure they celebrated. Wars were still going on. The Greeks still controlled Jerusalem. Whatever gains the Maccabees had made could easily slip away from them. So, it was the right time to celebrate, for it could possibly be the only time to celebrate.

There is another reason it was the right time to celebrate. The Maccabees and the Jewish men and women who joined them were in the middle of recovering their heritage, the rituals and traditions that made them who they were. There were still battles to be fought. But lighting of the Temple's menorah (a candelabra with seven candlesticks) was not unlike the pinnacle of success. It

was a very public reminder that the Jews could come back and be Jews again. And moreover, lighting the menorah was a stupendous act of defiance against the oppressors.

After the election, I became an advocate for boycotting everything that is wrong with this world. News media, Twitter, the Republican party, as well as the antisemitic elements in the Democratic party, the NRA, the Supreme Court, talk shows, and a whole lot of other things came to mind. It's not practical, and there probably is not a collective will to do it, but it was something that came to my mind as a fantasy.

What I have heard, though, is that many people have broken ties with those who supported the president-elect. It's understandable. If someone is supportive of a candidate who has an agenda to harm you or someone in your family, why would you want to spend time with him? If someone values the company of white nationalists, neo-Nazis, Oath keepers, Proud Boys, and Ku klux klansmen, that is really not an ideal companion for many people.

But . . . I think there has to be a line drawn, a line we want to avoid crossing. Family, neighbors, friends, they are people we would enjoy life with if only we could lift these arbitrary wedges that have come between us.

I have heard and read about people getting divorced because of the election, parents who don't want their kids home for Thanksgiving because of the election, long-time friendships ending because of the election. To tell the truth, I hope this trend stops soon. I don't know how to explain this well, but these divisions are what the ones in power want. We don't defy them by breaking off from our friends. We more likely hurt ourselves even more than we are hurt already.

If we take a tip from the Maccabees, I believe we can remove these wedges that have been driven between us and other people. Politicians, elected leaders of our communities, together with irresponsible journalists, have driven these wedges, and it helps them keep control. The Maccabees found a way - most likely inadvertently - to lift the wedges, and everybody got to enjoy a better life.

Enjoyment of life is not only good for physical and mental health. It is not only beneficial for the whole community. But to enjoy yourself in the face of a world moving in the wrong direction is a severe act of defiance. The coming oligarch would crumble if all its subjects enjoyed their lives independently of anything the leaders did to make their lives worse.

Part Three

The Eighth Layer Connects

In the days of yore, before the Maccabees began their revolt, the Greeks instituted a Hellenization program. This was a program by which Jews would become Greek by replacing Jewish traditions with Greek culture. The Greeks were obsessed with the body and outward beauty, while the Jews, up to that point, had little to worry about when it came to physical beauty, and were more interested in inner beauty and ethics. Study of Torah demands a different kind of discipline than training for athletic events or artistic performances, and the Jews in Judea and Jerusalem were easily attracted to the Hellenization program.

The Hellenization program was all about the six directions of the physical world, with superficial tinkering in the seventh meta-physical world of the mind.

At the time the Maccabees began to fight back, the majority of the Jewish population was already Hellenized. It was very similar to what we find among modern American Jews, many of whom know the names of professional football players, and the reindeer on Santa's sleigh, but they don't know who the Jewish patriarchs were or why they are important.

When the Maccabees began their campaign to make Jerusalem Jewish again, they did not get much support from fellow Jews. After a few battles in which the Maccabees emerged victorious over the massive Greek army, many Hellenized Jews joined the Greeks. Not a typo. Hellenized Jews were so immersed in the Greek ways that they were willing to take up arms against fellow Jews.

This is also something we see today, albeit at a different level. A lot of Jewish people have sided with the anti-Israel activists. They may comfort themselves by saying that anti-Israel does not mean antisemitic. That is a delusion. The notion that a Jewish state should not exist, is by definition an antisemitic notion.

Anyway, back to the time of the Maccabees. They kept winning battles. And with each battle they won, they gained more support from Hellenized Jews. When they re-dedicated the Temple - well, just imagine you were in Jerusalem at the time. You witnessed the struggles and hardships the Maccabees endured, only to reach this moment when they take over what once was the center of all Jewish life.

