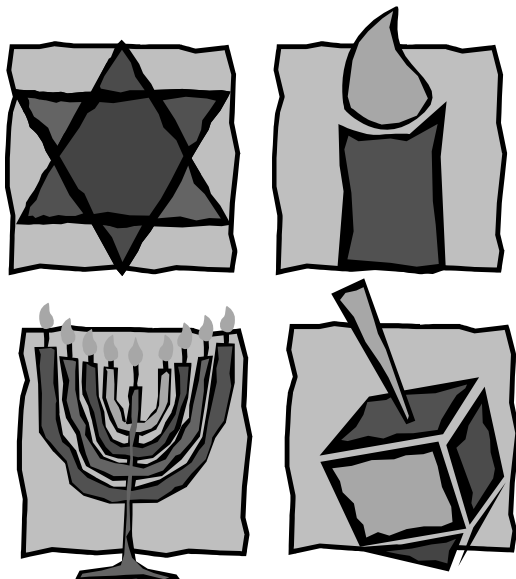


חג הנרות

The Festival of Lights



A Home Hanukkah Celebration
Created by Rabbi Adam Chalom



Kol Hadash
HUMANISTIC CONGREGATION



Happy Hanukkah!

Or Chanukkah, or Khanikeh, or however you're used to spelling it. In fact, the only correct way to spell this holiday is **חנוכה**. And you'll see that different writers in this booklet have different takes on how to do it. No matter how you spell it, Hanukkah is one of the most-observed holidays in the Jewish world today.

This booklet is intended for a home celebration of Hanukkah. It includes a few different ways to celebrate Hanukkah in your home —some may work better for children (or adults) of younger ages. I encourage you to choose a candlelighting blessing from page 4-5, a thematic reading for each night from pages 6 to 13, and a song from pages 14 to 15 for your Hanukkah observance. But don't feel like you must stick to one pattern for the whole holiday, or that you're limited to what's printed here.

The most meaningful Jewish experiences are those that families create for themselves—the Haggadah that's re-written for every Passover, and the Hanukkah lights that are lit in each family's own way. Just as every home and every Jewish family are different, so too will your Hanukkah celebration be unique. Once you feel comfortable, think about creating your own family Hanukkah traditions.

This is one of the most exciting aspects of Humanistic Judaism—that we are free and even encouraged to create new traditions from our Jewish heritage. Who knows how future generations will celebrate Hanukkah, in ways that speak to them?

Rabbi Adam Chalom

Table of Contents

A Quick History of Hanukkah.....	3
Candlelighting Blessings.....	4
Home Celebration 1 A Journey through Hanukkah.....	6
Home Celebration 2 A Celebration of Values.....	10
Home Celebration 3 The Eight Nights of Hanukkah.....	12
Home Celebration 4 Poetry and Light.....	13
Hanukkah Songs.....	14
For More Information.....	16

A Quick History of Hanukkah

The roots of Hanukkah may lie even before the Maccabees—the ancient Jewish historian Josephus refers to a Jewish winter holiday called “Lights” when he writes about the Maccabees, and the Jews are hardly the only people to light lights as the days get shorter and colder. At the same time, Hanukkah is the only traditional Jewish holiday based on solid historical events, which took place around 165 BCE (before the Common Era).

When the Greek king Antiochus IV imposed Hellenism on Judea, some Jews were attracted to Greek culture, while others violently rejected Greek religious practice. A religious rebellion, led by a family called *Khashmonim* (today known as “Maccabees” after the famous Judah Maccabee [“hammer”]), fought off the Greeks, made an independent state, and held a celebration on the 25th of Kislev to rededicate the Jerusalem Temple. In Hebrew, **חנוכה** *Hanukkah* means “dedication.” Their festival was eight days long because they had been unable to celebrate *Sukkot* while the Temple was defiled, and because Solomon’s original dedication of the First Temple in II Kings 8 supposedly lasted for 8 days.

Several hundred years later, the legend of the oil lasting miraculously for 8 days first appears in the Talmud—there’s nothing about it in Josephus or the Maccabees’ own histories. Evidently, despite rabbinic antipathy to the Maccabees for their eventual Hellenization and their claims to be both High Priests and Kings, a story to sanctify the holiday by de-emphasizing human agency was needed since people kept celebrating it.

Between then and now, Hanukkah was largely a minor holiday. An nine-light candelabra (*menorah* or *hanukiah*) would be lit and displayed—one “helper” candle (*shames*) and one additional candle for each night, A 4-sided top game (*dreidel*), also played in medieval Germany, joined the party, as did the giving of small coins (*gelt*), which became chocolate coins in America. Foods cooked in oil, like potato *latkes* or doughnuts (*sufganiyot*), were also added. In competition with Christmas and because of stronger Jewish national/ethnic feelings, Hanukkah has become more important in the last 150 years than it has been since the days of the Maccabees.

