

8 LIGHTS for NIGHTS

Your Chanukah Companion



STORY OF LIGHT

The year was about 165 BCE. Antiochus Epiphanes was king of the Syrian-Greeks. King Antiochus bore down on his Jewish subjects ruthlessly. He defiled the Holy Temple by filling it with pagan idols and sacrifices of pigs. He forbade the Jews to observe the commandments of circumcision, the New Moon, and Shabbat. Antiochus wanted the Jews to lay aside their Torah, and substitute it with Hellenistic Greek culture and idols.

Then, one courageous old man named Matisyahu turned the tide. With the rallying cry of, "Whoever is for G-d, come to me!" he called the people to rebellion. A pitifully small number responded at first, but Matisyahu's five sons led the way. They fought the Syrian-Greeks, retreated to the mountains, and began a guerrilla war against the Syrian-Greeks. Soon, Matisyahu passed on the leadership to his second son, Judah the Maccabee, a mighty warrior and charismatic leader.

Outnumbered a hundred to one, Judah and his men won many battles. More Jews came to join him. In a few years, he had defeated the mightiest armies of Syria. Victory belonged to the Jew, the pure, the righteous, the loyal defender of the Torah.

On the twenty fifth day of Kislev, the fighters made their way to the Holy Temple, where they beheld the idols, filth, and impurity the Greeks had left behind. They rummaged through the ruins seeking at least one flask of pure olive oil with which to light the makeshift menorah they had hastily put together.

Flask after flask they found, every one of them defiled. Until finally, a small jug, sufficient for only one day, was found with the purity seal intact. It would be eight days before they could manufacture more oil for the next lighting, but meanwhile, they lit what they had.

But the flames of the menorah burned, and burned, and burned. For eight days they burned, until more oil was brought. And those eight days were chosen as the eternal symbol to commemorate the miracle of Chanukah, the eight day long Festival of Lights, when we light the Menorah each evening, publicizing the great miracle of light G-d performed for us 2000 years ago.



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Print & Production-
ChabadFlyers.com

Design & Content-
Zalman Friedman
FriedmanAdvertising.com

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1 LIGHT, 1 NIGHT

Friday, Dec. 11 *-before Shabbat candles*



One Light - Challenge

The festival of Chanukah is about overcoming darkness, both physical and spiritual. The Talmud relates that the beginning of any struggle is strenuous. Would it not be easier to simply avoid the darkness and let it be?

The inner calling of a Jew is to illuminate the world. For only by meeting the challenge do we tap our inner source of light and fulfill our potential.

Another lesson of this night: dispelling darkness begins with one candle. The smallest act of good is potent enough to overcome a world of night.

the how-to

Hold the lit Shamash in your right hand, and recite:

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

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time.

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.



Proceed to kindle the single flame by that of the Shamash. The candles must burn for a full half-hour after night fall. The traditional Chanukah melody is on page 11.

Being that tonight is Shabbat, the Menorah should not be prepared, lit, or moved after kindling the Shabbat candles.

Saturday, Dec. 12 *-after Havdalah*



Two Lights - *Increase*

One could technically fulfill the Chanukah obligation by lighting a single candle each night, but the universal Jewish custom is to light an additional candle every night.

This teaches that when spreading light, it is not enough to fulfill the minimal obligation. Darkness is overcome

with a constant increase of light. As long as even one corner of the world remains concealed in darkness, our mission is not complete.

Tonight's candle teaches us not to reserve the light of Chanukah for ourselves. Light must increase and spread over the entire earth.

the how-to

Hold the lit Shamash in your right hand, and recite:

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Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time.

Proceed to kindle the two flames by that of the Shamash. Light as indicated: first the candle furthest left, then the one to the right. The candles must burn for a full half-hour after night fall.

The traditional Chanukah melody is on page 11.

The Menorah should not be prepared, lit, or moved until after reciting Havdalah.

2 LIGHTS, 2 NIGHTS

3 & 4 LIGHTS, 3 & 4 NIGHTS

Sunday, Dec. 13 -after sundown



Three Lights - *Consistency*

We did it once because we were inspired, a second time because it felt good. This third time we do it because we're committed.

In Jewish Law, permanence and consistency are established by repeating an act three times. In geometry and physics, three is the number of stability and balance. A one

or two-legged table can't stand without external support, but a three-legged table stands on its own.

Tonight's inspiration is consistency. Upon lighting the third candle, we express our persistence and commitment to dispel darkness with light.

Monday, Dec. 14 -after sundown



Four Lights - *Focus*

Upon lighting the fourth candle, we are exactly half way through the Chanukah process or conquering darkness.

As in any process, keeping an eye on the goal is imperative. Along the way, secondary opportunities may sidetrack us. At each stage of the journey we should ask ourselves, "does this help me achieve my goal?"

The four candles teach us that when we remain focused on our goal, the details along the way will not bog us down. Moreover, the feeling of gaining ground fills the traveler with the joy and energy to overcome obstacles along the way.

Tuesday, Dec. 15 *-after sundown*



Five Lights - *Majority*

The fifth night of Chanukah represents the epitome of the darkness of exile.

