

# חנוכה

# CHANUKAH

*A Celebration of Light*



WILSHIRE  
BOULEVARD  
TEMPLE



A pocket guide to Chanukah

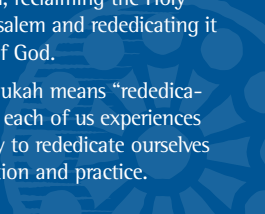


# Introduction to Chanukah

Chanukah—the eight-day festival of light—celebrates the triumph of light over darkness, of the pursuit of peace over violence, of spirituality over materiality.

Over twenty-one centuries ago, the Holy Land was ruled by the Syrian-Greeks, who sought to instill their practices on the people of Israel. Against all odds, a small band of Jews known as the Macabees defeated one of the mightiest armies on earth, reclaiming the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and rededicating it to the service of God.

The word Chanukah means “rededication” and now, each of us experiences the opportunity to rededicate ourselves to Jewish tradition and practice.





# The Chanukiyah

Jewish legend recalls that when the Macabees regained control of the Temple, they tried to light the holy menorah, but found only a single cruse of olive oil that had escaped contamination by the Greeks; miraculously, it burned for eight days.

To commemorate this miracle, we light the *chanukiyah*—a nine-branched candelabra, one of which is the *shamash*, or “helper” candle. We light a single flame on the first night, and increase the number each night thereafter, two on the second evening, and so on until all eight lights are kindled.





## Lighting the Candles

Today, *chanukiyot* come in all shapes and sizes. Some families collect and light more than one to share the light and joy of the holiday. No matter what your *chanukiyah* looks like or how many you might light, tradition suggests they be lit in a special and specific way.

**Step 1:** The candles are added to the *chanukiyah* from right to left, as they would be seen through your window (it's an important part of our tradition to “publicize the miracle,” so try to have your *chanukiyah* in view to the public).

**Step 2:** We kindle the Chanukah lights using the *shamash*—the helper candle—which is usually set higher than the rest of the candles.

**Step 3:** The candles should be kindled from left to right as they are viewed by the public. The newest candle is lit first. (On the Shabbat of Chanukah, kindle the Chanukah lights first and then the Shabbat candles)

## First Blessing

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

*Baruch Atah, Adonai, Eloheinu Melech  
ha'olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav  
v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Chanukah.*

Blessed are You, *Adonai* our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us to kindle the Chanukah lights.





## Second Blessing

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ  
הָעוֹלָם, שְׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ  
וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזַמַּן הַזֶּה.

*Baruch Atah, Adonai, Eloheinu Melech  
ha'olam, sheh'asah nisim la'avoteinu  
v'imoteinu ba'yamim ha'heim baz'man  
ha'zeh.*

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





## Third Blessing

On the first night only we add a third blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁהַחַיְנוּ  
וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

*Baruch Atah, Adonai, Eloheinu Melech  
ha'olam, sheh'heh'cheyanu v'kiy'manu  
v'higianu laz'man ha'zeh.*


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



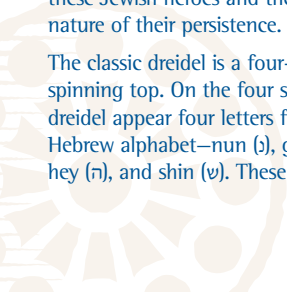


# The Dreidel

When the Syrian-Greeks controlled the Holy Land they passed a series of laws outlawing the study of Torah and the observance of mitzvot. Despite these laws, Jewish children continued to learn Torah in secret and when questioned pretended to be playing small tops rather than studying texts. The Chanukah dreidel evolved as a salute to these Jewish heroes and the miraculous nature of their persistence.



The classic dreidel is a four-sided spinning top. On the four sides of the dreidel appear four letters from the Hebrew alphabet—nun (נ), gimmel (ג), hey (ה), and shin (ש). These four letters





are an acronym for “*nes gadol hayah sham*”—“a great miracle happened there.”

In Israel, the actual setting of the Chanukah miracle, the last letter, shin, is substituted with a pey (פ), which stands for “po”—“here.”



# The Dreidel Game

1. All players sit around the playing area.
2. The “ante” (nuts, pennies, nickels, chocolate coins) is equally divided amongst all players.
3. Everyone takes a turn at spinning the dreidel; the one with the highest spin has first turn. Nun (נ) is the highest, then gimmel (ג), hey (ה), and shin (ש).
4. Everyone puts one unit of the ante into the pot.
5. The one who has first turn is followed in clockwise direction by all the others.

If the dreidel lands on a...

**Nun** - נ Nothing happens. Better luck next time! Nun stands for the Yiddish word nul, which means zero; now the player to your left takes a spin.

**Gimmel** - ג You get to take the whole pot! Gimmel stands for gantz, which means whole. Everyone, including you, now puts another unit of the ante into the pot, and the person to your left tries his luck at spinning.

**Hey** - ה You get to take half of the pot. If the pot has an odd amount of units, leave the extra there. Hey stands for halb, half. Now it's time for the player to your left to spin.

**Shin** - ש The absolute worst. The dregs. You now have to put another unit into the pot! Shin is for schenk; yes, that means give.



## Fried Food

Oil played a significant role in the Chanukah story—the small jug of oil miraculously provided fuel for the Temple Menorah for eight days. It is a Jewish tradition to eat foods that reflect the significance of a holiday, such as matzah on Passover, and apple dipped in honey on Rosh Hashanah, and Chanukah is no exception.

The most popular Chanukah dishes are potato latkes (pancakes) and *sufganiyot* (deep-fried doughnuts).

Latke & *sufganiyot* recipes can be found online:

[www.wbtla.org/pages/chanukah\\_recipes](http://www.wbtla.org/pages/chanukah_recipes)