Candlelighting Blessings

On the first night only

AY-FO OH-REE? OH-REE BEE.

איפה אורי? אורי בי.

AY-FO TIK-VA-TEE? TIK-VA-TEE BEE.

איפה תקותי? תקותי בי.

AY-FO KO-KHEE? KO-KHEE BEE.

איפה כחי? כחי בי.

V'-GAM BAKH.

וגם בך.

Where is my light? My light is in me.

Where is my hope? My hope is in me.

Where is my strength? My strength is in me. And in you.

Rabbi Sherwin Wine

OR

(by Rabbi Daniel Friedman)



Ba-ruh haor ba-o-lam



Ba- ruh ha-or ba-a-da-am she-he-cheya-nu v'



ki-y'ma-nu v' hi-gi-a-nu laz' man haze

(Child or Parent Reads): Precious is the light in the world and in all people, which has kept us in life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this happy season.

OR

(by Rabbi Peter Schweitzer)

Ba-ruch ha-or ba-oh-lahm. Ba-ruch ha-or ba-ah-dahm.

We celebrate freedom won a long time ago

ba-ya-meem ha-hem ba-z'man ha-zey.

May be recited or sung to the same tune as on page 5.

For each night—say or sing before lighting candles

BA-ROOKH HA-OR BA-O-LAM בְּרוּךְ הָאֹר בְּעוֹלָם.
BA-ROOKH HA-OR BA-A-DAM בְּרוּךְ הָאֹר בְּאָדָם.
BA-ROOKH HA-OR BA-KHA-NOO-KAH בְּרוּךְ הָאֹר בְּהַנּוֹכַחַת.

Blessed is the light in the world.
Blessed is the light of humanity.
Blessed is the light of Hanukkah.

Hebrew may be sung to the same tune as below, repeating the last line twice.

OR

(by Rabbi Daniel Friedman)

Ba-ruh haor ba-o-lam
Ba- ruh ha-or ba-a-da-am We light these candles
in our home tonight and we hope that in the world
light will shine for all

OR

(by Rabbi Peter Schweitzer)

*Ba-ruch ha-or ba-oh-lahm
Ba-ruch ha-or ba-ah-dahm
Come gather round and light the menorah
As we say, "L'had-leek ner shel ha-nu-ka"*

May be recited or sung to the same tune as above.

A Journey Through Hanukkah

Read passages after lighting Hanukkah candles

First Night—Light and Winter

In winter, the nights grow longer and colder. People all over the world light candles and lamps to fight the darkness. Every time we light Hanukkah candles, we remember how important fire is to our lives. The power of fire cooks our food, keeps us warm, and makes our lives better.

We need each other for warmth and inspiration. Fire is like our family, our community. Our family cooks our food, keeps us warm, and makes our lives better. And our family goes back a long way, part of a long tradition. The Festival of Lights is a festival of memory and tradition, too.

Second Night—The Maccabees

The story of Hanukkah goes back to over two thousand years ago, when the Jews had their own land, with their own temple in Jerusalem. A new people, the Greeks arrived, and the Greeks wanted everyone to be Hellenized – to speak Greek, to eat Greek food, and to follow Greek religion. Greek ideas were interesting, but the Greek king Antiochus tried to force all Jews to be Greek. There were only a few Jews compared to the Greeks, but the Jews wanted to decide for themselves what to believe and how to be Jewish. The Maccabee family stood up to the Greek king and took back the Jerusalem Temple. They entered the Temple, cleaned it up, and re-lit the Menorah with new oil. And they dedicated the Temple with an eight day festival—the Hebrew for “Dedication” is *Hanukkah*.

Today, compared to everyone else in the world, there are only a few people who celebrate Hanukkah – they are the Jewish people, all over the world. Jews still decide for themselves what to believe and how to be Jewish. Jews still celebrate Hanukkah. Jews still remember how good it is to be free.

Third Night—The Legend

The Rabbis who led Judaism after the Jerusalem Temple was destroyed did not like the Maccabees. They thought that the Maccabees betrayed Judaism by themselves Hellenizing, and by declaring themselves to be High Priests and Kings, even though they weren't from the family of King David. And they thought that military rebellion and national pride was dangerous, from their own experiences of two failed revolts against the Romans. But they couldn't stop Hanukkah—Jewish people kept lighting lights in the middle of winter.

