

Happy Chanukah

Chanukah Handbook 2017

Kislev, 5778

Temple Beth David

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THE HISTORY OF CHANUKAH

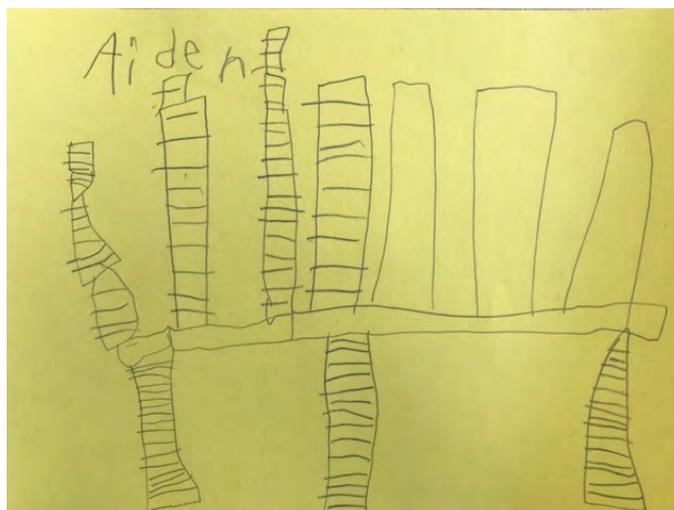
Around 165 B.C.E. Palestine was ruled by the King of Syria, Antiochus. This King commanded that idols be placed in the Temple and that all Jews be forced to worship these gods. Many Jews yearned for the day when they would once more be free to practice their religion and observe their own customs.

In the town of Modin lived a brave leader, Mattathias. He and his five sons rebelled against the Syrians. Of his sons, we remember Judah the best. He was called Judah the Maccabee because he was so strong and fearless. (“Maccabee” means hammer in Hebrew.) Soon, all of the Jews who followed Judah became known as the Maccabees. The Maccabees bravely fought the Syrian army and at last drove their enemies from the land of Palestine.

The Maccabees destroyed the idols and repaired the Temple. A great celebration was prepared to rededicate the Temple. (The word “Chanukah” means to dedicate.) They needed pure oil to light the Temple menorah, but could only find a small jug of oil that would burn for one day. Even though it would take many days to prepare new oil, they used the little jug to start. But a “GREAT MIRACLE HAPPENED THERE-NES GADOL HAYA SHAM!” The oil lasted for eight days until the new oil was ready.

As we burn our Chanukah candles for eight days beginning on the 25th of the Hebrew month of Kislev, we remember our ancestors’ struggle for religious freedom. We recite a special Chanukah prayer, Al Hanissim, which recounts this victory over oppression and gives thanks for our ability to practice our Jewish beliefs. “Maoz Tzur,” a song, which is sung after we light the candles, also reminds us of the bravery and courage of our ancestors who overcame their powerful enemies. Chanukah in the 21st Century must remind us of the struggle so many are making to achieve religious, social and political freedom.

The history of Chanukah comes from four sources: the Books of Maccabees (I & II), the Midrash (a collection of books that explains the words and ideas of the Bible as well as the meaning of the festivals), and the Gemara (the second part of the Talmud).



CHANUKAH: CEREMONIES, SYMBOLS, CUSTOMS

How did the Chanukah menorah originate?

The nine-branched Chanukah menorah, *Chanukiyah*, was a modification of the biblical model and seems to have originated in the first century C.E. It had eight branches, one for each day of the holiday, and a ninth branch for the Shamash or “servant” light. In ancient times, oil was used in the menorah. Over time, candles were substituted for the oil. Interestingly, some scholars believe that the use of small candles for the menorah was a deliberate choice, designed to distinguish Chanukah lights from Christian votive candles. Except in times of religious persecution, the menorah was placed outside the front door or, as is the custom today, displayed in the window of every Jewish home.

How do we light the Chanukah candles?

