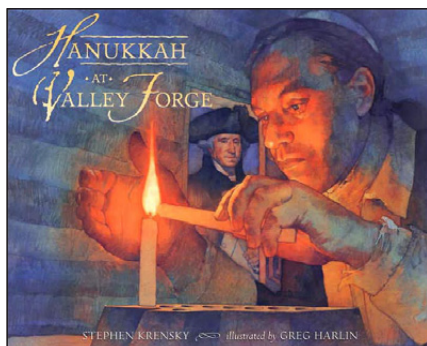


HANUKKAH AT VALLEY FORGE

Written by Stephen Krensky
Illustrated by Greg Harlin



In this fact-based story of the Revolutionary War, a Jewish soldier from Poland lights a Hanukkah menorah and has the opportunity to share the story of the Maccabees with his superior officer, General George Washington.

“**T**he general watched from the doorway in silence. The soldier was lighting a candle. The flame flickered for a moment and then grew steady. All the while, the soldier was speaking softly...”

As he recited the words of the *bracha* (blessing) that accompanies the lighting of the *Hanukkah* candles. This book shows that there are parallels whenever people take the difficult steps to bring about—whether during the time of the Maccabees, the American colonists, or the present day. The unnamed soldier in this book tells George Washington the story of that band of determined Jews who fought against great odds for freedom, not only for themselves but for those in future generations. Explore with your children some important questions raised by this book:

- What makes freedom important for all people?
- Why are some people willing to risk their lives for others' freedom?
- How can just a few ever defeat many?
- How can we show respect for those who safeguard the freedoms we enjoy?

Consider with your children the similarities in struggles for freedom, including the American Revolution and the Maccabee rebellion so long ago. Help them to understand that there are places in the world where similar struggles continue to this day.

HANUKKAH LIGHT

A major theme of *Hanukkah* is light—light that dispelled the darkness felt by those entering the defiled holy Temple in Maccabean times, light that gave hope on the freezing battlefields of Valley Forge, and light that reminds us of the value of religious freedom. How can light be kept alive in the world? One way is by following the example of the soldier in this book, who recited these *brachot* (blessings) on each night of *Hanukkah*:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Hanukkah.

Praised are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to kindle the Hanukkah lights.

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, she-asah nisim la-avoteinu, bayamim haheim, (u)baz'man hazeh.

Praised are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Who performed wondrous deeds for our ancestors, in those days, at this season.

On the first night only, the following blessing is added:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, shehecheyanu, v'kiyemanu, vehigi-anu laz'man hazeh.

Praised are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Who has kept us in life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season. Pj