Something is going to click inside you. You will see the eternal flame and a

spark is going to wake up a part of you that connects you with the Maccabees. A memory flash, or a fragrance of something in the oven, or a melody, or maybe just something someone says. Some feeling will come and tell you that no matter how hellenized you've become, deep down you want to see the Maccabees prevail. You want to prevail with them. You want to make Jerusalem Jewish again. That **spark** is how the eighth layer of all existence speaks to you.

While the Greeks walked around repeating slogans like, "The Jews will not replace us," meanwhile, more and more Hellenized Jews were supporting and joining the zealots. In my opinion, what happened next was made possible by all the people who came back to the side of the Maccabees.

What happened next? Well, once they had cleaned up the Temple really well, the last thing the Maccabees had to do was light the menorah. So they did, knowing full well the oil for the menorah would last only one day. That one day would be a very special day, and they could worry about the next day when they came to it.

That one day - the 25th day of the month of Kislev, on the Hebrew calendar - became a day of celebration and joy - even though there was still fighting all around and the oppressive Seleucid regime was still in control. With the Temple restored and the eternal flame burning, can you imagine any Jewish person, hellenized or not, staying home when others are celebrating.

Even if it was just one day. Even knowing that the flame would go out the next day, and the Greeks could potentially take back the Temple, well "Seize the day!" Right? When life gives you a reason and a chance to celebrate, you celebrate.

So the whole scene with the Temple restored, the flame burning, and the Jewish people happy and celebrating, was a tremendous act of defiance against the oppressors. Even if it would last only one day.

Wouldn't you know it? The next day came, and the eternal flame kept going. The Maccabees were Cohanim - members of the priestly tribe - so they and other priests resumed their duties in the Temple, which brought more unaffiliated Jews closer to them.

Battles still raged outside, and the Greek armies were very powerful. Nevertheless, the priests continued to do their priestly duties in the Temple while more and more members of the other tribes re-dedicated themselves to being who they always were - the Jewish people - practically oblivious to the dangers that lurked around them.

The flame from the one jar of oil burned for eight days, while new oil was processed to keep the Temple going. It was a miracle. A real miracle, witnessed by scores of people who had once lost touch with their own miraculous heritage. The Maccabees had proved that when you dedicate yourself fully to doing the right thing, you get Help. This is how the Eighth Layer of our existence connects with us.

Conclusion

Our World And The Eighth Day (Layer)

In my dream, you have achieved peace.

The Hebrew word for peace is "Shalom." It means "whole" or "complete." The opposite of peace is something that is not whole, its pieces are separated. The opposite of peace is frustration and anger. Children become frustrated easily whenever they don't get what they want. Children believe they are not complete without the things they think they want.

Adults have learned to manage their expectations, and therefore anger much less easily than children. Still there are wedges that separate adults from one another. If a person consistently causes you pain, it is awful hard to be at peace with that person. My dream is that you have come to terms with everybody who is important to you, so that whatever they do does not cause you pain anymore. Even if they try to cause you pain, you are able to defy their intentions, transcend the noise they make, and be at peace with who they are.

Our world is about to fall into the hands of children - men and women who are always angry, and who make decisions based upon their perceived sources of frustration. These men and women lack the tools to manage their expectations, and to comprehend or empathize with the plight of other people. They were elected by angry people who are immersed in noise and blocked from reality.

The upcoming leaders of our world have already proven their capacity for causing turmoil, and they have already told us of their intentions to cause more turmoil. The angry people who support them will be told to direct their anger at other people, like you and me, and they will.

My dream is that we all have achieved peace in spite of the way the world is going. If we stay true to ourselves and do what is right, and we transcend the noise that is untrue, then the greatest act of defiance will be to enjoy ourselves and our lives. If we choose this direction and dedicate ourselves to sticking to it,

I believe we will receive Help from the Eighth Layer. It may anger some people more, but it may also impress some people who want to join us.

When the world is going the wrong way, the best way to deal with it is to go the right way.

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