In a celebrated Talmudic dispute, two great Jewish teachers, Hillel and Shammai, argued whether we should begin by lighting eight candles and gradually decrease to one (Shammai) or begin with one candle and add an additional one each night, thus continuously increasing the light and joy of the holiday (Hillel). The majority ruled with Hillel. Thus, on the first night of Chanukah, we recite or chant the blessings and light one candle with the Shamash, two on the second night, and so on. Customarily, the candles are placed in the menorah from right to left but lit from left to right.

How did the fame of dreidel come to be associated with Chanukah?

Dreidel is a derivative of a German word meaning top, and the game is an adaptation of an old German gambling game. Chanukah was one of the few times of the year when the rabbis of old permitted games of chance. The dreidel, therefore, was a natural candidate for Chanukah entertainment. The four sides of the top bear four Hebrew letters: *Nun*, *Gimmel*, *Hei*, and *Shin*. Players would begin by “anteing” a certain number of coins, nuts, or other objects. Each one in turn would spin the dreidel and proceed as follows: *nun* (“nichts”)-take nothing; *gimmel* (“ganz”)-take everything; *hei* (“halb”)-take half; *shin* (“shtell”)-put in. The winner would often receive money (Chanukah *gelt*). Over time, the gambling terms were reinterpreted to stand for the Hebrew phrase *Nes Gadol Hayah Sham*, “A great miracle happened there.” Thus, even an ordinary game of chance was invested with Jewish values and served to remind Jews of the important message of Chanukah. Today Jewish children throughout the world continue to enjoy the fame of dreidel. In Israel, one letter on the dreidel has been changed. The *Shin* has been replaced with a *Pei*, transforming the Hebrew phrase into *Nes Gadol Hayah Po*, “a great miracle happened here.”



LIGHTING THE CHANUKAH CANDLES

Did you know that in ancient times there was a difference of opinion as to how to celebrate Chanukah? The students of one rabbi, Shammai, believed that the celebration of Chanukah should begin with eight candles, taking one away each night. The students of Hillel insisted upon starting with one candle and then adding one more each night. The school of Rabbi Hillel prevailed because “holiness is something that must grow, not diminish.” And the spirit of holiness needs to be communicated and shared. Therefore, it is a mitzvah to place the Chanukah lights at a window facing the street.

Lighting the Chanukah Menorah

As you face the Chanukah menorah, place the first candle on your right; subsequent candles are added to the left.

Light the Shamash, then take it in your hand and say:

בָּרוּךְ 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.

Praised are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who has made us holy by mitzvot and instructed us to light the Chanukah candles.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים
לְאַבֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמְנָן הַזֶּה.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-Olam, sheasah nisim la'avoteinu bayamim habem bazman hazeh.

Praised are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who did wondrous things for our people long ago at this time of year.

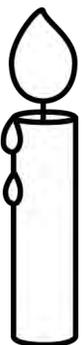
Now light the candles. The new candle is always kindled first.

On the first night only:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ
וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנָן הַזֶּה.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-Olam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu lazman hazeh.

Praised are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who has given us life, sustained us, and brought us to this season of joy.



SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS FOR EACH NIGHT

As we light each of the eight candles on the Chanukah menorah, we dedicate them to each of these cherished values.

FIRST NIGHT: FREEDOM-*Tuesday, December 12, 2017*

We dedicate the first candle to FREEDOM. The struggle against forced Hellenization was a struggle for freedom of expression, for the rights of the minority to be expressed without fear of repression. Let this candle's light inspire us to protect freedom for all.

SECOND NIGHT: TOLERANCE-*Wednesday, December 13, 2017*

We dedicate the second candle to TOLERANCE. Let us strive for a world in which the voice of hatred is no longer heard. Let this candle light the way for us to create a world of mutual respect and tolerance among all the peoples of the world.

THIRD NIGHT: PEACE-*Thursday, December 14, 2017*

We dedicate the third candle to PEACE. Let us use our freedom to create a world that uses words to build bridges among people and does not use weapons to destroy each other, a world in which "they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, and they shall not learn war anymore."

