

CONGREGATION EITZ CHAYIM'S CHANUKAH SERVICE FOR THE HOME



The Festival of Chanukah (Dedication) lasts eight days, similar to Sukkot (with Sh'mini Atzeret). On the first night of Chanukah, only one Chanukah candle is lit. On the next night, two Chanukah candles are lit, and one more candle is added every night until eight Chanukah candles are lit on the eighth night. In addition to these, a "Servant" candle (the Shamash) is used to light all of the other candles and it is the one candle that does all of the "work". The lights are strictly for beauty and NO work is to be done by the Chanukah candles themselves (hence the need for a Shamash). They are to be kindled as soon as possible after nightfall and displayed where as many people as possible can see them. This is different from Shabbat candles, which are ideally lit shortly before sunset and signal the beginning of Shabbat and are intended to light the interior of our homes. Long ago, people lit oil lamps for Chanukah. Today we use candles that are usually brightly colored, typically smaller than Shabbat candles and larger than birthday cake candles.



The mystics say that when one meditates particularly on the flames of the Chanukah candles, one can see from one end of the universe to the other – that is one of the reasons why a traditional Chanukah menorah has the candles in a line and at one height. There is also no doubt that a warm and friendly environment, as created by the brightly colored candles increases our own sense of wonder and wellbeing at a time when the sun is out the shortest amount of time. Chanukah starts on the 25th night of the winter solstice month of Kislev.

For the modern Jew, Chanukah's meaning transcends candle lighting, gifts for children, and latkes. Of central significance is the recognition that an individual's religion must be his or her own choice, not the choice of the government under which he or she lives.

Thus, out of the rejoicing over a significant event in the history of the Jewish people, amid gift-giving and candle-lighting, there emerges a strong resolve: every human being, in every part of the world, must be free to worship in the style which best suits his or her needs and way of life. And until everyone lives in complete freedom to worship as he or she wishes, neither the message of Judaism nor the message of Chanukah can or will be fulfilled. In order to be a "good" Jew, we must help others be what they seek to be in their connectedness to the Source of Life.

Mitzvot of Chanukah

It is a mitzvah for each home to have its own Chanukiah (Chanukah Menorah).

It is a mitzvah to kindle the

Chanukah lights of each evening during the eight days of the festival.

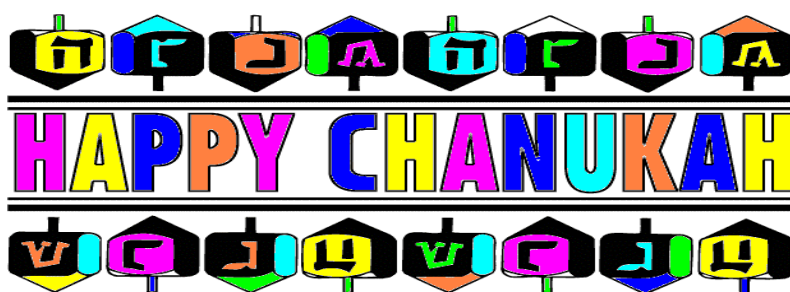
It is a mitzvah for parents to tell the story of Chanukah to their children.

It is a mitzvah for the whole family to participate in, and bear witness to, the lighting of the Chanukiah.

It is a mitzvah to share the lighting of the Chanukiah and the meaning of the Chanukah festival with our friends and neighbors.

It is a mitzvah to give tzedakah during the eight days of Chanukah.

The Chanukiah contains places for eight candles and a 9th candle, the Shamash. The Shamash candle is the helper-candle that is used to light all of the other candles and usually is placed above the other candles. Each of the eight candles represents one of the 8 days of Chanukah.



Traditions about Chanukah and the practice of lighting the Chanukiah.

Always place candles in the Chanukiah beginning from the far right and continuing toward left. (Hebrew)

The candles are kindled from the left toward the right – newest candle first. (English)

Light the Chanukah candles as close to the appearance of the stars as possible, preferably before any member of the household -- child or adult -- goes to sleep. On Friday evening, of course, the Chanukah candles are kindled before lighting the Shabbat candles because once Shabbat starts, no more "new flames" are to be started and Shabbat "trumps" Chanukah. For Havdalah on Saturday night, Chanukah candles are lit after the Havdalah service, so that Shabbat is concluded.

