



# Chanukah Guide

The holiday of Chanukah is based on the victory of the Maccabees over the Syrian Greeks. The events on which Chanukah is based took place in the Land of Israel, in the 160s BCE. Antiochus, the Syrian king, tried to stop Jewish practices, and took over the Temple in Jerusalem. Mattityahu and his five sons, later known as the Maccabees, led a revolt against Antiochus and his army ('Maccabee' is a name taken from the Hebrew word for 'hammer,' reflecting their military strength).

The revolt was successful, leading to the reclamation and purification of the Temple. The word 'Chanukah' is short for 'Chanukat HaBayit,' the rededication of the Temple. The Maccabees also established the Hasmonean dynasty, which kept Israel under Jewish rule for almost two hundred years.

The most famous story of Chanukah involves the miracle of the oil. It is said that when the Maccabees came to rededicate the Temple, there was only enough oil to light the Temple menorah for one day. A miracle happened and the oil lasted for eight days. Interestingly, this story does not appear until centuries after the Maccabean revolt took place, and first appears in the Talmud.

Chanukah is an eight-day festival, marked by the lighting of the Chanukiah or Chanukah menorah. We eat foods like *latkes* and *sufganiyot* (jelly donuts) to celebrate the miracle of the oil, we play *dreidl*, and we tell the story of the Maccabees. The story of Chanukah has become an inspiration for a strong and enduring Jewish identity.

# prayers

## LIGHTING THE CHANUKIAH

The candles are placed in the Chanukiah from right to left. Light only the Shamash, take it in your hand and say:

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

Ba-ruch a-tah Adonai, Eloheinu meh-lech ha-olam, a-sheer kid'shanu b'mitz-votav v'tzi-vanu l'had-lik ner shel Chanukah.

*We praise you, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe: You hallow us with Your Mitzvot, and command us to kindle the Chanukah lights.*



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ  
בְּיָמִים הָהֵם בְּזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

Ba-ruch a-tah Adonai, Eloheinu meh-lech ha-olam, sheh-a-sa ni-sim la-a-vo-tei-nu ba-ya-mim ha-heim ba-z'man ha-zeh.

*We praise you, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe: Who worked miracles for our ancestors in days long ago, at this season.*

On the first night Chanukah, a third blessing is also said:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחֵינּוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ  
וְהִגִּיעֵנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

Ba-ruch a-tah Adonai, Eloheinu meh-lech ha-olam, sheh-heh-cheh-ya-nu v'ki-y'ma-nu v'hi-gi-a-nu la-z'man ha-zeh.

*We praise you, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe: Who has kept us alive and strong and brought us to this season.*

**Light the candles. Beginning with the newest candle, proceed to light from left to right. Then say:**

*We kindle these lights on account of the miracles, the rescuing deeds, the wars You carried out for our ancestors through the hands of Your holy priests and throughout all of these eight days of Chanukah. These lights are holy and we are not permitted to make use of them, only to look at them, in order to give praise to Your Name for Your miracles, for Your rescuing deeds, and for Your marvelous acts.*

## Sevivon

Greenspan – Folk

S'vivon sov sov sov  
Chanukah hu chag tov (2x)  
S'vivon sov sov sov

Chag simcha hu la-am  
Nes gadol haya sham (2x)  
Chag simcha hu la-am.

## סביבון

סביבון סב, סב, סב  
חנכה הוא חג טוב  
חנכה הוא חג טוב  
סביבון סב, סב, סב  
חג שמחה הוא לעם  
נס גדול היה שם  
נס גדול היה שם  
חג שמחה הוא לעם.



## Light One Candle

Peter Yarrow

Light one candle for the  
Maccabee children  
Give thanks that their light did  
not die  
Light one candle for the pain  
they endured  
When their right to exist  
was denied  
Light one candle for the terrible  
sacrifice  
Justice and freedom demand  
Light one candle for the  
wisdom to know  
When the peace-makers time  
is at hand.

### CHORUS

Don't let the light go out  
It's lasted for so many years  
Don't let the light go out  
Let it shine through our love  
and our tears.

Light one candle for the  
strength that we need  
To never become our own foe  
Light one candle for those who  
are suffering the pain  
We learned so long ago.  
Light one candle for all we  
believe in  
Let anger not tear us apart  
And light one candle to bind  
us together  
With peace as the song in  
our heart.

### CHORUS

What is the memory that's  
valued so highly  
That we keep it alive in  
that flame?  
What's the commitment to  
those who have died  
When we cry out they've not  
died in vain?  
We have come this far always  
believing  
That justice would somehow  
prevail  
This is the burden and this is  
the promise  
And this is why we'll not fail.

## Chanukah Oh Chanukah

Oh Chanukah Oh Chanukah, come light the menorah  
Let's have a party, we'll all dance the Horah  
Gather round the table we'll give you a treat  
Dreidles to play with and latkes to eat

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.

## Who Can Retell

Folk

Who can retell  
the things that  
befell us?

Who can  
count them?  
In every age  
a hero or sage  
came to our aid.

Hark!

In days of yore  
in Israel's ancient  
land

Brave Maccabeus  
led the faithful  
band

But now all Israel  
must as one arise  
Redeem itself  
through deed  
& sacrifice

Who can retell...

## Mi Yemaleil

Mi Yemaleil g'vurot Yisrael  
O'tan mi yim-neh  
Hen b'chol dor yakum ha-gibor  
Go-el Ha-am  
Sh'ma!

Ba-ya-mim ha-hem ba-z'man ha-zeh  
Ma-ka-bee mo-shee-a u-fo-deh  
Uv'ya-mei-nu kol am Yisrael  
Yit-a-ched ya-kum v'yi-ga-el.

## 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.

## מי ימלל

מי ימלל גבורות ישראל,  
אותו מי ימנה  
הן בכל דור יקום הגיבור,  
גואל העם.  
שמע!

בימים ההם בזמן הזה.  
מכבי מושיע ופודה.  
ובקמיו כל עם ישראל.  
יתאחד, יקום ויגאל.



## Maoz Tsur

Ma-oz tsur y'shu-a-tee  
L'cha na-eh l'sha-bey-ach  
Tee-kon beyt t'fee-la-tee  
V'sham to-dah n'za-bey-ach  
L'yet ta-chin mat-bey-ach  
Mee-tzar ham'na-bey-ach  
(Az eg-mor b'shir mizmor  
Chanukat ha-miz-bey-ach.) (2x)

## מעוז צור

מעוז צור ישועתי, לך נאה לשבח.  
תכון בית תפילתי, ושם תודה נזבח.  
לעת תכון מטבח, מצר המנבח.  
(אז אגמור בשיר מזמור, חנכת המזבח.) 2x