



Menorah Making & Meaning

*YOUNG ISRAEL OF WEST HARTFORD
DOR L'DOR: PARENT-CHILD LEARNING*

Created by Elisheva Cohen

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YOUNG ISRAEL
OF
WEST HARTFORD

Table of Contents:

- 1- User Guide
- 2- Let's Recap- What's Chanukah All About?
- 3- Laws of the Menorah
- 4-Counting Up or Counting Down?
- 5- Menorah in the Temple
- 6-The Meaning Behind the Menorah
- 7- The Special Theme of Light
- 8- Chanukah Fun- Trivia and Puzzles
- 9- Answer Guide/Suggestions
- 10- Answer Guide Part II
- 11- Guidelines for Menorah Making Competition

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WEST HARTFORD

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גיטל חיה בת יוסף אברהם ועטיע
who dedicated their lives to
Jewish education, by their
family.*

User Guide:

This packet is geared towards children from the ages of four until 6th grade to learn with their parents or other family member. On each page, there will be a source for all to learn. On many pages, the sources will be accompanied by guiding questions in different colored boxes, based on age group, to discuss. For the youngest age group, feel free to just focus on the bolded line in the source and the questions. The **grey, top boxes** are for **children 4-6**, the **green, middle boxes** for **children 7-9**, and the **blue, bottom boxes** for **children 10-12**. These are merely suggestions but feel free to try out the other boxes as well. Please note that there are many possible answers to the questions, and the goal is not to reach one "right" answer.

In this packet, we will explore themes of Chanukah, specifically focusing on the laws of the menorah and the meaning behind it. Why is the menorah the symbol of Chanukah? What does the menorah have to do with the story of Chanukah? What is the difference between the menorah in the Temple and the menorah we light today? Why is light such a central theme on Chanukah? These questions and more will be addressed in this packet.

After you learn the packet, use the guidelines at the end of this packet to make your own menorah and enter into our Menorah Contest!!

See future dates and learn more about Dor L'Dor this year at youngisraelwh.org/DorLDor

Let's Recap: What's Chanukah All About?

The year was about 165 BCE. After the death of world conqueror Alexander the Great, his Empire was divided among his generals. The land of Israel - the Kingdom of Judea - was added to the Empire of Antiochus III. When Antiochus Epiphanes became king of the Syrian-Greeks, he was not satisfied with accepting the taxes and loyalty of the Jews as his predecessors had done. He wanted the Jews to lay aside their Torah and ancient religion, and, in their place, substitute the Hellenistic Greek culture and Grecian idols. He defiled the *Beit Hamikdash* - by filling it with pagan idols and sacrifices of pigs. He forbade the Jews to observe the commandments of *Brit Milah* (circumcision), *Rosh Chodesh* (the New Moon), and the *Shabbat*. Jews who dared to remain loyal to their faith were brutally tortured and murdered.

Against this backdrop, Jewish resistance began to decrease and it seemed inevitable that the last remnants of resistance would soon be wiped out. Then, one courageous man turned the tide. His name was *Mattisyahu* and he was a *Kohain* - head of the Hasmonean family, from the Judean town of Modi'in near Lod. The Syrian-Greek governor of *Mattisyahu's* region set up an idol in Modi'in, rounded up the townspeople, and introduced an "enlightened" Jew who would sacrifice a pig on the idol in recognition of the decree of Antiochus. Old *Mattisyahu* stepped forward and slew the traitor.

With the rallying cry of, "*Mi La'Hashem Ay-li* (Whoever is for *Hashem*, let him come to me)," he called the people to rebellion. A pitifully small number responded at first - the people were numb with fear and hopelessness - but *Mattisyahu's* five sons led the way. They fought the Syrian-Greeks, retreated to the mountains, and began a war against the Syrian-Greeks and their Jewish allies. *Mattisyahu* had not long to live, but on his deathbed he charged his sons to carry on the struggle. The glorious brothers heeded his command. He passed on the leadership to his second son, Judah the *Maccabee*, who was a mighty warrior and a charismatic leader.

Many miracles happened. Outnumbered a hundred to one, Judah and his men won many battles. Jews came to join him. In a few years, he had defeated the mightiest armies of Syria. Following the rebellion, the kingdom of Israel was restored for 200 years, until the destruction of the Second *Beit Hamikdash*.