FOURTH NIGHT: COURAGE-*Friday, December 15, 2017*

We dedicate the fourth candle to COURAGE. More important than physical courage is the courage of our moral convictions, the struggle for the ideas and ideals we hold. Let this light remind us that without courage, those ideas and ideals remain unfulfilled.

FIFTH NIGHT: KNOWLEDGE-*Saturday, December 16, 2017*

We dedicate the fifth candle to KNOWLEDGE. The quest for Jewish knowledge for our children and ourselves enriches our lives as Jews and enables us to transmit the beauty and depth of our heritage to future generations. Let this light symbolize our commitment to expanding our Jewish knowledge.

SIXTH NIGHT: JUSTICE-*Sunday, December 17, 2017*

We dedicate the sixth candle to TZEDKAH, to JUSTICE. We achieve great personal fulfillment by giving of ourselves and easing the burdens of others. Let this light remind us of other's needs and inspire us to share what we have with generosity and love.

Ner Shel Tzedakah Blessing

A blessing to recite on the 6th night of Chanukah

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְלִמְדֵינוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל צְדָקָה.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Haolam, Asher Kidshanu B'mitzvotav, V'lamdeinu l'hadlik ner shel tzedakah.

Blessed are You, Eternal, our God, who makes us holy through the performance of Mitzvot, and inspires us to light the Candle of Righteousness.

As we light this "Ner Shel Tzedakah" tonight, we pray that its light will shine into the dark corners of our world, bringing relief to those suffering from the indignity and pain that accompany poverty. May our act of giving inspire others to join with us in the fight against the scourge of hunger, homelessness, need and want. Together, let us raise our voices to cry out for justice, and may that clarion call burst through the night's silence and declare that change must come.

SEVENTH NIGHT: RESPONSIBILITY-Monday, December 18, 2017

We dedicate the seventh candle to RESPONSIBILITY. Our actions must be guided by a sense of obligation towards others, by the responsibility of every Jew for every other Jew. Let the light of this candle remind us that we must bear our mutual responsibility gladly and proudly.

EIGHTH NIGHT: CONTINUITY-Tuesday, December 19, 2017

We dedicate the eighth candle to the CONTINUITY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE. Each of us must be an active participant in Jewish life so that our children and grandchildren will learn the joy and beauty of their Jewish heritage from our actions as well as our words. May the light of this candle encourage us to make this a priority in our lives, intrinsic to our very being.

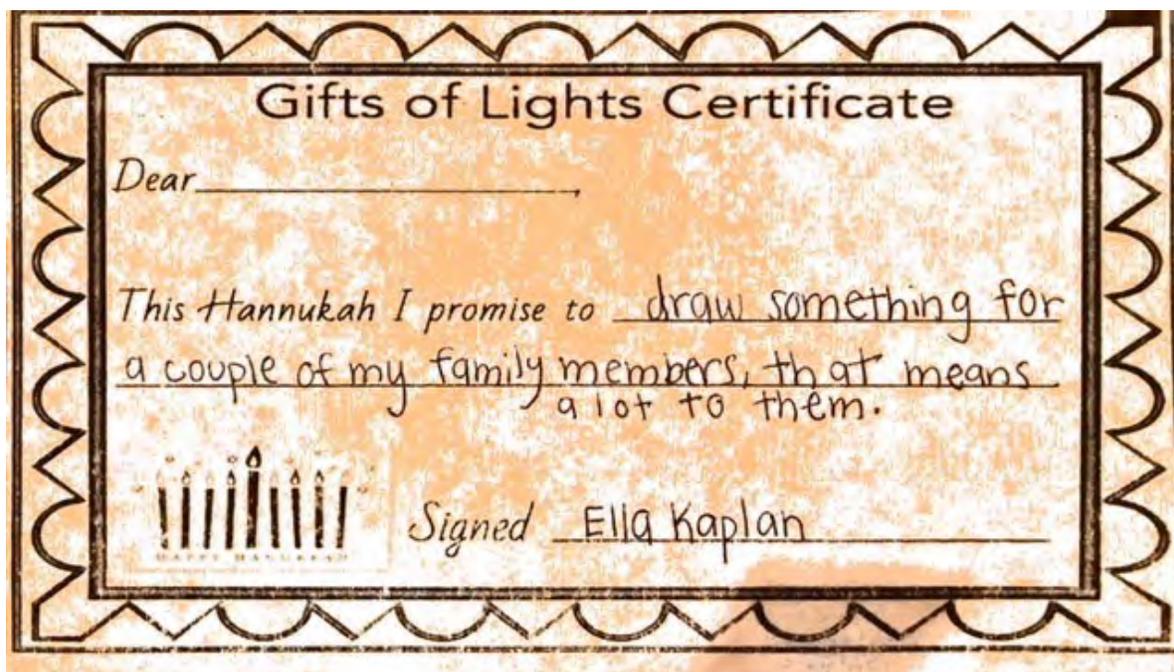
In lighting these Chanukah candles, we join Jews the world over, today, in the past, and in the future. May the candles illuminate our minds, warm our hearts and re-ignite our commitment to each other and to the Jewish people everywhere.

