

CHANUKAH: DARKNESS & LIGHT

Chanukah is celebrated at a time of darkness – candles are lit at nightfall during the darkest month of the year. At times of personal darkness, we tend to despair. Chanukah is a message of hope. The flickering of a flame is compared to the flickering of the soul - reaching upwards while the candle endures – actual - but somehow intangible. We light the candles on Chanukah to remind us that there is no room for despair. The light of the soul and the goodness of even the smallest deed are like the flames of the Chanukah candles that fill even the darkest room with Wonderous Light!

HOW TO LIGHT

On the first night, one candle is placed to the far right (as your face the Menorah). Another candle is placed as the “Shamash” (the higher “helper” candle), which is used to light the others. The second night, two candles are placed in the two far-right positions - and light the left one first with the Shamash candle. Follow this same procedure each night of Chanukah, adding an extra candle.

WHERE TO LIGHT

The menorah should ideally be lit in a window facing the public thoroughfare, or inside the house on a table - this fulfills the mitzvah of “publicizing the miracle”.

WHEN TO LIGHT

Ideally, immediately after nightfall. It is best to wait though until all the members of the household are present, adding to the family atmosphere as well as to “publicizing the miracle.” n Friday afternoon, the Menorah should be lit just before sundown.

The first two blessings are said after lighting the Shamash, but before lighting the Chanukah candles.

BLESSING #1

Baruch Ata Ado-noi Elo-heinu Melech ha-olam, Asher Kid-shanu bi-mitzvo-sav, Ve-tzi-vanu le-had-lik ner shel Chanukah.

Blessed are You, the Lord our G-d, King of the universe, Who sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to kindle the Chanukah light.

BLESSING #2

Baruch ata Ado-noi Elo-heinu Melech ha-olam, Shi-asa ni-sim la-avo-seinu, baya-mim ha-haim baz-man ha-zeh.

Blessed are You, the Lord our G-d, King of the universe, Who made miracles for our forefathers, in those days at this season.

BLESSING #3

(This blessings is said on the first night only.)

Baruch ata Ado-noi Elo-heinu Melech ha-olam, she-he-chi-yanu v-ki-yamanu Vi-hig-i-yanu laz-man ha-zeh.

Blessed are you, the Lord our G-d, King of the universe, Who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.

THIS PARAGRAPH IS SAID EACH NIGHT, AFTER THE FIRST LIGHT HAS BEEN KINDLED:

**Ha-nerot ha-lalu anach-nu mad-likin
Al ha-nissim vi-al hanif- laot
Al ha-tshu-ot vi-al ha-milchamot
She-asita la’avo -teinu
Ba-yamim ha-heim, ba-zman ha-zeh
Al ye-dey kohan-echa hak-e-doshim.
Vo-chol shmonat ye-mey Chanukah
Ha-nerot ha-lalu Kodesh heim.
Ve-ein lanu reshut le-his-tamesh ba-hem
Eila lir-otam bilvad
Kedai le-hodot u-le-hallel le-shimcha ha-gadol
Al ni-secha v-al niflo-techa vi-al yeshua-techa**

We kindle these lights
For the miracles and the wonders
For the redemption and the battles
Which You performed for our forefathers
In those days at this season
Through Your holy priests.
During all eight days on Chanukah
These lights are sacred
And we are not permitted to make use of them
But just to look at them
To express thanks and praise to Your Great Name
For Your miracles, Your wonders and Your salvations.

