

What's The Dreidel Really About?

by Avi Frier • www.yidneck.org

The song lyrics on the next page tell a story of a Dreidel player who is advised that the Dreidel might not be what he's always believed.

- Begin by distributing the next page and asking students to follow the lyrics as you play the song.
 - Play the song by navigating to the Youtube video on the “I Made It Out of Clay” song page at [yidneck.org](http://www.yidneck.org). Full URL is <http://yidneck.org/songs/i-made-it-out-of-clay/>
 - Alternatively, email purebred@yidneck.org and let us know that you are a teacher wishing to use the song in a lesson and we will send you a complimentary MP3 download. Please include the name of your school and the grade level(s) you teach.
- After the song, ask students to suggest answers to the questions that appear after the lyrics:
 - What did the singer originally believe about the letters on the Dreidel?
 - Why did the wise man tell him to forget what he was taught?
 - Is it possible that Dreidel is really about more than just the Chanukah story? What other stories from our history might it represent?
- Ask a student to read aloud Maimonides' understanding of what Jacob saw during his famous dream of the angels on the ladder.
- Ask the students:
 - What did the Babylonians do when they attacked Jerusalem?
 - Answer: They destroyed the first Beit Hamikdash / Holy Temple
 - They are therefore associated with attacking our nefesh / soul (נ)
 - What holiday is associated with the story of the Persian attempt to destroy the Jews?
 - Answer: Purim
 - Haman wanted to kill us; Persia is therefore associated with attacking our guf / body (ג)
 - What did the Greeks in the Chanukah story wish to take away from us?
 - Answer: Torah
 - The Greeks are therefore associated with attacking our sechel / thought (ש)
 - The Romans wanted to destroy hakol / everything (ה). How long did the Roman exile last?
 - Answer: It is technically still going on today, but the end may be in sight, as Jews are returning to Israel in droves.
- A final thought: The numerical value of the letters on the dreidel is 358. This is the same as the numerical value of משיח, the Messiah, who we believe will end the final (current) exile.
 - What can we learn from the idea that the Dreidel is about more than just Chanukah?
 - How can we use this knowledge to hasten the end of the Roman exile?

I MADE IT OUT OF CLAY

by Avi Frier featuring Lenny Solomon • www.yidneck.org

Grab a seat, some chocolate coins
There's room for everyone to join
Time to have some fun

A different letter on each side
Tells how the pot will be divided
When the spinning's done

Different stories you will hear
'Bout why we play this game each year

Well I have a little dreidel
And I made it out of clay
Oh and when it's dry and ready
Dreidel dreidel I will play

A great miracle occurred
That's what those letters mean to say
And we thank God for that
Every time that we play

Wise man next to me did say
Bout those four letters on the dreidel
Forget what you were taught

It's not about one little nais
Oil that lasted for eight days
Or a war we fought
(Listen up, son)

Many tried to take us down
God stepped in, spun things around

Well you have a little dreidel
And you made it out of clay

Oh and when it's dry and ready
I hope that dreidel you will play

Faced battle after battle
Lived to fight another day
And we thank God for that
Every time that we play

Many tried to take us down
God stepped in, spun things around

Well you have a little dreidel
And you made it out of clay
Oh and when it's dry and ready
Dreidel dreidel I will play

Faced battle after battle
Lived to fight another day
And we thank God, thank God
We thank God for that
Every time that we play

A few questions to think about...

1. What did the singer originally believe about the letters on the Dreidel?
2. Why did the wise man tell him to forget what he was taught?
3. Is it possible that Dreidel is really about more than just the Chanukah story? What other stories from our history might it represent?

We've all heard the story of Jacob's dream in which he saw angels ascending and descending a ladder that reached from the ground to the heavens. Our sage Maimonides (Rambam) teaches us that the angels Jacob saw were those that represented four kingdoms that would in the future dominate and exile the Jewish People: Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome.

First, Jacob saw the angel of Babylon ascend the ladder 70 steps and then come down; the Jewish People were in the Babylonian exile for 70 years. The protecting angel of the Persian Empire then climbed up the ladder 52 steps before he descended; the Jewish People were in exile in Persia 52 years. Next, the angel of the Empire of Greece climbed 180 rungs; Greece's domination lasted 180 years. Finally, the protecting angel of the Roman Empire climbed up the ladder, but he didn't come down. Jacob feared that this meant that the final exile would never end, until God promised Jacob to protect him and his descendants, and that they would ultimately flourish in Eretz Yisrael.

נ	נֵס	50	נ	נַפְשׁ	soul	Babylonia	70
ג	גְּדוּלָה	3	ג	גּוּף	body	Persia	52
ה	הִיָּה	5	ש	שֵׁכֶל	thought	Greece	180
ש	שָׂם	300	ה	הַכֹּל	everything	Rome	???