

How To Light a Chanukah Menorah

Kindling Chanukah lights is the most important Chanukah custom. Jews light Chanukah candles to remember the miracle of the Maccabees' victory. It is a mitzvah (commandment from God) that Jews "publicize the miracle" by lighting a Chanukah Menorah (also called a Chanukiah) each night during the eight days of Chanukah.

What to Light

Buy or make a Chanukah Menorah. The Menorah should have eight candle holders in a row and a separate candle holder for the "Shamash." The Shamash candle is used to light the other eight candles since it is forbidden to use the Chanukah lights for any purpose other than viewing.

When to Light

The Menorah should preferably be lit immediately at nightfall. If necessary, however, the Menorah can be lit late into the night. It is best to wait until all members of the household are present to light the Menorah. The Menorah should remain lit for at least 30 minutes after nightfall. On Friday afternoon, the Menorah should be lit before sundown.

Chanukah Blessings

This year, we kindle the first candle of Chanukah on Thursday night, December 10th and the last candle on Thursday night, December 17th.

Candles are added to the Chanukiah from right to left but are kindled from left to right. The newest candle is lit first. (On the Shabbat of Chanukah, kindle the Chanukah lights first and then the Shabbat candles.) Light the *Shamash* - the helper candle set higher or lower than all the rest of the candles - first using it to kindle the rest of the Chanukah lights; say or sing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who commands us to kindle the Chanukah lights.

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

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ
וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הַהֵם בְּזִמַּן הַזֶּה.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who performed wondrous deeds for our ancestors in days of old, at this season.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, she-asah nisim laavoteinu v'imoteinu bayamim hahaeim baz'man hazeh.

On the first night only we add:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיֵּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ
וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמַּן הַזֶּה.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higianu laz'man hazeh.