

# Hanukkah Guide



**Derech  
HaMashiach**  
Messianic Community

## What is Hanukkah?

It is a celebration festival, that focuses on the rededication of the temple after a period of heathen occupation and defilement back in 165 BCE. The name “Hanukkah” derives from the Hebrew verb "חנך", meaning "to dedicate".

## The story of Hanukkah

In 167 BCE Israel was a conquered territory of the Seleucid (Greek Macedonian) Empire. The ruler of the time was Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the successor of Alexander the Great. Unlike his predecessors, Antiochus forced Hellenization (through cultural imperialism) and persecution on to the Jewish nation.

This included:

- Appointing a Hellenistic High Priest to the Temple
- Prohibiting study of Torah
- Desecrating the alter by slaughtering pigs to Zeus Olympios

The desecration of the Temple and religious persecution was met with resistance by the Jewish people and a rebellion was started by the Judah Maccabee and his brothers - the family of High Priest Mattithias. Although the Maccabee forces were outnumbered by Antiochus, they succeeded in driving their forces out of Israel and regained control over the Temple.

All that is the backdrop to the real miracle. During the rededication of the Temple there was not enough sanctified oil for the Temple menorah to last past a single day. However, the oil continued to burn for eight days, allowing time for a fresh supply of oil to be found. This is the foundation on which the eight-day celebration of Hanukkah is based.

## Hanukkah and the Light of Messiah

The Hanukkiah has 9 candles, compared to the Menorah in the Temple, which has only 7. One candle is the servant candle, which lights the other eight candles, one more for each day of Hanukkah. We know that the number eight represents the supernatural in Jewish numerology.

In Sefardic tradition, we read Yesha'yahu (Isaiah) 9 during the period of Hanukkah, because the number eight represents the supernatural coming of Mashiach. Yesha'yahu 9:5 (6) talks about the restoration of the concealed light, the Light of Mashiach, to the world. Each name in this verse represents an attribute of Mashiach:



“For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; dominion will rest on his shoulders, and he will be given the name Pele-Yo`etz El Gibbor Avi-`Ad Sar-Shalom [Wonder of a Counsellor, Mighty G-d, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace],”<sup>1</sup>

Each candle, as it is lit, represents one of these attributes:

Candle (night) 1: Pele (Wonderful / Miracle)

Candle (night) 2: Yo`etz (Counsellor)

Candle (night) 3: El (G-d)

Candle (night) 4: Gibbor (Mighty)

Candle (night) 5: Avi (My Father)

Candle (night) 6: `Ad (Eternal)

Candle (night) 7: Sar (Prince)

Candle (night) 8: Shalom (Peace)

The time of Hanukkah represent the Eight Days of Mashiach. When we light each candle, read Yesha`yahu 9:5, and ask for the concealed to return, adding one extra attribute each night. Yeshua our Messiah truly is the Light of the World (Yochanan (John) 8:12, 12:46)

## How do we celebrate Hanukkah? (A practical guide)

### *Dates*

Hanukkah is observed over 8-days from Kislev 25 to Tevet 3 (Talmud: Shabbat 21b), starting at sundown.

*Notes:* \*Remember that the Jewish day starts at sundown.

\*Use these dates to check how they line up to your calendar each year. It does change!

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<sup>1</sup> All Scriptural quotes are taken from the Complete Jewish Bible by David H. Stern. Copyright © 1998. All rights reserved. Used by permission of Messianic Jewish Publishers, 6120 Day Long Lane, Clarksville, MD 21029. [www.messianicjewish.net](http://www.messianicjewish.net)



## ***Candle Lighting***

Candles are lit to recall miracle of eight days where the oil burned in the temple for its rededication and in commemoration of the victory of the Jewish people over their enemies.

(Talmud: Sukkah 46a)

### **What you will need:**

- A Hanukkiah. A special 8-pronged menorah with space for a *shamash* (servant candle).
- 44x candles. These will get you through the 8 nights of Hanukkah.

### **Steps:**

1. Place candles as per diagram on page 3 (right to left)
2. Light the *shamash* (servant candle – the one in the middle)
3. Recite passages (optional; page 4) and blessings (pages 5-6)
4. Light the candles from left to right using the *shamash* (page 3), while reciting the *Haneirot Hallalu* prayer (page 7).
5. Put the *shamash* back in the centre position
6. Have fun!



### Tips and tricks:

- The *shamash* should sit higher or lower than the other candles so as to not be confused with the others.
- Oil lamps can also be used. Olive oil is preferable.
- You can have one Hanukkah for your family or many. Some traditions have one for each family member.
- Buy candles that will burn for at least 30 minutes. Some traditions say that they can be extinguished after that time, while others say they must burn through to the end. Most pre-packaged Hanukkah candles last between 30-60 minutes.
- It is a time-honoured tradition to place your Hanukkah near a window (if safe to do so), to shine light to others. Make sure it is orientated towards the outside. Keep clear of flammable material!
- On a shabbat (Friday night) light the Hanukkah before the shabbat candles. On a Saturday night light the Hanukkah during Havdalah.
- Do not use to light the room as these lights are sacred.

### PLACING THE CANDLES (right to left)



### LIGHTING THE CANDLES (left to right)



**Passages to Recite (optional)**

**John 8:12**

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness,  
but will have the light of life.”

“Anokhi ohr ha’olam, ha’holekh acharai lo yelekh ba’choshekh, ki-lo ohr  
ha’chayim.”