So the Rabbis told a story to take credit away from the Maccabees—they claimed that the pure oil in the Temple was only enough to last for one day, but it miraculously burned for eight days. We know today that human beings can do amazing things, things our ancestors would have thought were miracles. We celebrate the human power to tell stories, to imagine new possibilities, and to make the marvelous real.

Fourth Night—The Menorah and the Hanukkiah

Ashkenazi Jews call it a *Menorah*, from the word *ner* (light). Sephardic Jews call it a *Hanukkiah*, from the word *Hanukkah*. The lights used to be all in a row, but today there are as many ways to light lights for Hanukkah as imagination can make.

The Talmud records a debate of how to light the Menorah—one side said you should light 8 lights the first night, 7 lights the second night, and count down; the other side said you should light 1 the first night, two the second, and so on. Why did the second one win? Because we should always promote the good and not reduce it.

We use the *Shammes* to light the other candles on the Menorah. As we light more candles each night, the light grows brighter. From one light, we make a lot of light. From one person with hope, we can make a lot of hope. We need to be the candle that lights all the rest.

Fifth Night—The Food—Latkes, Sufganiyot and more

The story of the oil may have taken credit away from the Maccabees, but it also led to some of the tastiest food of the Jewish year. In memory of the long-lasting oil at the rededication of the Temple, we now share foods cooked in oil as part of the holiday celebration.

Potato *latkes*, with apple sauce or sour cream or a bit of both, became very popular among Ashkenazi Jews in Eastern Europe. And *sufganiyot*, jelly doughnuts fried in oil and filled with jelly or custard, are popular among Sephardic Jews in Middle Eastern countries, and in modern Israel as well.

An old joke claims to describe every Jewish holiday: “they tried to kill us, they failed, let’s eat.” It just wouldn’t be Hanukkah without sharing these special foods with family and friends.

Sixth Night—The Dreidel Game

When the *dreidel* game was invented in the Middle Ages, the letters on the *dreidel* were the Yiddish rules for the game – נ Nun for *Nisht* “nothing”, ה Hay for *Halb* “half”, ש Shin for *Shtel ayn* “put in”, and ג Gimmel for *Gantze* “the whole thing”.

These *dreidel* rules are still the rules we play with today! We also have a new meaning for the letters – *Nes Gadol Haya Sham* – a great wonder happened there. In Israel, the *dreidel* [or *s’vivon*] says *Nes Gadol Haya Po*—a great wonder happened here. Whatever the letters mean to us, we know that the game is fun, and that our holiday has well begun.

Seventh Night—Giving and Receiving

To make children happy during Hanukkah, parents would give them some coins (*gelt*) to play *dreidl* or to spend on themselves during the holiday. As Jews became more connected to the world around them, and as Christmas became more about giving lots of gifts and less about religion, Hanukkah also became a time to give and receive gifts. The trick is knowing how to do it.

It's too easy to get caught up in "getting" and not spend enough time on "giving." We can give not just to our families and friends, but to people in the wider world who really need it. They don't need expensive gifts—we can give them food, and clothing, and shelter, and hope. In fact, we don't need expensive gifts either—we are grateful to be remembered and loved, and we are grateful to have the chance to show how much we love other people. It turns out that to give IS to receive!

Eighth Night—Heritage and Future

In Jewish life, we light candles for the past and for the future. *Yahrzeit* (memorial) candles remind us of the life of people that we loved, and Shabbat candles on Friday night celebrate the time of rest and community that is just beginning. The warmth of the flame is the past, and the light of the flame leads us forward.

We are heirs to many traditions. We are human, and we celebrate the achievements of humanity throughout its history. We are American, and we celebrate the freedom and opportunity that our ancestors were looking for when they came here, and that we enjoy today. And we are Jewish, part of a "golden chain" of Jewish culture and custom and holidays and history and story and food and games and giving. They are ours, and we rejoice.



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Celebrating Values

Created by Rabbi Daniel Friedman

Read passages after lighting Hanukkah candles

For the First Night

We dedicate this candle to **Life**. Its light will shed its beauty upon all other lights, just as life makes possible all other values. The earth may exist without life, but existence will have no meaning. Life is the wellspring of value. Life is the fountain of light.

For the Second Night

This candle reminds us of the bright light of **Reason**, our unique glory. It is our power to think that sets us apart from all other creatures. When we choose to think, we become masters of all we survey: We build tall structures of steel and glass, we send our voices and images across the wide spaces, we transform ugliness into beauty and erase the pain of disease. May reason be the guiding light in the lives of all people.

For the Third Night

We dedicate this third candle to **Truth**, the splendid reward of reason. Truth makes us free, and freedom nourishes happiness. Without truth, we stumble about as if blind. Truth opens our eyes to the beauty of life and shows us the way to fulfillment.

