

# BJEP GUIDE TO HANUKKAH

- ***Why do we light candles?*** Jews light Hanukkah candles to remember the miracle of the Maccabees' victory over the Syrians (who forbade Jewish practice and desecrated the ancient Jewish Temple). It also celebrates the miracle of the oil that burnt for eight days in the Temple.
- ***What is special about a Hanukkah Menorah?*** The Menorah should have eight candle holders in a row and a separate candle holder for the "Shamash." The Shamash candle is used to light the other eight candles.
- ***Where do you light a Hanukkah Menorah?*** To publicize the miracle, the Hanukkah Menorah is ideally lit in or near a window facing the public thoroughfare. If that is not feasible, it may be lit inside the house on a table, which at least "publicizing the miracle" for members of the household.
- ***How do you light the Menorah on the First Night?*** On the first night, place one candle in the Menorah's far right (as you face the Menorah) candle holder. Another candle is placed for the Shamash (helper candle). Say the blessings and then light the candle using the Shamash candle. Afterwards, sing some Hanukkah songs, play a dreidel game, and fry up some latkes!
- ***How do you light on the second through eighth night?*** On the second night, place two candles in the Menorah's far right (as you face the Menorah) candle holders. Another candle is placed for the Shamash (helper candle). Say the blessing and then light the candles using the Shamash candle. Light the left-most candle first and then light in order, from left to right. Follow this procedure for each night of Hanukkah.
- ***How can I make Menorah Lighting extra special in my house?*** Allow each child to light their own Hanukkah menorah. Even three and four-year-olds can light candles with help. Line the table on which the menorahs stand with aluminum foil. It is really beautiful to have a group of Menorahs all lit together, especially on the eighth night.

# Blessings over Chanukah Candles

On the first night, say all three blessings. On subsequent nights, say only the first two.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ  
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל תְּנֻכָּה.

**Baruch ata Adonai, Elohenu melech ha-olam  
asher kideshanu be-mitzvotav, ve-tzivanu le-hadlik  
ner shel Hanukah.**

**Blessed are you, Adonai our G-d, Sovereign of the Universe, Who  
sanctified us by his commandments, and has commanded us to kindle  
the lights of Hanukah.**

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים  
הָהֵם בְּזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

**Baruch ata Adonai, Elohenu melech ha-olam  
she-asa nisim la-avotenu ba-yamim ha-hem  
ba-zeman ha-zeh.**

**Blessed are you, Adonai our G-d, Sovereign of the Universe,  
Who wrought miracles for our ancestors in days of old, at this season.**

Only on First Night:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהִחַיָּנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן  
הַזֶּה.

**Baruch ata Adonai, Elohenu melech ha-olam  
she-hecheyanu, ve-kiyemanu, ve-higiyanu la-zeman ha-zeh.**

**Blessed are you, Adonai our G-d, Sovereign of the Universe,  
Who has kept us alive, and has preserved us,  
and enabled us to reach this season.**

# Suggested Hanukkah Songs

## MAOZ TSUR

*Maoz tzur y'shuati l'cha naeh l'shabeach  
Tikon beit t'filati v'sham todah n'zabeach.  
L'eit tachin matbeach mitzar hamnabeach  
Az egmor b'shir mizmor chanukat hamizbeach.*

Rock of Ages let our song,  
Praise thy saving power;  
Thou amidst the raging foes,  
Wast our shelt'rng 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.

## O HANUKKAH

O Hanukkah, O Hanukkah come light the  
menorah  
Let's have a party, we'll all dance the hora  
Gather 'round the table, we'll give you a treat  
Shiny tops to play with and latkes to eat.

*Chorus:*  
And while we are playing,  
The candles are burning low.  
One for each night they shed a sweet light  
To remind us of days long ago.  
One for each night they shed a sweet light  
To remind us of days long ago.

O Hanukkah, O Hanukkah a very special story,  
A man named Judah Maccabee gave us back  
our glory.  
He marched to old Jerusalem, the Temple was  
in flames,  
Eight days the battle lasted, our freedom was  
regained.

## I HAVE A LITTLE DREIDEL

I have a little dreidel  
I made it out of clay  
And when it's dry and ready  
O dreidel I shall play

Chorus:  
O dreidel dreidel dreidel  
I made it out of clay  
And when it's dry and ready  
O dreidel I shall play

It has a lovely body  
With legs so short and thin  
And when it gets all tired  
It drops and then I win. (Chorus...)

My dreidel's always playful  
It loves to dance and spin  
A happy game of dreidel  
Come play now let's begin.

(For some extra fun, try having children come up with their own versions of the song by substituting different materials in the verses. For example: "I have a little dreidel/ I made it out of plastic/ and when I tried to spin it/ my dreidel was fantastic." The results are silly!)

## WHO CAN RETELL

Who can retell the things that befell us,  
Who can count them?  
In every age a hero or sage came to our aid.  
(Repeat)

Hark! In days of yore in Israel's ancient land  
Brave Maccabees led the faithful band.  
But now all Israel must as one arise  
Redeem themselves through deed & sacrifice.

# HOW TO PLAY DREIDEL

The Hebrew word for dreidel is *sevivon*, which, as in Yiddish, means to turn around. Dreidels have four [Hebrew] letters on them, and they stand for the saying, “*Nes Gadol Haya Sham*,” meaning “a great miracle occurred there.” In Israel, instead of the fourth letter “*shin*,” there is a “*peh*,” which means the saying is “*Nes Gadol Haya Po*”--“a great miracle occurred here.”

Playing with the dreidel is a traditional Hanukkah game played in Jewish homes all over the world, and rules may vary. Here's how to play the basic dreidel game:

- Any number of people can take part in this great game.
- Each player begins the game with an equal number of game pieces (about 10-15) such as pennies, nuts, chocolate chips, raisins, matchsticks, etc.
- At the beginning of each round, every participant puts one game piece into the center “pot.” In addition, every time the pot is empty or has only one game piece left, every player should put one in the pot.
- Every time it's your turn, spin the dreidel once. Depending on the outcome, you give or get game pieces from the pot:
  - *Nun* means “*nisht*” or “nothing” [in Yiddish]. The player does nothing.
  - *Gimmel* means “*gantz*” or “everything” [in Yiddish]. The player gets everything in the pot.
  - *Hey* means “*halb*” or “half” [in Yiddish]. The player gets half of the pot. (If there is an odd number of pieces in the pot, the player takes half of the total plus one).
  - *Shin* (outside of Israel) means “*shtet*” or “put in” [in Yiddish]. *Peh* (in Israel) means “pay.” The player adds a game piece to the pot.
- If you find that you have no game pieces left, you are either “out” or may ask a fellow player for a “loan.”