

Chanukah Home Celebration

From Temple Sinai



On Lighting the Menorah:

One candle is lit for each night. The candle for the first night is placed on the right side of the eight-branched menorah (chanukiah). On each subsequent night, an additional candle is placed to the left of the preceding night's candle. The lighting proceeds from left to right, so that the new candle is kindled first. Each night, the shamash is lit first, followed by recitation of the first blessing. The other candles are then lit with the shamash, ending with the recitation of the second (and, on the first night, the third) blessings.

Ba-ruch a-ta A-do-nai, E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam, a-sher ki-de-sha-nu bemits-votav, ve-tsi-va-nu le-had-lik neir shel Cha-nu-kah.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who hallows us with Your mitzvot and commands us to kindle the Chanukah lights.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה.

Ba-ruch a-ta A-do-nai, E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam, she-a-sa ni-sim la-a-votei-nu ba-ya-mim ha-heim ba-ze-man ha-zeh.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who performed wondrous deeds for our ancestors in days of old, at this season.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ
בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בַּזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

On the first night only

Ba-ruch a-ta A-do-nai, E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam, she-be-che-ya-nu ve-ki-ye-ma-nu ve-bi-gi-a-nu la-ze-man ha-zeh.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

From These Lights are Holy, Elyse Frishman, CCAR Press, 1989

No practical use may be made of the Chanukah lights, such as illuminating the room. Therefore, according to Jewish tradition, a special helper candle known as the shamash is used to light the others and provide light.

It is an old custom to place the menorah where its lights will be visible from the outside. The public proclamation of the miracle of Chanukah worship is part of the observance of the holiday. Displaying the menorah is a demonstration of our pride and identity.

Tzedakah:

Chanukah gelt (money) was traditionally given to the poor and to children; the children would use the coins for dreidel games. Students also received gelt as a study incentive. We are grateful for so much: our freedom, food and shelter, the breath of life. In preparation for Chanukah, you might create a special Chanukah Tzedekah box; each night of the celebration, contribute some coins. At the conclusion of Chanukah, donate the coins to a charity of your choosing.

Chanukah Latkes:

It is customary to eat food fried in oil to recall the legend of the oil. Most noted among Chanukah delicacies is the latke (potato pancake), followed by the increasingly popular jelly donut.

Basic latke recipe:

1 large onion	1/2 cup matza meal
7 medium potatoes	2 eggs
salt and pepper to taste	vegetable oil for frying
applesauce	sour cream

Grate potatoes. Chop onion. Drain excess liquid from both. Mix onions, potatoes, seasonings, eggs, and matza meal together. Heat oil in large frying pan. Drop batter by tablespoons into the hot oil and fry over medium heat until crisp and golden on each side. (When batter stops bubbling, the side is ready). Drain on paper towels. Serve with applesauce and sour cream.



JEWISH KEYS: A CHANUKAH GLOSSARY

Chanukah: Literally, dedication.

Chanukat HaBayit: Literally, dedication of the house. Ceremonial hanging of the mezuzah.

Menorah: Seven- or eight-branched candelabra. Most commonly used to refer to the eight-branched Chanukah lamp.

Chanukiah: Eight-branched Chanukah menorah.

Gelt: Yiddish word for “money”; given as a Chanukah present, used for playing dreidel.

Dreidel: Yiddish for “top”; used in Chanukah game. Known in Hebrew as “*sevivon*.”

Nes Gadol Hayah Sham: Literally, “A great miracle happened there.” First letters of these four words are found on the dreidel.

Latke: Yiddish word for “pancake.” Potato latkes are traditionally eaten on Chanukah.

Sufganiyot: Jelly donuts served in Israel on Chanukah.



GREEN YOUR CHANUKAH BY GIVING GREEN GIFTS

Help cut down on waste and try some of these environmentally friendly gift ideas for Chanukah.

✧ Save paper and send an e-card.

- ✧ Make your own gifts! Especially from children, homemade gifts are often more special than anything you can buy. Take a photo and design a frame for it, knit a scarf for the winter or make a set of beeswax candles for someone to burn in their chanukiah — there are lots of great books about homemade gifts in your library; check one out today!
- ✧ Give Chanukah gelt in the form of tzedekah to a Jewish or environmental organization of your choice in honor of a friend or relative. Adopt an animal, plant a tree or buy an acre of rainforest in someone’s honor.
- ✧ Food! Edible gifts are always great for holidays. Bake someone a batch of cookies in Chanukah shapes, cook sufganiyot — jelly donuts—a traditional Chanukah treat, or be more creative.
- ✧ Get something that’s both useful and reusable: a travel mug, cloth bag, linen napkins, reusable lunchbox, etc.
- ✧ Make your own gift certificate or coupon. You could give someone “a night at the movies,” “one week of walking the dog,” etc. This is a great way to give someone exactly what he or she wants!
- ✧ Buy someone an environmental book, a subscription to an environmental magazine or a membership to a museum or zoo — a gift they can enjoy all year.
- ✧ Instead of regular gift wrap, use recycled or reusable packaging or a piece of cloth tied with ribbon.

CREATE CHANUKAH TRADITIONS IN YOUR HOME

Living in our pluralistic society, many Jewish parents and children may feel that they are “missing something.” This perception can be overcome by concerted efforts to create warm and positive Jewish memories and traditions that are unique to your family.



Chanukah celebrates our religious survival in spite of attempts to force us to assimilate into the mass culture of society at large. The dedication and struggle of the Maccabees inspires us to create a nurturing Jewish environment in our homes, lest we allow the media and marketplace to accomplish what the Syrian-Greeks could not.

Just as every family has its unique traditions with regard to celebrating Passover and Thanksgiving, you can create traditions unique to your family for the celebration of Chanukah.

Each family member can create or purchase his/her own personal Chanukiah (Chanukah menorah). Children can make Chanukah decorations that are stored away and displayed each year.

Every dinner during the week can feature a special fried Chanukah food like latkes or sufganiyot (jelly donuts).

Precede the daily candle lighting and dinner with a brief family reading or song from the CCAR Chanukah book, *Haneirot Halalu These Lights Are Holy*. Have an annual Chanukah party for friends and/or family you do not see often. Collect Chanukah gelt and decide as a family towards which cause to donate the money. Invite other families for a Chanukah Shabbat Dinner — and ask each family to bring samples of their traditional latkes. In the days of greatest winter darkness, the warmth of Chanukah and its lights can add a special warmth and beauty to your home and create positive Jewish memories that will be remembered for a lifetime.

THE GAME OF DREIDEL:

Long winter nights are brightened with the joy of celebrating Chanukah. The spinning game of dreidel has been popular for centuries. The dreidel (top) has four sides; each side is imprinted with a Hebrew letter.

The letters on the dreidel stand for the expression: “*Nes gadol haya sham*” — “A great miracle happened there.” (In Israel, the last letter “Shin” is replaced with a “pey,” to change the phrase to “*Nes gadol haya po*” — “A great miracle happened here.”)

Each person begins the game with a supply of counters. Players take turns spinning the dreidel until it lands.



- נ *Nun* “none” — gets nothing
- ג *Gimel* “get” takes entire pot
- ה *Hei* “half” takes half the pot
- ש *Shin* “share” — everyone puts one into the pot