As such, the fifth night never falls on Shabbat, a “taste of the Messianic Era,” which overshadows all darkness. Thus, the lighting of the Chanukah candles on

this night is especially significant. Tonight, we express our ability to bring light to the darkest of realms where negativity and darkness seem to have a stranglehold.

This fifth night is also the first night that a majority of the eight candles is lit; signifying that most of the journey toward our goal is complete.

the how-to



Hold the lit Shamash in your right hand, and recite:

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Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time.

Proceed to kindle the flames by that of the Shamash. Light as indicated: first the candle furthest left, then the one to its immediate right, and so on. The candles must burn for a full half-hour after night fall. The traditional Chanukah melody is on page 11.

6&7 LIGHTS, 6&7 NIGHTS

Wednesday, Dec. 16 *-after sundown*



Six Lights - *Infusion*

The world was created in six days. “Six days shall you labor and do all your work.” Six represents the labor of working and perfecting the world.

Upon lighting the sixth candle we articulate that the world and all its mundane workings must be infused with spirituality. When G-d is brought into every aspect of our lives, each act becomes a mitzvah.

Thursday, Dec. 17 *-after sundown*

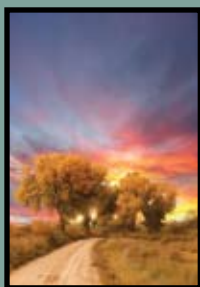


Seven Lights - *Reflection*

Shabbat, the seventh day of creation is when “the heavens and the earth were completed.” Just as there is a time to create, there is a time to reflect. Shabbat is when we rest from our labor to reflect its purpose, thus allowing the labor of the preceding week to actualize their potential.

When lighting seven candles, we allow the illumination of the six previous candles to fulfill their potential and fill all of creation with purpose and meaning.

Friday, Dec. 18 -before Shabbat candles



Eight Lights - *Miracles*

Eight represents that which is higher than nature; this is why the symbol for infinity is the figure eight. On this eighth night the true essence of Chanukah shines, for the greatest teaching of Chanukah is that miracles can and do happen, and that in the future, the miraculous will become the commonplace. The ultimate miracle is the fusion of the finite physical world with the infinite light of G-d. This is why the last day of Chanukah is called “Zot Chanukah,” meaning “*this* is Chanukah.”

As we light the eighth Chanukah candle, let us pray for the ultimate era of peace and light, the era of our redemption when “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the sea.”

the how-to



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Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time.

Proceed to kindle the flames by that of the Shamash. Light as indicated: first the candle furthest left, then the one to its immediate right, and so on. The candles must burn for a full half-hour after night fall. The traditional Chanukah melody is on page 11.

On Friday, the Menorah should not be prepared, lit, or moved after kindling the Shabbat candles.

8 LIGHTS, 8 NIGHTS



Dreidel

The Greeks deemed the studying of Torah a crime punishable by death. But children defiantly studied in secret and, when patrols were spotted, would pretend to be playing an innocent game of dreidel – a four-sided spinning top.

On each side is a Hebrew letter: “Nun,” “Gimmel,” “Hay” and “Shin.” The letters stand for the phrase, “Nes Gadol Hayah Sham” – a great miracle happened there. It is traditionally used to play a lively Chanukah game.



Latkes

To commemorate the Chanukah miracle, which occurred with oil, it is traditional to eat foods fried in oil. Among the most popular dishes is this recipe for scrumptious potato latkes:

- 8 Idaho potatoes (peeled)
- 2 large onions
- 4 egg whites (do not beat)
- Dash of salt
- Dash of pepper (if you like it hot)
- Margarine or oil (either, for frying)

Get the “knuckles” involved. Take out that old-fashioned grater with medium holes.

Add your egg whites, salt and pepper and mix well. Heat oil or margarine, then add mixture, one tablespoon at a time, into your favorite frying pan.

Fry on both sides until golden brown on a medium flame.

Gelt



On Chanukah, it is traditional to give Chanukah gelt (money) to children. This custom adds to the children’s happiness and festive spirit. In addition, it affords an opportunity to give children positive reinforcement for exemplary behavior, such as diligence in their studies and acts of charity.

Hebrew Blessings

1
2
3
melody

ברוך אתה יי אל-הינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותי, וצונו להדליק נר חנוכה.

ברוך אתה יי אל-הינו מלך העולם, שעשה נסים לאבות, בימים ההם בזמן הזה.

(ליל ראשון של חנוכה לבד)

ברוך אתה יי אל-הינו מלך העולם, שהחיו וקימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה

הנרות הללו אנו מדליקין, על התשועות, ועל הנסים, ועל הנפלאות, שעשית לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה, על ידי כהניך הקדושים.

וכל שמונת ימי חנוכה, הנרות הללו קדש הם, ואין לנו רשות להשתמש בהן, אלא לראותן בלבד, כדי להודות ולהלל לשמך הגדול, על נסִיך ועל נפלאותיך, ועל ישועותיך.

We kindle these lights to commemorate the saving acts, miracles and wonders which You have performed for our forefathers, in those days at this time, through Your holy Kohanim. Throughout the eight days of Chanukah, these lights are sacred, and we are not permitted to make use of them, rather only to look at them, in order to offer thanks and praise to Your great Name for Your miracles, for Your wonders, and for Your salvation.