Place the Chanukiyah in front of a window or the like in order to "publicize the miracle" of Chanukah.



The Chanukah lights are for us to enjoy. They are not to be used for anything else, even to light another light. That is why we have a special candle -- the Shamash -- to use to light the other candles.

Ideally, Chanukah candles burn for at least 1/2 hour. In some families it is the custom for everyone to light his/her own Chanukiyah.

Blessings

Each Day:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנוּכָּה.

A Source of Blessing are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of time and space, Who makes us special with mitzvot, and instructs us to kindle the lights of Chanukah.

Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu **Melech** haOlam, **asher** kidshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel Chanukah.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
הָעוֹלָם שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ
בְּיָמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה.

A Source of Blessing are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of time and space, Who did wondrous things for our ancestors, in those days, at this season.

Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu **Melech** haOlam, she-asa nisiym la-avoteinu bayamiym haheim bazman hazeh.

First night **only** we are invited to say a special blessing:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו
מלך העולם שהחיינו
וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.

A Source of Blessing are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of time and space, Who has sustained us in life, protected us, and brought us to this special time.

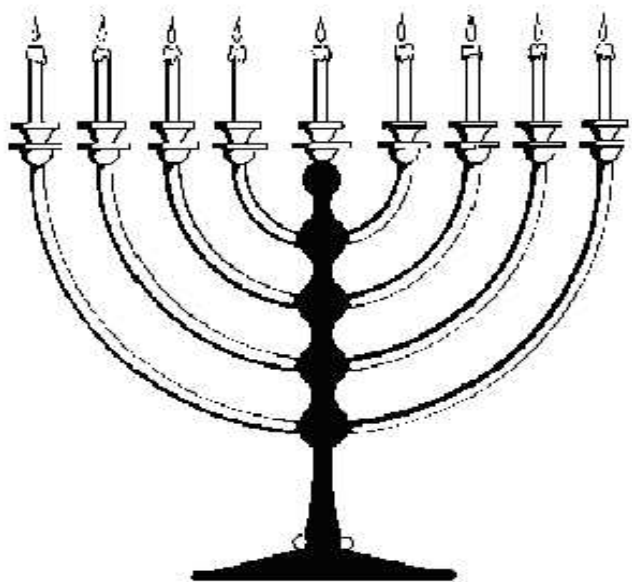
Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu **Melech haOlam**, shehecheyanu vekiyemanu vehigi-anu lazman hazeh.

Daily Kavanot (thoughts / intentions)

Shamash -- Each Day: As one candle may kindle many others and yet lose none of its own light, so Judaism has kindled the light of truth for many religions in many lands and still shines brightly through the ages.



First Day: The first light tells of the One who said, "Let there be light." The darkness of vanity and worthlessness was dispersed by the light of just one candle when it brings the radiance of seeking the one God. "I am the first and I am the last," says Adonai. What kind of God do you seek? And how will you know when you find what you seek?

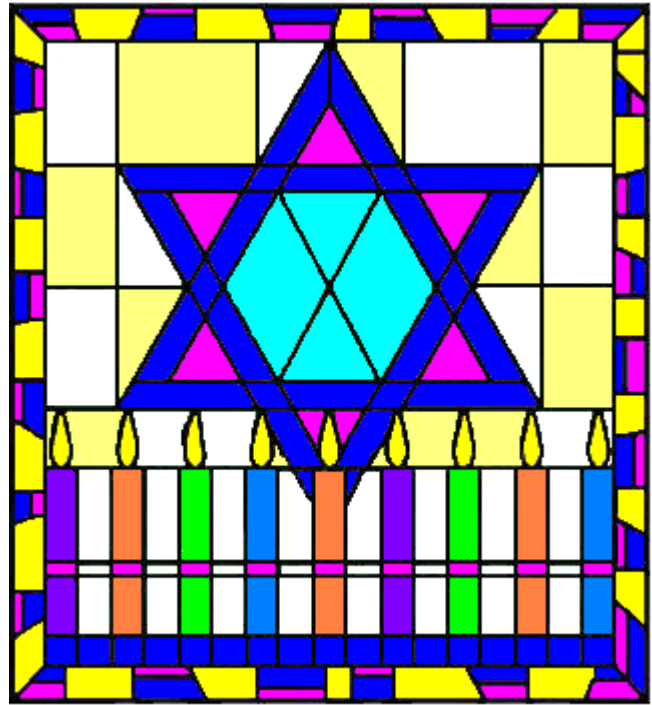


Second Day: The second light is the light of the Torah. Israel's book of instruction has brought learning and truth to much of the world. "The mitzvot is the lamp and the Torah is the light." What is the most important lesson you have learned about or from life this year? What do you need to teach to others and who are they that need to learn what you have to teach?