On the twenty fifth day of Kislev, Judah and his men marched into the Holy City and immediately made their way to the *Beit Hamikdash* where they saw a sight that left them shocked and angered. Idols, filth, impurity were everywhere. They rummaged through the ruins seeking at least one flask of pure olive oil with which to light the makeshift menorah they hastily put together.

Flask after flask they found - every one of them defiled. Finally - another miracle! One small jug, sufficient for only one day, remained with the seal of the *Kohain Gadol* intact! Quickly, with trembling hands, they poured it into the menorah and lit it. It would be eight days before they could manufacture more oil for the next lighting, but meanwhile, they lit what they had. The flames of the menorah burned for 8 days.

To publicize and commemorate these miracles, the Rabbis instituted the holiday of Chanukah.

Adapted from [Torahtots.com](http://www.torahtots.com)

<http://www.torahtots.com/holidays/chanuka/chanstr.htm>

Laws of the Menorah

Preparation

- Ideally olive oil and cotton wicks should be used, but other oils, wicks, and wax candles are also permitted.
- Set up the menorah from right to left, with the last candle set up being the added one for today.
- The candles and wicks should be in a straight line (not a circle), with none above the others (except for the shamash).
- There should be enough space between the candles that no two flames join together.

How to Light

- Before lighting, one recites two blessings and three on the first night (see below for text).
- On night one, one candle is lit and the shamash. The shamash is an extra candle ("the helper") which one can use to light the other candles. It is placed in the menorah but on a higher or lower level than the other candles to distinguish it from the regular lights.
- On each subsequent night, an additional candle is lit. By the last night, all eight candles are lit.
- Light from left to right, lighting the newest candle/today's candle first.
- After lighting the first candle, we begin singing/saying "HaNerot HaLalu," after which it is a custom to sign Maoz Tzur.

Who Should Light

- In Ashkenazi tradition, it is customary that everyone light their own menorah if possible (with the exception of husband and wife).

Can One Use the Light?

- The Chanukah lights should not be used for other purposes, such as a light by which to read. The shamash removes some of this concern as one can use the light of shamash, however, some say that it is still best to have another light on if one wants to use the light in that room.

When and Where

- Ideally should light at time stars come out (about 10-25 min after sunset) but if didn't light then, could still light rest of night if other household members are awake or many people are still outside.
- If can't late until very late (and neither of conditions above hold true) then light without a bracha.
- The candles should stay lit for at least 30 minutes after the appearance of stars.
- Should be placed in place where others can see it from outside, for purpose of publicizing the miracle.

The Brachot/Blessings:

1. ברוך אתה ה' אלוקינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר (של) חנוכה
2. ברוך אתה ה' אלוקינו מלך העולם, שעשה נסים לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה
3. ברוך אתה ה' אלוקינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקימנו והגענו לזמן הזה (first night only)

1. Blessed are You Hashem...Who commanded us to light the Chanukah candle
2. Blessed are You Hashem... Who performed miracles for our ancestors in those days, at this time
3. Blessed are You Hashem... Who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion

Counting Up or Counting Down?

Gemara Shabbat 21b

ב"ש אומרים יום ראשון מדליק שמנה מכאן ואילך פוחת והולך וב"ה אומרים יום ראשון מדליק אחת מכאן ואילך מוסיף והולך

Beit Shammai says: On the first day one kindles eight lights and, from there on, gradually decreases the number of lights until, on the last day of Hanukkah, they kindle one light.

And Beit Hillel says: On the first day one kindles one light, and from there on, gradually increases the number of lights until, on the last day, they kindle eight lights.

1. What does it mean to add or to subtract?
2. Do you think it's better to add candles every day or take away candles every day? Why?
3. What does a candle/flame do?
4. How can we act like a candle in a good way?

1. What is the dispute between Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai?
2. What do you think is the reason behind each opinion?
3. What do you think is more logical- to add a candle every day or to take away a candle every day. Why?
4. How is this relevant to our own lives?

1. What is the dispute between Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai?
2. What do you think is the reason behind each opinion?
3. What do you think is more logical- to add a candle every day or to take away a candle every day. Why?
4. Read the following additional source and then discuss which one speaks to you more:

The Talmud gives a reason for each of the opinions. Beit Shammai's is in accordance with the 70 sacrifices brought on the holiday of Sukkot, representing the 70 nations of the world. The number of bulls sacrificed decreased each day. Beit Hillel's opinion is based on the principle that in matters of sanctity, one increases but does not decrease/downgrade.

