

# Chanukah / Hanukkah / חנוכה

## The Jewish Holiday is...

Hanukkah is celebrated on the Hebrew date of the 25 of Kislev.



(It usually falls in or around December on the secular calendar.)

On Hanukkah we celebrate the two miracles that happened to the Jewish people in 165 BCE. A small Jewish group called the Maccabees, led by Yehudah (son of Matityahu), decided to rebel against the Syrian-Greeks and their Hellenistic ways. Despite being out numbered and outpowered, this small group miraculously beat the mighty Syrian-Greek army. When we went to rededicate (*Hanukkah* means to rededicate) the Temple that was desecrated by the Syrian-Greeks, there was just enough oil found to light the Menorah in the temple for one night, but the oil lasted eight nights, hence the eight nights of *Hanukkah*. The story of Hanukkah is found in the 1st and 2nd Books of Maccabees.



## Blessings for Lighting the Candles of the *Hanukkiah* (Hanukkah Menorah):

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִידְשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוֵּנוּ  
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tsivanu  
l'hadlik ner shel Hanukkah.*

Blessed are you, Adonai our G-d, King of the universe, who sanctified us with his commandments, commanding us to light the candles of Hanukkah.

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

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, she-asah nisim la'avoteinu bayamim  
hahem bazman hazeh.*

Blessed are you, Adonai our G-d, King of the universe, who made miracles for our ancestors in their days at this time.

(First Night Only):

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיֵּנוּ, וְקִיַּמְנוּ, וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה  
*Baruch atah adonai elohenu melech ha'olam, shehecheyanu, v'kiymanu, v'higiyanu  
lazman hazeh.*

Blessed are you, Adonai our G-d, King of the universe, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this time.

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## Hanukkah Traditions:

### Eating *Sufganiyot* (Jelly Donuts) and *Latkes* (Potatoe Pancakes)

(or anything fried in oil, to remind us of the miracle of the oil.)



### Playing *Siveevon* (Dreidel)

A siveevon has letters that represent the phrase:

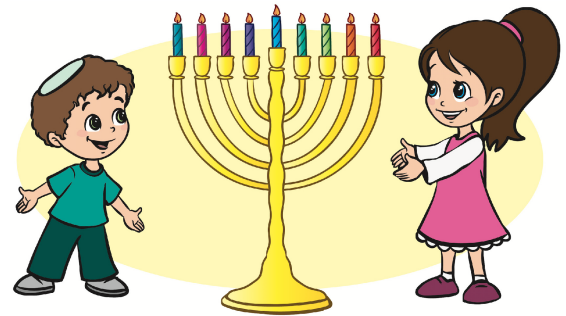
a big miracle happened there - נ ג ה ש

(in Israel: a big miracle happened here - נ ג ה פ)



### Lighting the *Hanukkiyah* (The *Hanukkah Menora*)

We light a new candle each night until the eighth night, when the entire *Hanukkiyah* is lit. We use the *Shamash* (helper candle, the taller one) to light all the candles.



### Gifts and *Gelt* (Chocolate coins)

Gifts are a tradition that evolved with time and the *Gelt* represents money. Before gifts, the tradition was to give money (gifted money and to charity).

## How to Play Dreidel (*Siveevon*, in Hebrew):

On the *siveevon* you will find four Hebrew letters: ש ה ג נ  
shin hay gimmel noon



They represent the phrase: *nes gadol haya sham* נֶס גָּדוֹל הָיָה שָׁם  
"a great miracle happened there"

Every player gets "coins" (*gelt*, pennies, candies, anything), and puts an agreed amount in the middle, "the pot." Everyone gets a turn to spin the *siveevon*. Everytime the pot is cleared out, everyone has to put in again. The person left with the most "coins" at the end of your game, wins!

If your *siveevon* lands on the letter נ *noon* - you give/get nothing of the pot

If your *siveevon* lands on the letter ג *gimmel* - you get everything in the pot

If your *siveevon* lands on the letter ה *hey* - you get half of the pot

If your *siveevon* lands on the letter ש *shin* - you give 2 coins into the pot