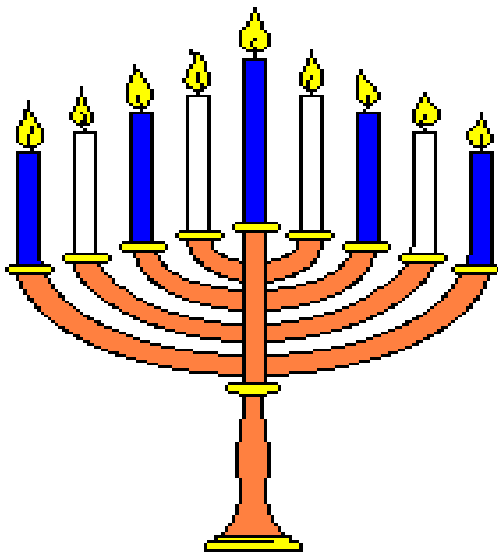
Third Day: The third light is the light of justice. No nation can endure which is unjust to the weak. "Justice, always Justice, you will pursue," was the instruction of Moses, our teacher. What needs to be done for Justice and what role do you need to take in that process and what does it mean to you when you choose to pursue justice?

Fourth Day: The fourth light is the light of Mercy. Cruelty hardens the heart and destroys friendships. "Do justice and love mercy" was the teaching of Micah the prophet.

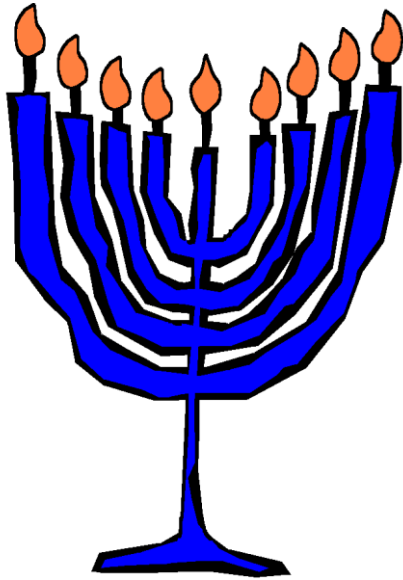
What is the tension between mercy and justice and how do they interact? When are these two ideals at odds and what does it mean to do justice and love mercy?



Fifth Day: The fifth light is the light of Holiness. Purity of thought and nobility of action make all of life sacred. From the prophet Isaiah, these words have been taken into our prayer book: "Holy, holy, holy (Kadosh), is Adonai Tzevaot." How do you embrace the Holy and what does it mean to be Holy? "T'hiyu Am Kadosh - be a holy people" the Torah instructs. What role do we play in making the nation Holy?



Sixth Day: The sixth light is the light of love. When the love which we feel makes our lives beautiful, we learn to understand the Biblical words, "You will love Adonai your God with all your heart and soul and might." What does it mean to love Adonai? If we are not sure that Adonai exists, can we love Adonai? If we love Adonai, why do we sometimes act as if we don't? And what can we do about all that?



Seventh Day: The seventh light is the calm light of Patience. Nothing can be achieved in haste. The spreading tree and the soul of man grows slowly to perfection. Thus sang King David, "Trust in Adonai, wait patiently for God." We look around and there is so much in the world and in our families that need doing. We cannot do everything that needs to be done by ourselves. Nor can we refrain from doing our part of what needs to be done. One part of patience is to do our part and allow others the time and space to do theirs.

Eighth Day: The eighth light is the Light of Courage. Let truth and justice be your armor and fear not. Judah Maccabee, the Hero of Chanukah, lived by the words Moses spoke to Joshua: "Be strong and of good courage." Sometimes it takes a lot of courage to pick up the sword and other times it takes a lot of courage to put it down. By drawing on the Source of Life we can find the courage and the wisdom to act as the beacon for truth, justice and mercy.

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