Rabbi Weinbach explains (ou.org) that the difference between the opinions comes down to what is the best way to add more light into this world and triumph over evil. For Beit Shammai, it is to fight the negative influences around us (for example, through the bringing of sacrifices). When we do that, we are slowly removing negative influences from us symbolized by decreasing the number of candles every day. The fire is symbolically burning away the effect of negative forces in this world. According to Beit Hillel, however, the best way to combat darkness and negativity in this world is to be positive role models and live a Godly life. We get rid of the darkness not by "burning away Evil, but rather, by increasing our light as a Torah Nation." That is why we increase the number candles every night, to symbolize our responsibility of spreading light in this world.

Menorah in the Temple

“מחוץ לפרוכת העדות יִעָרֹךְ, וְכִי לְאוֹרָה הוּא צָרִיךְ? ... אֲלֵא עֲדוּת הִיא לְבָאֵי עוֹלָם שֶׁהַשְׂכִּינָה שׁוֹרָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל

“Outside the veil of the testimony, in the Tent of Meeting, shall Aaron order it from evening to morning before the Lord continually; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations” ([Leviticus 24:3](#)). It must be understood: And does God require its light for illumination at night? Rather, the lighting of the candelabrum is testimony to mankind that the Divine Presence rests among Israel. (Gemara Shabbat 22b)



מחוץ לפרוכת העדות בָּאֵהָל מוֹעֵד יִעָרֹךְ אֹתוֹ אֶהְרֹן מִעֶרֶב עַד-בֹּקֶר לִפְנֵי ה' תִּמְיֹד חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם:

Aaron shall set them up in the Tent of Meeting outside the curtain of the Pact [to burn] from evening to morning before the Lord regularly; it is a law for all time throughout the ages. (Vayikra 24:3)

One of the miracles on Chanukah was that though the Greeks defiled the Beit HaMikdash with idols and other impurities, there was one jug that was pure, untouched, which could then be used to light the Menorah and the Jews could begin to restore the Temple. And... (see left)

Not only that, but even though there was only enough oil for one day, it lasted for 8! This was just the right amount of time for them to be able to make more oil. (Gemara Shabbat 21b)

1. Count how many branches the menorah in the Beit HaMikdash had.
2. How many does our menorah have today?
3. Can you find the jug of oil in the picture? What was it filled with?
4. Who lit the Menorah in the Beit HaMikdash?

1. How was the menorah in the Beit HaMikdash different than the ones we use today?
2. What is the connection between the menorah in the Beit HaMikdash and Chanukah?
3. What does it mean that the menorah in the Beit HaMikdash was testimony that God's presence rested with us (source 2)? Why specifically was the menorah used to symbolize this?

1. How was the menorah in the Beit HaMikdash different than the ones we use today?
2. What do you think the number seven could symbolize? What else in the Torah or Jewish practice has to do with seven?
3. What is the connection between the menorah in the Beit HaMikdash and Chanukah?
4. What does it mean that the menorah in the Beit HaMikdash was testimony that God's presence rested with us (source 2)? Why specifically was the menorah used to symbolize this?

The Meaning Behind the Menorah

For the commandment is a lamp, The teaching is a light- אֹרֶךְ יְמֵיךָ וְתוֹרָה אֶלֶף - Mishlei 6:23
Your word is a lamp to my feet, a light for my path- נֶר-לְרַגְלִי דְבָרְךָ אֶלֶף לְנִתְיָבְתִּי - Tehillim 119:105

What is the meaning behind the menorah? What does it symbolize? King Shlomo stated that the symbols of a candle and light represent the Torah and mitzvot. Why? Because just as light shines and guides a person's way, so too does the Torah. The words of Torah, as King David said, guide our path- they show us where to go and illuminate how we should act.

The Greeks, unlike Haman in the Purim story, didn't want to destroy us physically, rather they wanted to take away our spirituality and connection to God. The Greeks were very focused on outer beauty alone and physicality- what's good for me? The Torah, on the other hand, reminds us that there is more to life than just materialism and outer beauty. The Torah challenges us to use what's around us to serve God, to help others, and spread light in this world. It guides us on the moral path and helps us understand the right way to act.

The Menorah reminds us of the importance of bringing God into everything we do and spreading goodness, spreading God's light, to those around us. What's amazing about a candle is that when one candle lights another, the first one's light doesn't decrease. So too, when we help others and spread light, we are not losing anything but are making this world a better place.

1. Why is the Torah special?
2. What do you think of when you see the menorah?
3. What is something nice you could do for a friend when playing together?

