

HANUKKAH BLESSINGS



Blessing Over the Hanukkah Candles (to be said prior to lighting the candles)

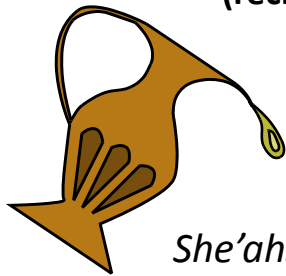
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנוּכָּה.

*Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha'olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav,
v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Hanukkah.*

Blessed are you Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe,
who has made us holy through God's commandments,
and commanded us to light the Hanukkah candles.

Blessing for Miracles

(recite immediately following the first blessing, prior to lighting)



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

*Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha'olam,
She'ahsa neesim la'avotaynu bayamim haheim baz'man hazeh.*

Blessed are you Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe,
who performed wonders for our ancestors in history at this very time of year.

Blessing for Special Occasions

(recite following the Blessing for Miracles only on the first night of Hanukkah)



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהַחַיָּנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

*Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melekh ha'olam,
shehekheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higiyanu laz'man hazeh.*



Blessed are you Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe,
who gave us life, sustains us, and enabled us to reach this season.

ALL ABOUT HANUKKAH

1. What is Hanukkah?

Hanukkah is an 8-day holiday that commemorates the victory of the Maccabees (a Jewish family leading the revolt) over the religious persecution of King Antiochus and his Syrian armies in 165 B.C.E. It is a holiday that celebrates religious freedom. Following the Maccabees' victory, the Temple, the holy place of worship in Jerusalem, was rededicated. Hanukkah is a Hebrew word that means dedication.

2. What do I need to celebrate Hanukkah?

Hanukkah menorah: a 9-branched candelabrum. The Hanukkah menorah (also called a *hanukkiah*) has 9 candles. One candle is the *shammash*, or helper candle, that is used to light the others. On the first night of Hanukkah, light the *shammash* and use its flame to light the first candle placed in the far right side of the menorah. Add one candle each night, filling the menorah from right to left, lighting the newest candle first so that you are lighting them from left to right. (See reverse side for blessings).

Dreidel: a spinning toy with four sides. On each side are Hebrew letters that together form the acronym, **ש ה ג נ**, that stand for the Hebrew words **נִסְ גְּדוּל הַיְהוָה שָׁם**, translated as A Great Miracle Happened There (in Jerusalem). A game is played with the *dreidel*. Each player needs the same number of coins or candy, and play begins with every player putting two pieces in the center. Players take turn spinning the dreidel. If it lands on **ש**, the player puts in another piece. If it lands on **ה**, the player takes half the pieces from the center. If it lands on **ג**, the player does nothing. If it lands on **נ**, the player wins by taking all the pieces from the center. After a win, play continues with everyone placing two more pieces in the center.

Foods: fried potato pancakes (called *latkes*), fried doughnuts (called *sufganiyot*), or anything cooked in oil to celebrate the miracle of the oil found in the Temple. According to the legend, when the Maccabees reclaimed the Temple, they found a single jar of oil to light the *ner tamid* (eternal light), which was sufficient to keep it lit for only a single day. Miraculously, the single jar of oil continued to burn for eight days. We eat foods cooked in oil to symbolize this miracle. (Check our Facebook page for links to recipes).

Presents: Although not a traditional practice, American Jews often give presents to their children during Hanukkah. The value to help those less fortunate is also stressed, and Jewish families will often perform charitable acts or give charitable gifts during the holiday.

3. What if I have other questions?

For more information about Hanukkah, Jewish practices and beliefs, or how to connect to Jewish life in Greater Cleveland, contact Rabbi Melinda Mersack at mmersack@jecc.org or 216-371-0446 x232. Keep up with future jHUB events and offerings: www.jHUBCle.org



CONNECTING
INTERFAITH FAMILIES
TO JEWISH LIFE
IN GREATER CLEVELAND