

Chanukah Lighting Guide

Hanukkah lasts for 8 nights, and on each night, we light one more candle than the night before. Arrange the lights in your hanukkiyah each night starting with the rightmost branches, and the shamash (helper) light in its place.

Place the hanukkiyah where many people can see it, ideally near a window or door.

On the Shabbat of Chanukah, kindle the Hanukkah lights first and then the Shabbat candles.

Light the Shamash – the helper candle – using it to kindle the rest of the Hanukkah lights; say or sing:



ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם

אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של חנוכה.

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tsivanu l'hadlik ner shel Chanukah.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the world,
who sanctifies us with mitzvot, commanding us to kindle
the Hanukkah lights.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם

שעשה נסים לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה.

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam,
she-asah nisim laavoteinu v'imoteinu
bayamim hahaeim baz'man hazeh.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the world,
who performed wondrous deeds for our ancestors in days of old
at this season.

For first night only:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם

שהחיינו וקיימנו והגענו לזמן הזה.

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam,
shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higianu laz'man hazeh.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the world,
for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us
to reach this season.

Happy Chanukah!



Ner Shel Tzedakah: Candle of Righteousness

Chanukah has traditionally been a time of giving gifts and/or *gelt* (money) to children. In Eastern Europe, children were dismissed from school early to enjoy their small bit of pocket money and have some time off during the holiday. This tradition of gift giving and receiving has magnified over the years. Nowadays, it is not uncommon for families to give ever larger presents each night of the holiday.

Just as Jews in the time of the Maccabees wrestled with the extent to which they should allow Greek culture to influence their lives, so, too, do North American Jews wrestle with the extent to which we should allow secular culture to influence our lives. This culture of commercialism undermines the true meaning of our celebration.

Ner Shel Tzedakah ("Candle of Righteousness") is a project in which families and individuals devote the sixth night of Chanukah to learning about the problem of poverty. They donate the value of the gifts (or the gifts themselves) that otherwise would be exchanged on that night to organizations that assist the poor, locally or globally. By making donations on the sixth night of Chanukah, families help the Jewish candle of righteousness glow brightly for those in need. *Don't let the light go out!*

A Blessing for the Sixth Night of Chanukah

*Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Haolam,
Asher Kidshanu B'mitzvotav, V'limdeinu L'Hadlik
Ner Shel Tzedakah*

*Blessed are You, Eternal, our God, who makes us holy
through the performance of Mitzvot, and inspires us
to light the Candle of Righteousness.*

As we light this "Ner Shel Tzedakah" tonight, we pray that its light will shine into the dark corners of our world, bringing relief to those suffering from the indignity and pain that accompany poverty. May our act of giving inspire others to join with us in the fight against the scourge of hunger, homelessness, need and want. Together, let us raise our voices to cry out for justice, and may that clarion call burst through the night's silence and declare that change must come.

All About the Dreidel

The word dreidel derives from a German word meaning "spinning top," and is the toy used in a Chanukah game adapted from an old German gambling game. (Historically, Chanukah was one of the few times of the year when rabbis permitted games of chance.)

The four sides of the top bear four Hebrew letters: nun, gimel, hei, and shin. Players begin by putting into a central pot or "kitty" a certain number of coins, foil-wrapped chocolate disks known as gelt (Yiddish term for money), nuts, buttons, or other small objects. Each player in turn spins the dreidel and proceeds as follows:



- נ NUN – TAKE NOTHING
- ג GIMEL – TAKE EVERYTHING
- ה HEI – TAKE HALF
- ש SHIN – PUT ONE IN

Over time, the letters on the dreidel were reinterpreted to stand for the first letter of each word in the Hebrew statement "Neis gadol hayah sham," which means "A great miracle happened there" and refers to the defeat of the Syrian army and the re-dedication of the Temple. In Israel, one letter on the dreidel differs from those used in the rest of the world. The *shin* has been replaced with a *pei*, transforming the Hebrew statement into "Neis gadol hayah po," which means "A great miracle happened here."

Traditional Foods for Chanukah

Latkes (potato pancakes) and *sufganiyot* (jelly doughnuts) – foods cooked in oil – are customarily eaten during Chanukah and serve as a symbol of the legend of the jar of oil that lasted for eight days. In Israel, pastry shops specialize in creating delicious and creative *sufganiyot*. Also popular are *bimuelos* (fried dough puffs), *sfenj* (North African yeast doughnuts), and *keftes de prasas* (fried leek patties).

