

Chag Sameach

Have a safe and joyous Chanukah!

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...

I'm certainly not the only one of us eager to say goodbye to a truly Dickensian 2020...!

I look back at the Spring, when we first struggled to gauge the threat of the pandemic. Yet amid all of that fear, isolation, and economic insecurity, there were moments of joy and inspiration. Things were utterly foreign outside; but there was also the comfort of being with our families in a quieter world than I had ever experienced. At times, I have almost wished for a return to those moments when "home" was the first and sometimes only priority for the day.

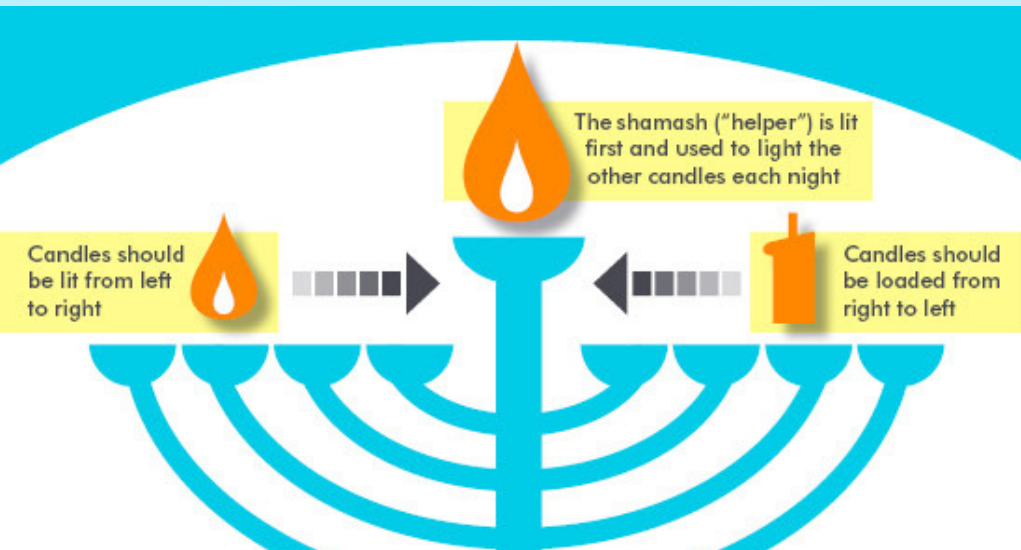
I know 2021 will undoubtedly bring new challenges. Nonetheless, I am looking ahead with optimism and courage. May the lights of the season bring you warmth and hope, and may we all be together again this time next year.



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

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

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



Lighting the Chanukah Candles

The candle for the first night is put on the right side of Chanukiyyah. On each subsequent night, an additional candle is placed to the immediate left of the previous night's candle, and the candles are lit from left to right, so that the kindling begins with the newest light.

How do you spell Hanukkah?

According to Evite, a leading digital invitation and social event planning brand, with no one, right way to spell the Hebrew word for the Festival of Lights, it begs the question: what is the most popular way to spell Hanukkah?

Culled from folks who sent Hanukkah-related invitations on Evite in 2011, here are the Top 8 Ways to Spell (C)Hanuk(k)a(h):

- HANUKKA 23%
- HANUKKAH 22%
- HANUKA 13%
- HANUKAH 12%
- CHANUKA 11%
- CHANUKAH 10%
- HANNUKA 5%
- HANNUKAH 4%

A New Spin on Dreidel

Cut 8 large dreidel shapes from sheets of construction paper. Write one of these discussion starters (or your own) on the dreidels. Together with your family, record answers for one of the discussion starters on each night of Hanukkah.

- Togetherness is part of our family when...
- Sharing is part of our family when...
- Loving is part of our family when...
- Fun is part of our family when...
- Celebration is part of our family when...
- Mitzvot are part of our family when...
- Learning is part of our family when...
- Tradition is a part of our family when...

When you're finished, add the dreidel to your Hanukkah decorations.

A Hanukkah Prayer for Freedom

Rabbi Warren Stone

Source of Creation and Life of the Universe
We gather together on Hanukkah
As Jews of conscience
with a deep spiritual bond to the lights of freedom.

We are grateful for the inner might of the Maccabees
Who fought to reclaim a Jerusalem in despair
And rekindle the lights of human freedom.

Freedom has many faces:
Freedom from war and conflict or threats of terror
Freedom to have a secure home
Freedom from hunger, poverty and despair.

Freedom is deeply personal as well:
Freedom to express one's gender identity without fear
Freedom to express one's racial identity without fear
Freedom to make choices about life and deepest beliefs
Freedom to live our faith in all of its beauty
without negating anyone else's.

Our Hanukkah menorah with its eight branches and
Kindling light
Remind us of the diversity on our Earth
Bound together with a branch of Oneness.
It is a reminder that we are interconnected as a
Global Community.

We are diverse yet equal in our world: Jewish, Christian,
Moslem, Hindi, Buddhist, Sikh, and Humanist.

At times of deep darkness instead of walking in fear
Let us kindle Godly lights
Lights within and lights beyond
And let us increase these lights each day
To light the way for All.

(items excerpted from ReformJudaism.org)