Reprinted from the www.socialaction.com website. This candle lighting ceremony originally appeared in the December 5, 1997 issue of The Forward.

TZEDAKAH ACTIONS FOR CHANUKAH

Inspired by the URJ Commission on Social Action Member, Barbara Lerman-Golomb

1. Donate a bag of non-perishable items to the Foothill Unity food bank or volunteer to help out during the week of Chanukah.
2. Donate children's books to a local hospital (www.reachoutandread.org) or donate books of all ages to a local homeless shelter. The Temple Beth David library can also use your support with building our library's children's and adult collections.
3. Visit the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life's (www.coejl.org) Chanukah Website for holiday eco-tips for giving a gift to the earth through environmental stewardship. You can give a gift to your home such as energy efficient appliances or compact fluorescent light bulbs.
4. Visit the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry's (www.nacoej.org) Website for donation ideas such as sponsoring a child's lunches for the year or the Union for Reform Judaism's Website for *Lech Lecha to a Place of Hope*—The Million Quarters Project (<http://urj.org/csa/projects/mqproject/>).
5. Make a donation to Mazon (www.mazon.org) such as 3% of the amount you are spending for holiday dinners.
6. Visit www.savedarfur.com and www.jewishworldwatch.org to keep updated on the crisis in Sudan. Give Chanukah gelt to buy a solar oven.
7. Donate a gently used Judaica item to the World Union for Progressive Judaism (www.wupj.org) for a newly formed Reform synagogue in the Former Soviet Union or other country around the world.



RAISE A FINGER AND YOU CAN MAKE A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Ideas inspired by Rabbi Alan Lachtman

Clicking every day on www.theliteracywebsite.com is an effective way to help. The joy of reading to children in need demands we get the word out. Each of us is the key to the success of this site! It's simple. The more people who visit The Literacy Site, the more clicks on the "Fund Books for Kids" button, then the more children in low-income families will receive books of their very own.

Chanukah teaches us that we can make a difference in the lives of others. Just lift your finger when you go to www.thehungersite.com. Your click helps feed the hungry with the value of 1.1 cups of staple food. Please click not only every day of Chanukah but throughout the year.

www.thechildhealthsite.com is important as your click, along with each other person helps provides basic and critical health services to more than 1,000 children. Each click helps prevent life-threatening diseases, restores vision to blind children, and enables child amputees to walk. Doing a mitzvah from home is easy.

You will be helping stray animals by signing onto this humane and powerful Website, www.theanimalrescuesite.com. Each click provides the value of .6 bowls of food and care to a rescued animal in a shelter or sanctuary. Every day you can help God's helpless four legged friends. Just think when the rescued dogs get better they will be dancing the *Canine Hora* because of your thoughtfulness.

