

Our Hanukkah celebration always coincides with our reading of the Joseph story, for some reason.

In this week's parashah, Vayeshev, we learn of how Joseph, the favored son, becomes so alienated from his brothers that they throw him into a pit, and wind up selling him into slavery. This is a sad story – though it will have a happy ending in a few weeks – but what do you think it has to do with Hanukkah?

I remember when I was much younger, I sometimes got really mad at my little brother. Sometimes I tried to hurt him, and I *definitely* sometimes wished he wasn't around. You *don't* need to write this in the chat, but I wonder if any of you have ever felt this way about your sibling?

The thing is, I think siblings often feel this way because they worry that there isn't enough love, or enough attention not go around. And sometimes there really *isn't* enough attention to go around, and that can be very frustrating. But there is always enough love to go around.

That's where Hanukkah comes in. Because on the Shabbat of Hanukkah, we always read, in addition to our Torah portion about Joseph, a haftarah, a selection from the prophet, Zachariah. And the prophet Zachariah offers of vision of the way the world will be someday. He is talking about a time when the Temple will be rededicated a third time, just like in the ancient Hanukkah story. He says, "On that Day, each of you will invite your friends over, to celebrate together under your vine, and under your fig tree." That sounds like a wonderful thing for us to get to do together sometime when we don't have to worry about Covid, right?

But I also think it's an answer to the Joseph story. Joseph's brother's thought that there wasn't enough for all of them, so they sent him away. Zachariah's vision is of a time when we will all invite each other to in, to share space together. When we will recognize that there is enough love, enough of everything to go around, and that it feels even more abundant when we celebrate together.

And that is the secret of the Hanukkah candles, lighting up this dark, cold time of year. Because when one candle lights another, the first candle doesn't lose and of its light. But together they make the whole space brighter.

May we be blessed this Hanukkah to feel an abundance of all we need, and to hold the vision of a day when we can invite each other over to celebrate together. Shabbat Shalom!