

ק"ק שערי ציון
CONGREGATION
SHAARE ZION



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Hanukah

There are many parallels between Hanukah and Purim. Both are holidays established by the Hachamim. Both are days where labor is not prohibited, and when Al Hanissim is said. However, there is a fundamental difference between the two. On Purim we faced physical annihilation. Haman with power of attorney given to him by Ahashverosh, manipulated a decree of annihilation against the Jews. Through Esther's efforts, and the people's fasting and Tefillot, we were able to topple the decree.

Conversely, by Hanukah, the decrees were of a spiritual nature. The Greeks made decrees prohibiting Torah study and Misvah observance. We responded with an all-out military assault and successfully defended our Torah and spiritual rights.

Ironically, when faced with a physical decree, we responded with Tefilla and fasting. When we encountered the spiritual decrees of Hanukah, we reciprocated with military battle. Why?

The Rabbis explain: When faced with challenges in life, one must read the writing on the wall. When we were facing annihilation, the response Hashem expects is Tefilla and a spiritual counter. To only fight back would not be a response of acknowledging Hashem's punishment.

However when our enemies took away our Misvot, Hashem wanted to see to what lengths we would go to fight for it. Were we willing to fight for our religion? Would we be willing to risk our

lives for our Torah? As they say “If you don’t have something that you would be willing to die for, your life is not worth living”.

The response was much more apropos in light of a comment of the Bayit Hadash. He says that the reason the Greeks were so successful in abolishing the Temple service was because the Jews themselves were callous and indifferent to the Avoda. Only when we are weak in our Misvot do our enemies gain the ability to take them away.

Accordingly, our weakness in Avoda gave our enemies power. To fight fire with fire, we needed to reinvigorate ourselves to Hashem and to His Torah.

Hanukah should be a lesson in real commitment to Hashem, and to the Torah, and B”H we will display our passion and love for Hashem and the Torah always.

Rabbi Joey Mizrahi

Laws of Hanukah

- One who is careful with the lighting of the Hanukah candles will merit having sons who are *Talmideh Hachamim*.
- On the first night of Hanukah, we light one candle. Every night afterwards we add an additional candle until on the eighth night we light eight candles.
- Every night we light an additional candle as a Shamash. The reason for the Shamash is that we are forbidden to use the light from the Hanukah candles. By lighting an extra candle, we ensure that if we accidentally use the light, we are using the light of the Shamash.
- Some have the custom to light an extra Shamash every night.
- On the first night, we recite three berachot prior to lighting the Menorah.

1. Lehadlik Ner Hanukah
2. Sheasah Nissim
3. Sheheheyanu

- After the first night, we recite only the first two berachot. Sheheheyanu is omitted.
- The first candle is placed on the far right of the Menorah. Every night the new candle is placed to its left. The new candle is lit first, followed by the remaining candles from left to right.
- The Shamash is lit last.
- The best time to light is 20 minutes after sunset. One should try to light within the first half hour after this. If one was not able to light until later, he can still say the berachot until dawn.
- The candles must burn for at least half an hour after *Set Hakochabim*. If one puts enough oil to last half an hour and then the candle went out, he does not have to relight the candle.
- Men and women are obligated to light the Menorah. However, only one Menorah needs to be lit per household.
- The custom is that the master of the home lights the first candle and then allows the rest of the family to continue lighting.
- After the first candle is lit, we recite *Hanerot Hallalu* and *Mizmor Shir Hanukat Habayit Ledavid*.
- On Friday night, we light the Menorah before we light the Shabbat candles.
- One should add extra oil on Friday night so that the Menorah will stay lit until half an hour after *Set Hakochabim*.
- On *Mosaei Shabbat* in the synagogue, we light the Menorah before we make Habdalah; however at home the custom is to make Habdalah before lighting the Menorah.

Reminders:

- 1. The first candle of Hanukah is lit on Sunday night, December 2nd.**
- 2. Beginning Tuesday, December 4th, during Arbit prayer, start reciting Barech Alenu.**
- 3. For your convenience, there will be an additional minyan for Minha at 2:00 p.m. in the Midrash on Friday, December 7th.**
- 4. The last candle is lit on Sunday night, December 9th.**

Wishing You and Your Families a Happy and Joyous Hanukah!