1. What is one example where the Torah helps us understand what the right/moral thing to do is?
2. How can you use the Torah to guide you? Think about a specific case- like playing a basketball game. What does it mean to bring God into what we do?

1. What is one example where the Torah helps us understand what the right/moral thing to do is?
2. How can you use the Torah to guide you? Think about a specific case- like playing a basketball game. What does it mean to bring God into what we do?

The Special Theme of Light

There was a wealthy old man who had three sons and wanted to give his inheritance to one of his sons. To determine which son would receive his fortune, the man conducted a test- each son would have to fill up a room as best as he could. Whichever son fills the room the most, will receive the inheritance. So the brothers began their mission. The oldest son thought long and hard and decided to fill the room with bricks. He labored for hours, carrying the bricks into the room and stacking them in piles so that no crack could be found. When he was done, he proudly presented the filled room to his father. The middle son decided that he would fill the room with piles of straw. In this way, there would be no airspaces and the room would be completely filled. He too showed off his filled room to his father. Before placing anything in the room, the youngest son asked his father to walk with him into the dark empty room. The son then took out a candle and a match and lit the candle. The room was immediately filled with light. The father turned to his youngest son with a smile- you will receive the inheritance. As Rav Schneur Zalman of Liadi says, “a little bit of lit dispels a lot of darkness.”



1. What happens when a room is dark and you light a candle?
2. How do you feel when it is very dark around you?
3. How do you feel when you then turn a light on?

1. Why do you think the youngest son received the inheritance over the other two brothers?
2. What does it mean that- “a little bit of light dispels a lot of darkness?” How can you understand this non-literally as well?
3. Why do you think light is such an important theme on Chanukah specifically?
4. How can you add more “light” into this world?

1. Why do you think the youngest son received the inheritance over the other two brothers?
2. What does it mean that- “a little bit of light dispels a lot of darkness?” How can you understand this non-literally as well?
3. Why do you think light is such an important theme on Chanukah specifically?
4. How can you add more “light” into this world?

Did you know that Chanukah falls out in the darkest time of the year?

Chanukah Fun- Trivia and Puzzles!

Write above each picture- which one is the order of preparing the candles and which is the order of lighting them?

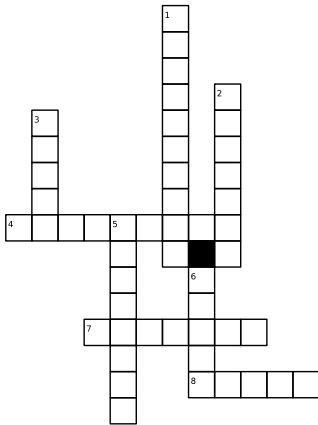
Left to right



Right to left



Chanukah Crossword



Down:

1. the Kohein and leader of the Jewish resistance
2. the extra, helper candle
3. the number of branches on the menorah in the Temple
5. the best oil to use to light the menorah
6. the number of blessings we recite on the first night

Across:

4. the king of the Syrian-Greeks during this period
7. what we light on Chanukah
8. the number of days the oil lasted for

Dreidel Song

I have a little dreidel
I made it out of clay
And when it's dry and ready
Then dreidel I shall play

CHORUS

Oh dreidel dreidel dreidel
I made it out of clay
And when it's dry and ready
Then dreidel I shall play

It has a lovely body
With legs so short and thin
And when it is so tired
It drops and then I win!

CHORUS

My dreidel's always playful
It loves to dance and spin
A happy game of dreidel
Come play now, let's begin!

CHORUS

Answer Guide/Suggestions

p.4

1. What is the dispute between Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai?

Beit Hillel says to light one candle on the first night and add a candle each night. Beit Shammai says to light eight candles on the first night and remove a candle each night.

2. What is a potential reason behind their opinions?

The gemara provides a few potential reasons for their opinions. One is that Beit Shammai's is in accordance with incoming days (how many days of Chanukah remain) while Beit Hillel's is in accordance with outgoing days (the number of days already observed). Another reason brought is that Beit Shammai's opinion corresponds to the 70 sacrifices brought on the holiday of Sukkot, wherein every day of Sukkot, the number of bulls brought decreased. (For the connection between the bull offerings on Sukkot and Chanukah see http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2018/moadim/rhab_chanukah.html). [Just to mention one answer- in the Book of Maccabees it states that because of the wars, they were not able to celebrate Sukkot that year. Therefore, they made Chanukah eight days to model after Sukkot]. Beit Hillel's corresponds to the notion that in matters of sanctity, we can increase the sanctity but cannot diminish it.

p.5

First box- The Menorah in the Beit HaMikdash had seven branches whereas today, ours has eight (and a shamash). In the Beit HaMikdash, the Kohein Gadol would light the menorah- originally this done by Aharon HaKohen who was the first Kohein Gadol.

