

A HANUKAH LETTER FROM MOSCOW

Hanukah booklet for ages 5-10

By: Jeffrey S. Winter
515-277-5566
Bureau For Jewish Unity
924 Park Blvd.
Des Moines, Iowa, 50312



• Dear Friends in America:

Shalom! My name is Masha. I'm eight years old and I live in Moscow. Moscow is a large city in a country called the Soviet Union. About 70 years ago it was called Russia and some people still call it by that name. You can find the Soviet Union on any world map. It's the largest country on earth.



Activity
1

I live in an apartment with my parents and my little brother Sasha. My family likes to do a lot of things outside together. We like to get all bundled up and go ice skating during the winter. Then we play in the snow.



#2

• Moscow has many parks and beautiful buildings. Sometimes we walk through Red Square and see the buildings.



When December arrives I know that the snow is coming. I get excited because Hanukah is almost here. My family is Jewish and we celebrate the Jewish holidays.



- A few days before Hanukah, my parents get our Hanukah Menorah out of a big wooden drawer in the living room. The menorah used to belong to my grandmother. I like to help polish the silver.



My father taught me the blessings to say when we light the Hanukah candles.
He teaches in our Sunday School because he knows Hebrew and other things
about Jewish life.



Every Sunday I see my Jewish friends at our Sunday School. We stay with our teachers all day learning Hebrew, Torah, Jewish songs, and about holidays. Sometimes we celebrate holidays together and have parties.



Other kids
in kitchen

children sitting on the floor
or chairs with a teacher.



Every week we meet at a different apartment. This is because in the Soviet Union we can't hold our classes in a synagogue or other public buildings. The neighbors don't like it when we meet in their building, so each week we have to go some place else.



#5

My mother told me that in the Soviet Union many people almost forgot they were Jewish. The Soviet government wanted this to happen. But my parents decided to learn Hebrew and to celebrate Jewish holidays anyway. They believe that Judaism is beautiful. Sasha and I agree.



- My parents would like to take our family to live in Israel where we can live Jewishly as we wish. But when people want to leave the Soviet Union they have to ask permission from the government. Many times the government refuses to allow people to leave. That is what happened to my family. Now we are "refuseniks" which means that they refused to let us go. We hope they will change their minds.



#7

Now Hanukah is almost here. Tonight my family will have a little party to light the first candle. We will sing the blessings and Maor Tsur. Then we will exchange presents and eat some Hanukah latkes and beet borsht. We will remember how during the time of the Macabees brave Jews kept their traditions even when a large army tried to stop them.



#6

This year some people from America came to visit us and other refusenik families. They gave me a Dreidle. I've been playing with it all week. Here's a Nun, a Gimmel, a Shin, and a Hay. These Hebrew letters stand for "a great miracle happened there." Sometimes I pray that a great miracle will happen here, too.



#4

My cousins, aunt, and uncle are here now, so I'll have to go soon. My Aunt
Imma will probably pinch my cheek and then she'll give me some chocolate
Hanukah gelt. My cousin Lev is the same age as I am. We'll play Dreidle
together. My relatives are refuseniks, too. Maybe next Hanukah we will play
with the dreidle in Israel.



Well, I'm going to help make the latkes now. I hope that you have a happy Hanukah. We love to get letters from people in America and learn about life there and in Israel.

Cooking Latkes?

Here comes Aunt Inna - Shalom or as we say in Russia, Dosvidanya!

Your friend,

Masha

DIYV.
Shalom
Dosvidanya
ДОСВІДАННЯ

in
Russian