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THE STORY OF CHANUKAH IN BRIEF

After the year **175 B.C.E.**, **ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES**, ascended the throne of Syria. Urged by Hellenized Jews, he attempted to force the Jews to abandon their religion & language; to accept Greek idols & language instead. When the Jews resisted, soldiers were sent to enforce the king's orders; venturing into the Temple to set up idols for pagan sacrifices on the sacred altar. Resistance brought martyrdom to many Jews including the aged sage **ELIEZER**, who was killed when he refused to eat swine meat; and **HANNAH** who lost her 7 sons rather than have them bow down to Greek idols.

Open revolt began in the town of **Modin** when an old priest named **MATTATHIAS** and his 5 sons broke up an attempt to enforce idol sacrifices. With the slogan "**Whoever is for the Lord, follow me!**" they scattered the king's soldiers & fled to the hills. Around this family of **MACCABEES** grew up a company of fearless patriotic men who waged guerilla warfare from the caves in the mountains. When **MATTATHIAS** died leaving leadership to his son **JUDAH MACCABEE**, warfare was taken into the open in a series of successful battles. The Syrian armies were routed. **Right had won out against brute might.** The powerful kingdom of Syria had to recognize the independence of the little state of Judea. The walls of the city of Jerusalem were repaired; the holy Temple was cleansed and rededicated to the worship of God.



ORIGINS OF THE HOLIDAY & CANDLES

Our oldest sources differ as to the nature of Chanukah. In **1 Maccabees**, the festival is a **rededication of the Temple** with no description other than the mention of songs & praise. **1 Maccabees** is thought to have been written during the rule of John Hyrcanus (134-104 BCE) by an eyewitness to the events.

According to **2 Maccabees**, **Chanukah**, still with no name, **was a festival of rededication & also an observance of Sukkot.** Judah & his warriors were unable to observe Sukkot at its proper time as they were mustering to attack Jerusalem at that time. They modeled the rededication of the Temple on the dedication of the Temple of Solomon (held on Sukkot). These sources yield no name for this celebration nor is there any mention of the lighting of lights, other than the rekindling of the ceremonial candelabra in the Temple which were lit every day of the year.

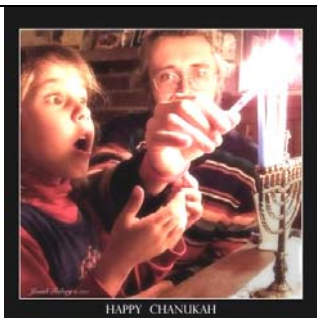
In the **Talmud** the **story of the flask of oil** ^{1st} appears, given as the explanation for celebrating Chanukah. This legend appears so long (about 300 years) after the rededication of the Temple by the Maccabees, and therefore so long after the ceremony of lighting lights was firmly established, that **it would seem to have been written to give religious sanction to an already popularly observed custom.**

The **Midrash** offers a different answer for the question of lights: "**When the sons of Hasmonean, the High Priest, defeated the Greeks, they entered the Temple and found there eight iron spears. They stuck candles in these spears and kindled them.**" (Pesikta Rabbati 2.5) This explanation lends an added symbolism to the lights: **the implements of war are transformed into the shining lights of religious service.**

The Prayer **AL HANISIM** speaks of the lights without reference to miracles. It explains the lights as reminders of the lights rekindled in the sanctuary by the Maccabees.



HOW CHANUKAH IS OBSERVED



- All family members should celebrate **Chanukah** together if possible. Preparations should include decorating the home & preparing the **Chanukiah** (the Chanukah Menorah) for lighting.
- Special foods include the **Ashkenazic "Latkes"** the **Sephardic "Bumuelos"** & the **Israeli "Sufganiot"** (jelly donuts). Homemade of all of these is always best. Of course they are all made with oil.
- **The most important Mitzvah of Chanukah** is that the **Chanukiah** be highly visible. It is best to place it on the windowsill. If impossible, it should be placed on a table for all family members to see.
- One may use candles or oil (Olive Oil is preferable as that was what was used in the Temple of old). The lights are to burn for a minimum of a half-hour.
- Anyone may light the **Chanukiah**. Some have each family member have his or her own **Chanukiah** to light.
- It is customary not to do **any** work during the time the candles are lit. This is the time for singing and playing games, etc.
- The **Chanukiah** should be lit as soon as it turns dark outside or as close as possible. On Friday evening they are lit before the Shabbat candles. Oil or larger candles should be used so they burn past nightfall.
- The Shamash is lit, the blessings made and then the candles are lit with the Shamash. The Shamash (assistant candle) isn't counted and is only used to light the other candles.
- Each night a candle is added from Right to Left as you face the Menorah. However you light from Left to Right or (the new candle of each night first).

LATKES: A blender recipe – Enjoy!

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|--|--|
| ¼ cup flour (or 2 tablespoons matzah meal) | 1 teaspoon salt |
| 2 eggs | 2 tablespoons parsley |
| 1 sliced onion | 3 cups dices raw potatoes (~2 large Idaho) |

Put everything except potatoes into the blender. Cover and blend.

Keep motor on, remove top & add potatoes. As last piece of potato goes in, turn blender off.

Put onto *hot* greased griddle (frying pan). Brown on *both* sides.

