

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 (chanukia). 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 bemitsvo-tav, 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 יְיָ 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 יְיָ 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-he-che-ya-nu ve-kiye-ma- ve-hi-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 יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעֵנוּ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

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.

Tzedeka:

Chanukah gelt (money) was given traditionally 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 Tzedeka box; each night of the celebration, before kindling the menorah, some coins would be contributed. At the conclusion of Chanukah, the collection would be offered to a special 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 doughnut.

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
apple sauce	sour cream

Grate potatoes. Chop onion. Drain excess liquid from both. Mix all ingredients 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.

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: “Neis gadol haya sham” — “A great miracle happened there.” (In Israel, the last letter “Shin” is replaced with a “Pei,” to change the phrase to ‘Neis 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

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