

Guide for Chanukah Observance

Observing Chanukah . . .

1. Chanukah is celebrated eight nights, from the evening of the 25th of Kislev (that is, the night before) to the evening of the 2d of Tevet. In 2019, the days of Chanukah are December 23rd through the 30th. This means that the first candle is lighted Sunday night, December 22nd, and eight candles are lit Sunday night, December 29th.

2. The first candle is placed on the right side of the Chanukah menorah (Chanukiyah) as you face it. On the successive nights, you place the candles in the Chanukiyah from right to left, but you light from left to right (i.e., the candle in honor of the most recent night is lit first). You should try to place the Chanukiyah where it can be seen from the outside (typically in the window), or on a porch near the doorway.

3. You light the shamash first in order to light the other candles. The Chanukah candles are to be used only as a reminder of the miracle. You shouldn't use one Chanukah candle to light another.

4. On Friday night, the Chanukah candles are lit before the Shabbat candles. At Havdalah (the service with which we conclude the Sabbath on Saturday night), first you make Havdalah, then light Chanukah candles (in the synagogue, however, customs differ as to what to do on Saturday night).

Blessing over the Lights

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של חנוכה.

Barukh atah adonai, eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher kideshanu b'mitzvotav vetzi-vanu le-hadleek ner shel hannukah

You are the Source of Blessing, Adonai, Our God, Whose Sovereignty fills creation, Who brings sanctity to our lives by giving us holy commandments, and Who has commanded us to kindle the light of Chanukah.

Blessing for the Miracle

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, שעשה נסים לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה.

Barukh atah adonai, eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she'asah nisim la-avoteinu ba-yamim ha-hem ba-z'man ha-zeh

You are the Source of Blessing, Adonai, Our God, Whose Sovereignty fills creation, Who performed miracles for our ancestors in those days at this time.

Blessing for Time

On the first night only, we say the following blessing:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.

Barukh atah adonai, eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she-he-che-yanu, ve-ki-y'manu, ve-higi-anu la-z'man hazeh.

You are the Source of blessing, Adonai, our God, Who has given us life, Who has sustained us, and brought us to this holy moment in time.

After lighting the candles:

After we light the candles, we recite the meditation "HaNerot Halalu," "These Candles," and then we sing "Maoz Tsur."

הנרות הללו אנוחנו מדליקים על הנסים ועל הנפלאות ועל התשועות ועל המלחמות. שעשית לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה, על ידי כהניך הקדושים. וכל שמונת ימי חנוכה הנרות הללו קדש הם, ואין לנו רשות להשתמש בהם, אלא לראותם בלבד, כדי להודות ולהלל לשמך הגדול על נסידך ועל נפלאותיך ועל ישועתך.

Hanerot halalu ana madlikim

al ha-nisim, v'al ha-nifla'ot, v'al ha-teshu'ot, ve'al ha'milhamot sheh-asitah la-voteinu, ba-yamim hahem, ba-z'man hazeh

We light **these candles** for the miracles and wonders and for the saving victory in war that You provided for our ancestors in those days at this time through Your holy priests. And all eight days of Chanukah these candles are holy; we are not permitted to make any mundane use of them. We may only look upon them, so that we will remember to acknowledge and praise Your great and holy Presence, for Your miracles and Your wonders and Your saving power.

מעוז צור

Ma-oz Tsur

מעוז צור ישועתי
תכון בית תפילתי
לעת תכין מטבח
אז אגמר בשיר מזמור
לך נאה לשבח,
ושם תודה נזבח,
מצר המנבח,
חנוכת המזבח.

Ma-oz tsur yeshu-ati, lecha na-eh le-sha-be-ach

Ti-kon beit tefilati, ve-sham todah n'za-be-ach

Le-et ta-khin mat-be-ach, mi-tsar ha-m'na-be-ach

Az eg-mor, b-shir mizmor, hanukat ha-mizbe-ach

Translation:

Fortress rock of my salvation, to you it is pleasant to give praise

You establish my house of prayer, and there we shall make a thanksgiving sacrifice

At the time when you make a slaughter out of the howling enemy,

Then I will finish with poetic song for the dedication of the altar

English "Rock of Ages"

Rock of Ages, let our song praise Thy saving power.
Thou, amidst the raging foes, wast our sheltering tower.
Furious, they assailed us, but Thine arm availed us.
And Thy word broke their sword
when our own strength failed us.
And Thy word broke their sword
when our own strength failed us.