

Book Review
The Light That Unites
By Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider
Reviewed by Rabbi Elan Adler

Before Aliya, when I lived in Baltimore, I had a collection of over 200 different haggadot. Many became my favorite go-to haggadot for use before and during the Leil HaSeder. Now, my number 1 favorite haggadah is The Night that Unites by the same author, Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider, who has a knack for creating ground-breaking volumes that are as pleasing to read as they are to give as a gift.

His current book, The Light That Unites, is all about Chanukah and is like being in a Chanukah mall: there are so many places to shop and learn under one roof. I'm not aware of any other book that is so generous and varied in what it offers the beginner as well as the scholar. It is so rich in actual texts and translations of Chanukah prayers and there is plenty more.

Rabbi Goldscheider understands that often, the Chanukah candles are lit, a prayer and melody follow, and then things take their course extraneous to the lighting. It is a moment in time which the author seems to widen spiritually in several different creative and significant ways.

In order to lift up the ritual of candle lighting, each night has a theme, among them peace, love, family, heroism, miracles, hope, unity and holiness. There are brief essays, reflections and imageries about each theme.

Many say the prayers from a siddur, or some other volume which truncates the commentaries on what's

being said. This book has wide commentary, translation, transliteration and engaging stories that explain the depth of what we are saying and singing. Generously sprinkled through this beautiful book, filled with colorful pictures and pages, are thoughts from Giants of Torah and Chassidic Masters such as Maimonides, Ibn Ezra, the Chafetz Chaim, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the Lubavitcher Rebbe and others. Reading their stories and comments actually increases the lights before us, which opens our hearts to the light of God.

Last year I bought one book and gave several as gifts. I received two rounds of thanks; one when I gave it, and one after Chanukah in appreciation for how the book transformed and fortified the holiday and how the family united together more enriched and spiritual. *The Light That Unites: A Chanukah Companion*. What a great name. What a great goal. What a superb book! I can't wait for the next offering of Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider. Kol Hakavod!!