For the Fourth Night

The universe, earth and humanity overflow with **Beauty**. The silent stretches of stars and planets, the lush abundance of field and wood, the birth of new life – all are beautiful. Yet, the beauty that we see is not so thrilling as the beauty that fires the mind and inspires the heart. When the vast universe beckons to us to seek its truths, when we plant and harvest and build from the resources of the land, when we search out the secrets of life – we discover a beauty that surpasses even the most brilliant sunset. May the glow of this candle inspire in us the spark of imagination, that we may find new beauty in life and in the world.

For the Fifth Night

The warmest light is that of **Love**. We love people, we love ideals, we love the principles that make life and beauty possible. Love is the feeling that we hold toward all that we value. And it is the warmth that we receive from those who value us. To earn another's love is to know the richest reward of life. To bestow our love is the highest tribute we can pay to those dear to us. May the light of love burn brightly in our lives.

For the Sixth Night

“Justice, justice shall you pursue.” These ancient words have carried their challenge to every age. The just society is the ideal society. A person can seek truth, discover beauty, feel love. But only when all people act with honesty and courage is there justice among them. Justice is truth in action.

For the Seventh Night

“On three things the world rests: on justice, truth and Peace.” A peaceful world, however, is not our primary goal. It is the reward for achieving our goals; it is the consequence when we live together in truth and justice. A Chinese proverb advises:

If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character. If there be beauty in the character, there is harmony in the home. If there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation. When there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.

The lights of this holiday encourage us to hasten the day when every man and woman, boy and girl, will be lovers and pursuers of peace.

For the Eighth Night

This final candle we dedicate to the **Future**, with all its priceless possibilities. The flames of the Menorah will soon flicker and die; but the heroism of the Maccabees, the truth they defended, the freedom for which they fought – these are lights that cannot be extinguished so long as we hold them dear. We have rededicated ourselves to Life and Reason, Truth and Beauty, Love, Justice and Peace. May their precious light guide our way in all the days to come.

The Eight Lights of Chanukah

Created by Marilyn Rowens

Read passages as candles are lit

The first light is the light of **Reason**. It is the light of reason that teaches us to see the difference between right and wrong.

The second light is the light of **Self-Esteem**. It is the light of self-esteem that inspires us to believe in ourselves.

The third light is the light of **Courage**. It is the light of courage that gives us the strength to stand up for our beliefs.

The fourth light is the light of **Freedom**. It is the light of freedom that reminds us to take responsibility for our own lives.

The fifth light is the light of **Love**. It is the light of love that enables us to care for those in need.

The sixth light is the light of **Loyalty**. It is the light of loyalty that helps us keep our promises to those who depend on us.

The seventh light is the light of **Generosity**. It is the light of generosity that encourages us to give even when we do not receive.

The eighth light is light of **Hope**. It is the light of hope that leads us to a vision of a better world.

Poetry and Light

(Translation by Martin Birnbaum. Adapted by Hersh Hartman. Courtesy of NY Service Bureau for Jewish Education) Reprinted with permission.

SHAMES	Recalling our ancient Struggle tonight - You be the first (second, third, etc) To kindle the light	<i>du zay der ershter (tsveyter, driter, ferter, finfter, zekster, zibeter, akhter) tsind es on vider; dos ondenk likht far heldishe breeder.</i>
First Light	To the Maccabees, To their glorious fight; To the heroes of old I kindle this light.	<i>dos ershte likht mit shtolts tsind ikh on tsu dee heldn fun folk, tsu der makabeyisher fon.</i>
Second Light	For the right to be different And to speak without fear— To the spirit of freedom This candle burns clear.	<i>far dos rekht tsu zayn zikh vee nor ikh aleyk ken; far frayhayt un glaykh-hayt o, likhtele, bren.</i>
Third Light	I light this candle With love in my heart For my people's culture Our writers, our art.	<i>mit shtolts un mit freyd tsind ikh on ot-dem flam; far der shprakh un kultur fun meyn yidishn shtam.</i>
Fourth Light	To all the children, Wherever they live— To my friends in all lands This candle I give.	<i>fur ale kinder umetum af der velt; far zeyer frayndshaft zol dos likht zayn tsehelt.</i>
Fifth Light	I light the fifth candle On this Hanuka night For the land of my birth: May its freedom stay bright.	<i>far mayn eygn land unter himlishe shtern; vee frayhayt tseloykhtn zol dos likhtele vern.</i>
Sixth Light	And now, to Israel And to Jews everywhere: May peace be their lot And freedom, their share.	<i>far medinas yisroyl un vu es lebn nor yeedn: zol oyfgeyn dos likhtl far glik un far freedn.</i>
Seventh Light	To all those who live By their minds and their hands: This light to the toilers Of all the world's lands.	<i>tsu yedn vos arbet, tsum mentshn fun mee, zol oyfgeyn dos likht in shtralikn glee.</i>
Eighth Light	To joy everywhere, To justice and right, 'To life and to peace This candle burns bright.	<i>farn mentsh fun der velt, far dem frayen gedank; far lebn un sholem o, likhtl, bren lang.</i>

