



THE BORROWED HANUKKAH LATKES

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Rachel's mother invites their neighbor for dinner on Hanukkah, but the woman really doesn't want to be a bother.

In *The Borrowed Hanukkah Latkes*, Mrs. Greenberg's warmth and generosity endear her to Rachel and her family. This is easy to understand; many of us know someone to whom we aren't related but whose ways make us feel as if we are. Mrs. Greenberg clearly longs for companionship, but as with many older people, she doesn't want to be a bother. She recounts a memory of her house being "filled with people...But that was a long time ago." Here is a lesson perhaps especially pertinent during *Hanukkah** and the holidays, when elders' memories of happy, earlier days are often crystallized, comforting and saddening at the same time.

This presents wonderful opportunities to teach the lessons of the *mitzvah* (sacred responsibility) of *v'hadarta p'nei zaken*, care and respect for elders. A simple invitation to a holiday celebration could be an act that makes a tremendous difference in the life of an older person. Branch out! Make it a habit of your holidays to share them with the elderly—perhaps someone who comes from a different culture or religion. You might transport your celebration to that person's home, as Rachel's family did. What a satisfying and lasting lesson of inclusion for children to learn early in life!

HANUKKAH LATKES

Jewish holidays often have foods associated with them. For example, *Rosh Hashanah*, the Jewish New Year, has its apples and honey. *Hanukkah* is known for *latkes*, hot and fragrant potato pancakes. In Israel, *sufganyot*, jelly-filled doughnuts, are traditional. These treats, many of which are fried, are reminders of *Hanukkah's* ancient miracle, in which the Jews who retook the Holy Temple from the Syrian army found only enough consecrated lamp oil to last one day but which burned for eight.

Through the ages, latkes have remained a staple for *Hanukkah*. Although contemporary cooks may work to make the basic latke extraordinary through use of ingredients such as spinach or wild rice, the latke remains a simple food, accessible to most and one which lends itself to preparing enough for a crowd, as in the case of Rachel's family.

*The transliterated word *Hanukkah* can be spelled in many different ways—including *Chanukah*, *Channukah*, *Chanuka*, etc. Pj