EIGHT WAYS TO CELEBRATE CHANUKAH by Rabbi Jack Reimer

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|---|---|
| 1 st night is BIG GIFT night. | On this night the parents supply the gifts to the children. |
| 2 nd night is MOMMY night. | On this night let the family honor and give gifts to the mother. |
| 3 rd night is DADDY night. | On this night let the family honor and give gifts to the father. |
| 4 th night is POEM night. | Let each member of the family write or choose a favorite poem. |
| 5 th night is SMALL GIFT . | On this night let each member of the family give a gift and get one. |
| 6 th night is GIFT OF SELF night. | On this night let each one promise to do something nice for the family. |
| 7 th night is WORD night. | On this night let each one find and teach the family a new word. |
| 8 th night is GIFT OF GIVING night. | On this night let each one give a gift to a favorite tzedakah. |



Gift Alternatives: Putting More Mitzvah & Meaning into A// the Days of the Year

- **Insure a day of good feelings** with no fights or conflicts. Praising the good through words, cards, poems & hugs...
- **Set aside serious 'quality' family time** including a story, a favorite meal, a special day-trip...
- **Create a lesson in Tzedakah** by taking a trip to a homeless shelter to help serve a meal or an animal rescue shelter to volunteer or the pediatric ward of a hospital to read stories, sing songs or just play
- **Invite special guests to your home** who are true mitzvah-heroes through the acts of lovingkindness they perform.
- **"Build" a meaningful gift** through the week. For example: Read your child a book about tigers. Then...Take him/her to the zoo to see the tigers. Then...Request material from the Sierra Club or any other organization that supports endangered tigers. Then...Make a donation in your child's name to help save wild tigers. Then...Make a card or plaque announcing your donation in your child's name. (Other themes could involve sick children, trees in Israel, honoring the elderly, recycling, etc...)
- **Make a scrapbook of charities** and let your child select one or more that you will send a \$10 check to or help him/her start a project related to such charities.
- **Give your child the world of Jewish learning** & growth by giving him/her a gift certificate to a Jewish bookstore.
- **Have your child donate at least one gift** he/she receives (on birthdays as well) to a less fortunate child.



NHC Traditions ~ Join Us For:

1. DECEMBER 16th – PRE-Chanukah Tot Shabbat! – 5:00PM

Join our babies to 7 year olds in celebrating Shabbat & Chanukah

2. DECEMBER 18th – PRE-Chanukah K-4 Zimriah – 12:00-1:30

Parents/Grandparents/cameras & all others welcomed to enjoy the Chanukah music of our children

3. DECEMBER 20th – CONGREGATIONAL CANDLELIGHTING 6:00-6:30 PM

We invite **all ages** to join our 6th & 7th Grades in the Upstairs Foyer for our Chanukah Candle Lighting & Sing-a-Long.

4. DECEMBER 21st - 6:30 PM @ NORTHERN MANOR - MIDDLETOWN & SMITH Roads

Bring Chanukah joy to the residents who are gathered for an hour of singing & sharing of memories.

Contribute a modest gift (for the residents - toiletries, i.e. decorative comb & brush sets, cologne, bath powders, pretty soaps, etc. No single item should exceed \$5.00.) Wrap & mark your gift with a removable label to indicate whether it's appropriate for a man, woman or either.

Bring it to NHC no later than December 19th. (There is a large box near the office to place it in.)

Enhance your Chanukah joy / add deeper meaning to the holiday.

We're counting on our entire congregation,

Religious School, Kadima/USY, Parent's Association, Sisterhood, Men's Club, Choir, etc. to make this a truly memorable occasion.

Please note: Our NHC evening minyan will be @ Northern Manor that evening.

5. DECEMBER 24th - HUNAN HAVDALLAH Chanukah Winter Party - 6-9PM

Kosher Chinese Food, Fun, Music, Good Company... including an appearance by the NHC's "Temple Dudes!"

Adults (13 and over): \$18 - Ages 5-12: \$12 - Under 5: Free - Family Maximum (for immediate family): \$60

The Chanukah Blessings

A bracha is like a spotlight. It directs our attention.

It makes us think about what we are doing.

We say 3 brachot when we light the chanukiah on the 1st night of Chanukah.

We say 2 brachot on the other 7 nights.

Light the shamash. Take it in your hand and say the brachot. Then light the candles.

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

Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam,

asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Chanukah.

Praised are you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who makes us holy by giving us mitzvot, and makes it a mitzvah for us to light Chanukah lights.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים
לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ, בְּיָמֵים הָהֵם בְּיָמֵינוּ הַזֶּה.

Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam,

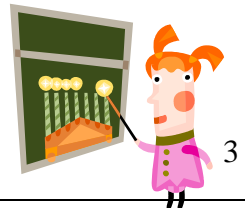
she'asah nissim la'avoteinu bayamin ha-hem ba-z'man ha-zeh.

Praised are you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who made miracles for our ancestors in their days at this very time of year.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחֲסִינוּ וְקִיָּמְנוּ
וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזָמַן הַזֶּה.

Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam,

She-hekheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higiyanu la-z'man ha-zeh



**Praised are you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe,
who keeps us in life, sustains us, and helps us to reach this moment.**