אֲנֹכִי אֹר הָעוֹלָם הַהֹלֵךְ אַחֲרַי לֹא יֵלֵךְ  
בְּחֹשֶׁךְ כִּי-לֹא אֹר הַחַיִּים.

**Psalm 27:1**

“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the  
refuge of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”

“Adonai ori ve’yishi, mi-mi irah? Adonai ma’oz-chaiyai, mi-mi efchad?”

יְהוָה אֹרִי וַיִּשְׁעֵי מִמִּי אִירָא  
יְהוָה מְעוֹז-חַיַּי מִמִּי אֶפְחָד.



## *Blessings (page 1 of 2)*

### **Lehadlik Ner Shel Hanukkah**

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who sanctifies us with his commandments and commanded us to kindle the light of Hanukkah.

Baruch attah Adonai eloheinu melek ha-olam, asher kideshanu bemitzvotav, vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel hanukkah.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ  
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה.

### **She'ash Nissim (The One Who Works Miracles)**

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

Barukh attah Adonai eloheinu melek ha-olam, she'asah Nissim la'avoteinu bayamim hahem, ba-zeman hazzeh.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים  
לְעַבְוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם, בַּזְּמַן הַזֶּה.



## Blessings (page 2 of 2)

### Shehecheyanu\*

*\*Note: This is only recited on the first night of Hanukkah*

Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has kept us alive and sustained us and has brought us to this special time. Amen.

Barukh attah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she-hecheyanu v'ki-yemanu v'higianu lazeman hazeh. Amen.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיָּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה. [אָמֵן]





## Prayer

### Haneirot Hallalu

Talmud (Soferim 20:6)

We kindle these lights to commemorate the miracles and wonders and the savings acts that You have performed for our forefathers, in those days at this time, by Your holy priests. And all throughout the eight days of Hanukkah, these lights are holy, and we are not permitted to make use of them, but only to behold them, in order to offer thanks and praise to Your great Name for Your miracles, for Your wonders and for Your salvation.

Haneirot hallalu anachnu madlikin al hanissim ve'al hanifla'ot, ve'al hateshu'ot, ve'al hamilchamot, she'asita la'avoteinu bayamim hahem, baseman hazeh al yedei kohanekha hakedoshim. Vekhol sh'monat yemei Hanukkah Haneirot hallalu kodesh hem. Ve'ain lanu reshut lihishtamesh bahem ela lir'otam bilvad kedai lehodot ulhallel lishimkha hagadol al nisekha ve'al nifle/otecha ve'al yeshuatekha.

הַנִּירוֹת הַלְלוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מִדְּלִיקֵין עַל הַנִּסִּים וְעַל הַנִּפְלְאוֹת,  
וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת וְעַל הַמַּלְחָמוֹת, שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ  
בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמְנוֹ הַזֶּה. עַל יְדֵי פִּהֲנִיךָ הַקְּדוֹשִׁים.  
וְכֹל שְׂמוֹנַת יָמֵי חֲנֻכָּה, הַנִּירוֹת הַלְלוּ קֹדֶשׁ הֵם.  
וְאִים לָנוּ רְשׁוֹת לְהִשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בָּהֶם, אֲלֵא לְרֵאוֹתָן בְּלִבְךָ,  
כִּי לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְהַלֵּל לְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל עַל נִסֶּיךָ וְעַל  
נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְעַל יְשׁוּעָתְךָ.



## ***Torah Readings***

<b>Day</b>	<b>Readings</b>
Hanukkah 1 Kislev 25	Numbers 7:1-17 John 9:1-7; 10:22-39
Hanukkah 2 Kislev 26	Numbers 7:18-29
Hanukkah 3 Kislev 27	Numbers 7:24-35
Hanukkah 4 Kislev 28	Numbers 7:30-41
Hanukkah 5 Kislev 29	Numbers 7:36-47
Hanukkah 6 Kislev 30	Numbers 28:1-15 Numbers 7:42-47
Hanukkah 7 Tevet 1	Numbers 7:48-53
Hanukkah 8 Tevet 2	Numbers 7:54 - 8:4



## Games

Other Hanukkah customs include playing with four-sided spinning tops called dreidels and exchanging gifts. Giving *tzedakah* (charity) is also encouraged.

Dreidel, also called *Sevivon* in Hebrew, is a game traditionally played on Hanukkah using a special 4-sided spinning top. The Hebrew letters on its sides are *Nun*, *Gimmel*, *Hey* and *Shin*. In Israel, *Pey* is used for the word *po* (here) instead of a *Shin* (there). Together, the letters stand for the phrase:

*Nes gadol hayah sham/po*

“a great miracle happened there/here”

### How to play spin the dreidel

1. Any number of people can play (3 or more is better)
2. Each player starts with the same number of game pieces (chocolate, nuts, etc)
3. Each player puts one piece in the pot at the beginning of each round
4. Spin the dreidel!
5. If it lands on:

**Nun נ** – Nothing. The player does nothing and the next player spins.

**Gimmel ג** – Get! The player gets the whole pot! All players then put in another piece.

**Hey ה** – Half. The player gets half of the pieces in the pot. If there are an odd number of pieces, the player rounds up.

**Shin ש / Pey פ** - Sorry. The player must share their winnings by placing one piece into the pot.



## ***Food***

In another allusion to the Hanukkah miracle, traditional Hanukkah foods are fried in oil. Potato pancakes (known as latkes) and jam-filled donuts (*sufganiyot*) are particularly popular in many Jewish households.

**Chag Hanukkah Sameach!**



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