

# hanukkah and the coulisse

*"We are the mighty.*

*The last generation of slaves and the first generation of free men.*

*Alone our hand in its strength*

*Tore from the pride of our shoulders the yoke of bondage.*

*Yea, on the tops of the crags, in the thickness of the clouds,*

*With the eagles of heaven we drank from her fountains of freedom."*

*—H. M. Bialik, In Those Days, at This Time.*

the celebration of hanukkah is an aspect of judaism which, like most of our holidays, emphasizes the importance of the historic sense in jewish life. it is an illustration of how the jew who participates in his religious culture is continually made conscious

of his identification with historical mankind.

in the figurative analogy of thomas mann, it is as if the jew, the jewish people, exist in a coulisse, a tunnel or groove of time in which symbols, situations, and prototypes recur at intervals. or it is as if the jew, the

jewish people, stood in the present between two mirrors, one of the past and one of the future, and on both sides of him his image is repeated to infinitude. finally, there are times when past and present, perhaps even the future, fuse and only the sense of the