Hanukkah Songs

O Hanukkah, O Hanukkah, come light the menorah
Let's have a party, we'll all dance the Hora
Gather 'round the table, we'll give you a treat
S'vivon 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.

MEE Y'-MA-LAYL
G'-VOO-ROT YIS-RA-EL
OH-TAN MEE YIM-NEH
KAYN B'-KHOL DOR
YA-KOOM HA-GIB-BOR
GO-EL HA-AM

מי ימַלֵּל גְבוּרוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֵתֵן מִי יִמְנֶה?
בֵּן בְּכָל דּוּרֵי־קוּם הַגְּבוּר
גּוֹאֵל הָעָם.

Who can retell the things that befell us?
Who can count them?
In every age a hero or sage came to our aid.

I have a little Dreidel
I made it out of clay.
And when it's dry and ready,
A Dreidel I shall play

Oh Dreidel, Dreidel, Dreidel,
With leg so short and thin,
And when it is all tired
It drops and then I win.

Oh Dreidel, Dreidel, Dreidel,
I made it out of clay.
And when it's dry and ready,
A Dreidel I shall play

My Dreidel is so playful
It loves to dance and spin;
A happy game of dreidel
Come play, now let's begin.

It has a lovely body
With leg so short and thin;
And when it is all tired,
It drops and then I win.

O Dreidel, Dreidel, Dreidel
It loves to dance and spin;
A happy game of dreidel
Come play, now let's begin.

Moderately

Maccabees of old did rise, To defy the wicked king
 They stood tall and bravely fought. Soon they heard freedom's ring
 They brought a message cheering, That the time was nearing
 Which would see people free, Tyrants disappearing.

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The tempo is marked 'Moderately'. Chords are indicated above the notes: E^b, A^b, E^b, B^{b7}, E^b, E^b, A^b, E^b, B^{b7}, E^b, E^b, A^b, B^b, E^b, Cmi., Gmi., A^b, B^b, E^b, B^b, Cmi., A^b, B^b, E^b.

Lyrics and audio files for these and other songs may be found at www.hebrewsongs.com or through the links to online music libraries at the Jewish Music Web Center at www.jmwc.org.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

The **Society for Humanistic Judaism** has much more on Hanukkah and other Jewish holidays—visit www.shj.org and follow the link to “SHJ Celebrations.” In addition, the SHJ “Book Store” sells holiday “resource kits” for families that include the story of the holiday, celebrations, children’s sections with stories and arts and crafts activities, recipes and songs.

The **Center for Cultural Judaism** has several essays and celebration texts for Hanukkah available on their website—visit www.culturaljudaism.org and follow the link to “Jewish Life.” You’ll also find information on other holidays.

The **Sholem Community** is a secular Jewish group in Los Angeles that has a home Hanukkah celebration on their website, from which the Yiddish poem for candlelighting in this booklet was taken. You can see their entire publication at www.sholem.org/docs/CelebrateHanuka.pdf.

There are several publications available through the **Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations** for learning more about Hanukkah—csjo.org/pages/publications.htm.

For a detailed history of Hanukkah’s origins and styles of celebration through the ages, it’s hard to beat Hayyim Schauss’ ***The Jewish Festivals: a Guide to Their History and Observance***. For a more contemporary version, you can also look at Arthur Waskow’s ***Seasons of our Joy: a Modern Guide to the Jewish Holidays***. Both are in print and widely available.

Kol Hadash Humanistic Congregation is part of
the world-wide movement of Secular Humanistic Judaism

- ☆ We believe that human beings possess the intelligence and wisdom to determine the purpose and course of their lives without the need for supernatural guidance or protection. We use human reason, initiative, and courage to formulate and achieve our noblest aspirations.
- ☆ We believe we are Jewish by virtue of our participation in the history of the Jewish people. We interpret Jewish history as the product of human decisions and actions.
- ☆ We believe in the fundamental importance of individual responsibility to shape lives of significance and dignity.
- ☆ We encourage our children to value their Jewish identity and to feel confident in their ability to think for themselves.

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