

I know its way too early but I found myself recently browsing Hanukkah stuff online. The days are shortening and I don't know about you, but I'm just about ready to get real cozy.

Hanukkah in my life has undergone a curious transformation. During my blissful twenties and thirties, when the Jewish world was my proverbial kosher oyster, I would think 'oh, this is just a minor festival'. Instead, all the weight of my experience was placed on the High Holidays and Passover. High Holiday retreats; shul-hopping, long and thoughtful Elul prep. Big Seders put on without a worry and with no children

underfoot. I paid less attention to a small celebration with drippy candles in December. Besides, no-one was going to buy me presents

Every mitzvah we perform, every part of Jewish culture we sample, enjoy and support, every Jewish movie we watch or Jewish book we read or Jewish recipe we cook adds to the continued thriving and flourishing of our people.

If I reflect on the reasons why Hanukkah is so popular (despite its minor status as a holiday) in the USA, of course the 'December Dilemma' comes up. Cynics might comment that it's the fierce competition with Christmas that drives Hanukkah's success, but I don't think that is the only possible answer.

Despite Hanukkah's weird, eclectic origins (part revolt, part civil war, part miracle, part Talmudic reimagining), I think Hanukkah's magic lies in its synergy of Jewish pride and joy. Hanukkah is a holiday that invites us to both rally internal resources of light and an externalized confidence to share and shine that light outwards. Hanukkah is that

time of year where our candles are lit in the windows and our social media feeds light up with beautiful photos of said candles. It's a time to be