1. How was the menorah in the Mikdash different than the one we use today?

The menorah in the Beit HaMikdash only had seven branches whereas ours has eight (and a shamash).

2. What is the connection between the menorah in the Beit HaMikdash and Chanukah?

One connection is that on the 25th of Kislev, when the Chashmonaim (who fought against the Greeks) entered into the Beit HaMikdash, they saw idols and impurity everywhere placed there by the Greeks. They found one intact jug of oil with the seal of the Kohein Gadol and they lit a menorah. Miraculously, though there was only enough oil for one day, it lasted eight days.

3. What does it mean that the menorah was testimony that God's presence was with us?

The menorah was not needed for its physical light that it provided. Rather, just like when the Jews were in the desert, they knew His presence was with them because He guided them with a pillar of fire, so too in the Beit HaMikdash, His presence was known with a fire. [Throughout the Torah, God's presence is often portrayed as a fire- such as when God sent a fire down to consume Avraham's sacrifice in the Covenant of Parts (Brit Bein HaBetarim) (Bereshit 15:17). The light of the menorah was thus a testimony to mankind that God rests with us.

[note: though God is everywhere, we believe that His presence was/is more condensed and focused in certain places, such as in the Beit HaMikdash. However, when God's presence is revealed is often based on our actions and worthiness].

Answer Guide Part II

p.5 continued

1. What is the significance of the number seven?

Seven often represents completeness and wholeness. The number seven appears all throughout the Torah and Jewish practice. For example, there are seven days of the week. God rested on the seventh day making it Shabbat, the culmination of our week and the time to focus more on our relationship with God and those around us. There are also seven days of celebration for a bride and groom, seven days of shiva, seven aliyot read from the Torah on Shabbat, and Shemitta, the year in which we rest the land, comes every seven years. Seven also represents nature and God's involvement in the natural world. Accordingly, eight symbolizes the supernatural.

p.6

1. What is one example where the Torah helps us understand what the right thing to do is?

Regarding finding a lost object, the Torah explicitly states that one should return it as it says in Devarim 22:1-2- "If you see your fellow's ox or sheep gone astray, do not ignore it; you must return it back to your fellow. If your fellow does not live near you or you do not know who he is, you shall bring it home and it shall remain with you until your fellow claims it; then you shall give it back to him." See Shemot 22 for many examples where the Torah gives us the guidelines of how to act in different situations and moral directives such as treating the stranger and convert well.

p.7

1. Why is light such an important theme on Chanukah?

Aside from the connection between light and the miracle of the oil lasting for eight days, the time of year Chanukah falls in also connects to the importance of light. Chanukah falls out during the darkest time of the year (when the days are shortest and nights are longest). [See Gemara Avodah Zara 8a for further details on this point-

https://www.sefaria.org/Avodah_Zarah.8a.9?lang=bi&with=Sheets&lang2=en.

Chanukah is thus the perfect time to remind us that even when things may seem dark, even when there seems to be so much evil in this world, there is light and we have a responsibility to spread that light.



YOUNG OF ISRAEL
WEST HARTFORD

MENORAH MAKING COMPETITION

GUIDELINES:

- You may use any materials from your home in order to create your chanukiah (for example: old newspapers, legos, or blocks -- get creative!)
- The Chanukiah should have 8 branches plus one for the *shamash*.
- Each of the 8 branches should be on same line and of the same height and should be separate from each other so that each flame is distinct.
- For the *shamash*, it should be placed in a way that shows that it is not one of the Chanukah candles. Usually, it is placed higher (or lower) than other candles to make it obvious that it is not one of the others.
- **Finished entries should be dropped off at the Kaufman home on Friday, Dec. 11**

*DONT MISS OUR NEXT DOR L'DOR FAMILY LEARNING PACKET
EXPLORING THE LAWS OF AND MEANING BEHIND THE MENORAH*

**Voting will take place at our Young Israel DONUT DRIVE-BY on 12/12
WINNERS WILL RECEIVE AMAZON GIFT CARDS!**



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