

Chanukah—Rededication—Transmuting Darkness Into Light

In his book, *Seasons of Our Joy*, Rabbi Arthur Waskow explains that “by the twenty-fifth of Kislev, [the beginning of Chanukah, as for] every lunar month, the moon has gone into exile... And late in Kislev, close to the moment of winter solstice, the sun is also in exile... It is the darkest moment of the year... At this dark moment we celebrate Chanukah...by lighting candles for eight nights. Night after night, the candle-light increases. And **night after night, we make our way into, through, and out of the darkness.**”

Let this be an invitation to explore the relationship we have with the “darkness” we see **without** and **within**. This worksheet is intended to support a deepening of our connection with the essence of Chanukah through these eight days. Choose one topic that holds energies of “darkness” (shadow energies) for you right now. As you stay present to this “darkness,” let it be your teacher, allowing it to reveal the rays of light that shine from its center.

LIGHT OF AWARENESS – “Darkness” I am aware of:

1st Candle: What is the “darkness” I see in the world that I seek to hold in the light of awareness?

2nd Candle: How is this “darkness” I see in the outer world also reflected within, in my own life/self?

LIGHT OF SILENT CONTEMPLATION – Being present to the “darkness:”

3rd Candle: I bear witness in contemplative silence to the ways this “darkness” manifests the world.

4th Candle: I bear witness in contemplative silence to the ways this “darkness” manifests in my life/self.

LIGHT OF INQUIRY – What the heart spontaneously reveals as a response to witnessing:

5th Candle: Sourcing from the silent spaciousness within, what response is naturally and effortlessly kindled within me to the “darkness” I see in the world?

6th Candle: Sourcing from the silent spaciousness within, what response is naturally and effortlessly kindled within me to the “darkness” I see in my life/self?

LIGHT OF MANIFESTATION –Actualizing what was uncovered:

7th Candle: What action do I resolve to take—sourced from the response I discerned—to bring my unique light to the “darkness” I see in the world?

8th Candle: What action do I resolve to take—sourced from the response I discerned—to bring my unique light to the “darkness” I see in my life/self?

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An Example

One Topic: Racism. For this example I will only write the possible beginning (first sentence) of what could be a much longer journaling process each night.

LIGHT OF AWARENESS – “Darkness” I am aware of:

1st Candle: What is the “darkness” I see in the world that I seek to hold in the light of awareness?

In light of the recent events in our country it is clear to me that our nation suffers from endemic racism; the causes of which may stem from... (Bring as much awareness about the topic as possible)

2nd Candle: How is this “darkness” I see in the outer world also reflected within, in my own life/self?

I am aware that I see this racism being also part of my being, part of my own conditioning, learned from earlier experiences in my life and my upbringing such as... (Bring as much awareness as possible)

LIGHT OF SILENT CONTEMPLATION – Being present to the “darkness:”

3rd Candle: I bear witness in contemplative silence to the ways this “darkness” manifests the world.

I simply sit with the images, the ways I witness racism being expressed in the world, some subtle, some not so subtle. I am present to what is without judging, neither justifying nor condemning.

4th Candle: I bear witness in contemplative silence to the ways this “darkness” manifests in my life/self.

I repeat what I did with the 3rd candle, looking at how racism manifests in me; simply being with the truth of what-is, observing myself in these moments, watching my emotions etc... Not judging, just witnessing.

LIGHT OF INQUIRY – What the heart spontaneously reveals as a response to witnessing:

5th Candle: Sourcing from the silent spaciousness within, what response is naturally and effortlessly kindled within me to the “darkness” I see in the world?

In silence the still small voice within reveals to me ways to shine light into the darkness. I remain with it until there is a knowing of what is asking to be acted upon.

6th Candle: Sourcing from the silent spaciousness within, what response is naturally and effortlessly kindled within me to the “darkness” I see in my life/self?

In silence the still small voice reveals to me the healing light needed to chip away at my own racism.

LIGHT OF MANIFESTATION –Actualizing what was uncovered:

7th Candle: What action do I resolve to take—sourced from the response I discerned—to bring my unique light to the “darkness” I see in the world?

However big the answer I sourced might be to respond to racism in my country I resolve to take one step, my own step (however little) to bring light to this issue. I name it and commit to act on it now.

8th Candle: What action do I resolve to take—sourced from the response I discerned—to bring my unique light to the “darkness” I see in my life/self?

I repeat what I did with the 7th candle, this time, with the one-step resolution aimed at healing myself.