



**Rabbi Steve Adams**

# What's Nu From the Rabbi's Desk

A number of years ago there was a book titled, "O God" which was made into a popular movie. Singer John Denver was a store clerk who begins communicating with God, played by comedian George Burns. It

is a cute story which raises all sorts of interesting theological questions, yet what I remember most clearly is a discussion about miracles.

John Denver's character asks God if he still performs miracles. God's response, "well the 1969 Mets was the last one, before that you'd have to go back to the Red Sea." I guess that in the last two years we could add the miracles of the Boston Red Sox and the Chicago White Sox World Series victories as well. There have also been many miracles in between the two mentioned in the movie, miracles worth our consideration at this time.

In The Six Day War in 1967, Israel was faced with the threat of attack from all sides. Yet in less than one week, the Jewish State had not only defended itself, but had soundly defeated all the attacking forces. Perhaps another miracle is that in the many years since, at least half of those countries have signed peace treaties with Israel. Our very survival through four thousand years of struggles and challenges is surely a miracle. Not only did we survive the Holocaust, we also kept our high ideals, even though it would have been easy and understandable to succumb to more base and violent impulses. The creation of Israel in modern

times is a miracle, as is the high level of culture, technology, intellectual discourse and democracy that exists there. And even when we go back in time, many years after the "parting of the Sea of Reeds" we have the story of the Maccabees, a small band of people who defeat the mighty Hellenistic-Assyrian forces to maintain religious freedom for a period of years.

This month we celebrate that mighty miracle of the Maccabees during Chanukah. We often speak of the miracle of the oil that lasted eight days, yet that is only the second miracle. The first miracle is the victory of the Maccabees. This is a reminder that most miracles are not supernatural. Miracles are not always as obvious or monumental as the parting of the sea. In fact we all experience miracles every day.

As we look ahead to the Chanukah season, let us consider some of the more common miracles in our lives. Our families and the type of love we experience, unconditionally, is one miracle. Life itself is one of the greatest miracles. The beauty of our world, the changes of the seasons and the rhythm of our lives are miraculous events that we often take for granted. The rabbis viewed every day as a new creation, thereby acknowledging the miraculous in that which we see before us all the time.

On Chanukah we say, "A Great Miracle Happened There". We praise God, Who did wonders for our ancestors in ancient days at this season. Why don't we also give thanks for the miracles that happen here and now and in doing so add meaning to the beauty of our own existence today?

Chag Haorim Sameiach — Have a Happy Festival of Lights