

Preparing for Ḥanukkah

The days are getting shorter, and Ḥanukkah is fast approaching! We at New London Synagogue hope that your Ḥanukkah is filled with light and warmth.

The Mitzvot (Commandments) of Ḥanukkah:

The primary obligations of Ḥanukkah are to light the Ḥanukkiyah, and to 'publicise the miracle' (*pirsumei nisa*). This is the reason that we place the lit Ḥanukkiyah in a window, where it is visible to the outside (aside from in situations in which this would pose a danger).

How To Light the Ḥanukkiyah

The Ḥanukkiyah has nine candles: eight represent the days of Ḥanukkah, and one is the 'shamash', the light which kindles the other flames. The shamash is always placed separately to the eight Ḥanukkah lights (sometimes higher, and sometimes off to one side). A traditional Ḥanukkiyah on the first night might look like this as you face it:



1. Place the Ḥanukkiyah in a windowsill, or somewhere it is visible to the outside.
2. Place the first candle in the far right of the Ḥanukkiyah.
3. Hold and light the shamash.
4. Say the blessings (below), including a special blessing for the first night.
5. Use the shamash to light the first candle (far right).
6. Place the shamash into its holder (in the pictured Ḥanukkiyah, in the middle, because that is the highest candle holder).

On the second night, we need to place two candles as well as the shamash. In order to do this, we place the *oldest* candle first (loading the Ḥanukkiyah from right to left), but light the *newest* candle first (lighting the Ḥanukkiyah from left to right). On the second night, our Ḥanukkiyah might look like:



1. Place the Ḥanukkiyah in a windowsill, or somewhere it is visible to the outside.
2. Place two candles into the Ḥanukkiyah. First, place the original candle on the far right, and then the new candle on its left.
3. Hold and light the shamash.
4. Say the blessings (below).
5. Use the shamash to light the newest candle, and then the original candle (lighting from left to right).
6. Place the shamash into its holder (in the pictured Ḥanukkiyah, in the middle, because that is the highest candle holder).

We continue to light an extra candle for every night (three candles and the shamash on the third night; four on the fourth; etc) until all eight candles are lit on the eighth night. On the eighth night, our Ḥanukkiyah should look something like this:



How To Light the Hanukkiyah for Shabbat

As Hanukkah lasts for eight nights, it will inevitably meet with Shabbat, the day on which we are obligated to refrain from lighting candles. In order to ensure that we can fulfil both *mitzvot*, on a Friday night, we light the Hanukkiyah *before* lighting the Shabbat candles.

After Shabbat on a Saturday night, we light the Hanukkiyah *before* making Havdalah, as long as we have officially ended Shabbat either by saying Ma'ariv (the evening service) or by saying 'barukh hamavdil bein kodesh l'hol' (the phrase that separates between Shabbat and the week).

How To Say the Blessings

While holding the shamash, but before lighting the candles, recite the following blessings:

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

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam asher kid'shanu b'mitz-votav v'tzivanu l'hadlik neir shel Hanukkah.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God and sovereign of the universe, who has sanctified us with commandments and commanded us to light the Hanukkiyah.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים
הָהֵם בַּזְּמַן הַזֶּה

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam she-asah nissim la'avoteinu bayamim haheim baz'man hazeh.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God and sovereign of the universe, who performed miracles for our ancestors in those days, at this season.

On the first night only, add the following blessing:

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהַגִּיעַנוּ לְזֶמַן
הַזֶּה**

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higiyanu laz'man hazeh.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God and sovereign of the universe, who has given us life and sustained us and enabled us to reach this season.

It is also popular to sing HaNeirot Halalu and Maoz Tzur while lighting the Hanukkiyah, or just afterwards.

HaNeirot Halalu:

הַנֵּרוֹת הַלְלוּ אֲנֵנוּ מִדְּלִיקָן, עַל הַנִּסִּים וְעַל הַנִּפְלְאוֹת וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת וְעַל הַמְּלַחְמוֹת,
שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזֶמַן הַזֶּה, עַל יְדֵי כַּהֲנֵיךָ הַקְּדוֹשִׁים.

וְכָל שְׁמוֹנַת יָמֵי חֲנֻכָּה, הַנֵּרוֹת הַלְלוּ קֹדֶשׁ הוּ, וְאֵין לָנוּ רְשׁוּת לְהַשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בָּהֶן, אֶלָּא
לְרֵאוֹתָן בַּלְבָּד, כְּדֵי לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְהַלֵּל לְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל עַל גִּסְיֶךָ וְעַל גִּפְּלֹאוֹתֶיךָ וְעַל יְשׁוּעָתֶךָ:

*Haneirot halalu anu madlikin al hanissim, v'al hanifla-ot, v'al hatshu-ot v'al
hamilhamot she-asita la'avoteinu bayamim haheim bazman hazeh, al y'dei
kohanekha hak'doshim.*

*V'khol sh'monat y'mei Hanukkah, haneirot halalu kodesh hein, v'ein lanu reishut
l'hishtameish bahein, ela lir'otan bilvad, k'dei l'hodot ul'haleil l'shimkha hagadol al
nisekha v'al nif-l'otekha v'al y'shu-atekha.*

We light these lights for the miracles and the wonders, for the redemption and the battles, that you made for our forefathers in those days at this season, through your holy priests.

During all eight days of Hanukkah these lights are sacred and we are not permitted to make ordinary use of them, but only to look at them - in order to express thanks and praise to Your great Name, for Your miracles, Your wonders, and Your salvations.

Maoz Tzur (First Paragraph)

מְעוֹז צוּר יְשׁוּעָתִי לְךָ נִאָּה לְשִׁבְחֵךְ

*Ma'oz tzur y'shu-ati l'kha na'eh
l'shabei-ah, tikon beit t'filati v'sham
todah n'zabei-ah,*

תִּכּוֹן בַּיִת תְּפִלְתִּי וְשָׁם תּוֹדָה נִזְבַּח

לְעֵת תִּכְיִן מִטְבְּחֵךְ מִצָּר הַמְּנַבְּחֵךְ
אֵז אֶגְמַר בְּשִׁיר מִזְמוֹר חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּזְבֵּיךְ

*L'eit takhin matbei-ah mitzar ham-
nabei-ah, az egmor b'shir mizmor
hanukat hamizbei-ah.*

A Popular Free-Translation

Rock of ages, let our song
Praise Your saving power;
You, amid the raging foes,
Were our sheltering tower.
Furious they assailed us,
But Your arm availed us,
And Your word,
Broke their sword,
When our own strength failed us.



happy
Hanukkah!

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