Did you know that in ancient times there was a difference of opinion as to how to celebrate Chanukah? The students of Rabbi Shammai believed that the celebration of Chanukah should begin with eight candles, taking one away each night. The students of another rabbi, Rabbi Hillel insisted upon starting with one candle and then adding one more each night. The School of Rabbi Hillel prevailed because “holiness is something that must grow, not diminish.” And the spirit of holiness should be communicated and shared. Therefore, it is a mitzvah to place the Chanukah lights at a window facing your neighbors.

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 dreidel, and we tell the story of the Maccabees. The story of Chanukah has become an inspiration for a strong and enduring Jewish identity.
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:

**Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, a-sher ki’chashnu b’mitz-votav v’tzi-vanu l’had-lak 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.*

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

**Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, sheh-heh-chay-yim la-zeman ha-zei.**

*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.**
Light One Candle
Peter Yarrow

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.

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.

**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)