

D'var Torah - Linda and Florence

When Chanukah falls on Shabbat, there is a special haftorah reading from the book of Zechariah.

Zechariah was a prophet in late 4th, early 5th centuries BCE. He foresees the destruction of the 2nd Temple, and also prophecies the destruction and rebuilding of the Temple and the Jewish community.

In the book of Zechariah, Zechariah has 8 Visions accompanied by an angel-like figure (in case he has questions). (This could be the Jewish version of Dickens' Christmas Carol!)

Zechariah's 5th vision is a menorah (7 branches - reference to kind in 1st temple). On either side of the menorah is an olive tree. Each olive tree has branches connected to menorah. (Olive oil in those days was used to light the menorah.) In the vision, olive from olive trees is fueling the lights on the menorah. With the olive branches connected, the flames will continuously burn! The olive branches are also a sign of peace!

The angel explains to Zechariah that this vision is G-d's word to Zerubbabel. What's very interesting is that Zerubbabel is not a priest, not a king, but a secular leader of the community, like Florence Ross!

The angel tells Zechariah that G-d's message to Zerubbabel is **NOT BY MIGHT, NOT BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT!** The commentary is that Zerubbabel will succeed by spirit from G-d.

Not by Might, Not by Power, But by my Spirit! This could be Florence Ross's credo! Couldn't it?

At Chanukah, we recall the Maccabees rising up against the Syrians. We also remember that one of first acts after victory was **RESTORING** the temple and lighting the menorah – of course, we celebrate the miracle of the small amount of oil lasting for 8 days.

Does the Chanukah story have any relationship to our dear Florence Ross?

Let's see.

✧ Chanukah is...

A

Story of bravery

Story of action

Story of standing up for one's principles

Story of standing up for religious freedom

Story of standing up for one's identity and one's truth

✧ Story of **REBELS** and **REBELLION**

Story of self-determination

Story of FAITH
Story of DEDICATION
Story of visions of peace

- ✧ Story of NOT GIVING UP
 - Story of OPTIMISM and hope for the future
 - Story of building community
 - Story of restoration
 - Story of positive outcome

- ✧ Story of bringing Light into one's life, and the lives of others
 - Story of MIRACLES!
 - Story of JOY!
 - Story of the Infinite and
 - Story for perpetuity!

This is also the story of Florence Ross, grandmother of the world. Don't you agree?