The rainforest can be helped when you navigate to the Website, www.therainforestsitesite.com. Your click will fund the preservation of 11.4 square feet of endangered rainforest. We can have dominion over the face of the earth in such a positive way.

You can be like Judah the Maccabee and make the world a better place by merely raising your finger as part of tikkun olam.

Be part of the newly emerging social action group at Temple Beth David. Contact Rabbi Lachtman.



Chanukah Recipes

Potato Latkes

Ingredients:

- 3 large potatoes, peeled and grated
- 1 small onion
- 2 eggs
- 2 tbsp. flour or matzah meal
- 3/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 c. peanut oil



Instructions:

Finely grate the potatoes. Grate and add onions. Add flour eggs and salt. Mix well. If batter seems watery, add more flour or matzah meal. Heat oil in a large skillet. Drop large tablespoons of batter in the skillet. Try to keep them brown so they look like pancakes. When they are brown on the edges, turn them over. Fry until crispy and brown. Drain on paper towels. Serve warm with applesauce or sour cream.

Chanukah Applesauce

Ingredients:

- 2 1/2 lb. sweet apples such as Rome Beauty or McIntosh quarter, cored
- 1 1/2 c. water or apple cider
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 3/4 c. sugar
- Lemon juice; freshly squeezed

Instructions:

Can be stored in the refrigerator for up to a week or frozen for up to six months. You'll never settle for store-bought once you've seen how easy homemade applesauce is to make. Peel and core apples. Combine apples and water or cider in pan over low heat. Cook, stirring a couple of times, until tender - about 25 minutes. Drain, reserving liquid. Pass through a food mill, adding cinnamon, sugar and juice and from a third to a half-cup of cooking liquid for a good consistency. Or puree apples in processor. Serve with potato latkes. Serves 8.

Cheese Blintzes

Batter Ingredients:

2 eggs
1/8 teas, salt
3/4 cup flour
1 cup milk

Filling Ingredients (Mix together):

1 lb. dry cottage cheese
1 egg
2 teas, sugar (optional)
1/4 teas, cinnamon (optional)
3 tbsp, butter (optional)

Instructions:

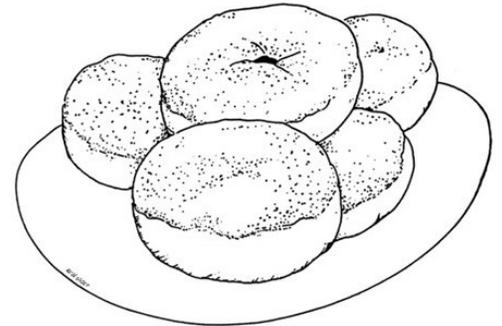
Beat eggs well, add salt, and flour mixing constantly. Add milk gradually and beat until smooth. Fry in 6 inch fry pan. Turn out on clean cloth. Place a tablespoon of filling in center and fold over, in envelope shape. Fry and serve with sour cream and applesauce (applesauce optional). Makes about 12.

Donuts (Sufganiot)

Buttermilk Doughnuts (an exceptionally light donut)

Ingredients:

2 eggs	3/4 tsp. salt
1 cup granulated sugar	1/4 tsp. baking soda
1/4 cup cooking oil	1 cup buttermilk
1 tsp. vanilla	cooking oil for deep frying
4 cups all-purpose flour	powdered sugar
4 tsp. baking powder	



Instructions:

Beat eggs until thick and lemon-colored. Add the granulated sugar and beat until smooth. Stir in the cooking oil and vanilla. Thoroughly stir together dry ingredients. Add to egg mixture alternately with buttermilk. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and roll to 1/2 inch thickness. Cut with a floured doughnut center. Fry in deep hot oil (375 degrees) until golden brown, about 3 minutes, turning once. Drain on paper toweling. Serve plain or sprinkled with powdered sugar. Makes 24 donuts.