



8

INSIGHTS FOR 8 NIGHTS OF CHANUKAH



1

THE MIRACLE OF NATURE

The Jews found enough oil to last for 1 day, but God miraculously made the oil last for 7 more days. So why do we celebrate 8 days of Chanukah, if only 7 days were miraculous? We celebrate all 8 days to teach us that **even the first day** was a miracle - it was the "miracle" of nature, that God makes oil burn in the first place.

Take a moment to reflect on the miracle of nature, and thank God out loud for one of the "ordinary" blessings in your life.



5

SPREAD THE LIGHT OF TORAH TO OTHERS

The Talmud states that we must place the Chanukah candles outside or in a place where people will see them, in order to publicize the miracle of Chanukah. Lighting the menorah in public reminds us that our Judaism should not just be kept to ourselves, but it should be shared with others.

Today, share a Torah insight with a friend or family member, or tell them about one of the blessings you enjoy in your life.



2

FOCUS ON THE RIGHT VALUES

The Greeks were steeped in immorality. They aggrandized athletics and perfection of the human body above all else. While the Torah does encourage us to appreciate our material blessings, we view them through a different lens: We take care of our physical needs in order to enable us to reach our higher, ultimate goal of perfecting our soul and our character.

Demonstrate that you value spirituality over physicality by complimenting a friend on a good character trait they possess, or on a mitzvah they have done.



6

DO MITZVOS WITH ENTHUSIASM

God allowed the Greeks to make decrees against the Jews because the Jews were becoming negligent and lazy in their service of God. This punishment was "measure for measure" - since the Jews took the Holy Temple service for granted, God deprived them of the opportunity to serve. The sons of Matisyahu rectified this sin of laziness by fighting back against the Greeks and rededicating themselves to the Temple service. Seeing their renewed enthusiasm, God came to their aid.

Do one good deed today with enthusiasm and a smile.



3

REDEDICATION: RENEWED COMMITMENT

"Chanukah" literally means "dedication" in Hebrew, and commemorates the Jews' rededication of the Second Temple when the Maccabees regained control of Jerusalem from the Greeks. Chanukah is a time to rededicate ourselves to our beliefs, values, goals, and passions.

What were your New Years' resolutions for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur? Take a moment to reflect on how your resolutions are going - why or why not your plans have been successful. Then either come up with a new plan or rededicate yourself to your commitments.



7

GOD LOVES THE JEWISH PEOPLE

The miracle that the Jews found a jug of pure oil was actually **unnecessary** - according to Jewish law, the Temple Service may be carried out **even with impure oil** in pressing circumstances. So why did God do the miracle of helping the Jews find pure oil, and making it last for 8 days? Our Rabbis explain that God performed this miracle just to demonstrate His love for the Jewish people, by enabling us to carry out His mitzvos in an optimal way.

Demonstrate your own love for the Jewish people by offering a smile, a kind word, or a helping hand to a fellow Jew.



4

ALL STRENGTH IS FROM GOD

In the Holy Temple, the menorah was shaped as 7 lights branching from one central stem. The fact that all 7 lights stem from one source represents that each of us draws our strength from One Source: God. God is the source of our strength and when we recognize this, we merit His salvation.

What areas of your life do you take pride in? Your brains? Your talents? Your job? Your good looks? Recognize that each of these are gifts from God, and we cannot take credit for them on our own.



8

KEEP TORAH LEARNING GOING STRONG

We play dreidel on Chanukah to commemorate how the Jewish children used to play dreidel when the Greek patrols walked by, to hide the fact that the Jewish children had been studying Torah. The Greeks and many other nations have tried to squelch our study of Torah for thousands of generations, but the Torah and the Jewish people keep going strong to this very day.

Set aside 5-10 minutes today to study Torah or share a Torah thought with friends or family.





HOW TO LIGHT THE CHANUKAH MENORAH



Prepare the Chanukah menorah by placing the appropriate number of candles or oil wicks in your menorah according to the current night of Chanukah (i.e. on the first night, use 1 light, on the second night, use 2 lights, and so on.) If you are using a menorah, the lights should be positioned as far to the right as possible. **Before** kindling the Chanukah menorah, recite the following two blessings:

*Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam
asher keedishanu b'mitz'votav
v'tzivanu l'had'lik neur shel Chanukah.*

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם
אשר קדשנו במצוותיו
וצונו להדליק נר של חנוכה.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the Chanukah lights.

*Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam
she'asah nisim la'avoteinu bayamim haheim baziman hazeh.*

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם
שעשה נסים לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has performed miracles for our fathers in bygone days, at this time.

On the first night only, add the following blessing:

*Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam
shehecheyanu v'keeyimanu v'higi'anu laz'man hazeh.*

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם
שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who has given us life, and has sustained us, and has brought us to this time.

After reciting the above blessings, kindle the Chanukah lights, beginning with the light that is positioned farthest to the left. Continue kindling the remaining lights from left to right. After the first light has been kindled, begin reciting Haneiros Halalu (below) while you finish kindling the remaining lights.

*Haneiros halalu anakhnu madleekeen al haneeseem
ve'al haneef'la'ot ve'al hate'shoo'ot ve'al hamil'khamot
she'aseeta la'avotainu bayameem hahaim baze'man hazeh
al yedai kohanekha hakedosheem.
Ve'khol she'monat yemei Chanukah haneiros halalu kodesh haim
ve'ein lanu reshut leheeshtameish bahem ela leer'o'tam beel'vad
ke'dei lehodot u'lehalal leshimkha hagadol
al neesekha ve'al neef'le'otekha ve'al yeshoo'o'tekha.*

הנרות הללו אנחנו מדליקין על הנסים
ועל הנפלאות ועל התשועות ועל המלחמות
שעשית לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה
על ידי כהניך הקדושים.
וכל שמונת ימי חנוכה הנרות הללו קדש הם
ואין לנו רשות להשתמש בהם אלא לראותם בלבד
כדי להודות ולהלל לשמך הגדול
על נסידך ועל נפלאותיך ועל ישועותיך.

We are kindling these lights upon the miracles, the wonders, the salvations, and the battles which You [God] performed for our ancestors in those days at this season, through Your holy priests. During all eight days of Chanukah, these lights are holy, and we are not permitted to make ordinary use of them [such as reading or doing work by their light]; we are permitted only to gaze at them in order to express thanks and praise to Your great Name for Your miracles, Your wonders, and Your salvations. (Translation adapted from the Artscroll siddur)

After you finished kindling the proper number of lights and finished singing "Haneiros Halalu" (above), recite the following:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>5 יְנַיִם נִקְבְּצוּ עָלַי אֲזֵי יְמֵי חַשְׁמוֹנִים
וּפְרָצוּ חֲזוֹמוֹת מִגְדַּלֵי וְטִמְאוּ כָּל חַשְׁמוֹנִים
וּמְנוֹתַר קִנְקֵינִים נַעֲשֶׂה גַם לְשׁוֹשְׁנִים
בְּנֵי בִינָה יְמֵי שְׁמוֹנָה קָבְעוּ שִׁיר וּרְנָנִים:</p> | <p>3 דְּבִיר קִדְשׁוֹ הִבִּיאֵנִי וְגַם שֵׁם לֹא שִׁקְמָתִי
וּבֹא נֹגֵשׁ וְהִגְלֵנִי כִּי זְרִים עֲבַדְתִּי
וַיִּין רַעַל מִסְכְּתִי בְּמַעַט שְׁעֵבַרְתִּי
קִץ כָּבֵל וְרִבְבָל לְקִץ שְׁבָעִים נוֹשְׁעֵתִי:</p> | <p>1 מַעֲזֹז צוּר יִשׁוּעָתִי לֵךְ נֹאֵה לְשִׁבְחָה.
תְּבוֹן בֵּית תְּפִלָּתִי וְשֵׁם תּוֹדָה נִזְבַּח.
לְעֵת תְּכִין מִטְבַּח מִצַּר הַמְּנַבַּח.
אֲזִ אֲנִמּוֹר בְּשִׁיר מִזְמוֹר חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ:</p> |
| <p>6 חִשׁוֹן זְרוּע קִדְשֶׁךָ וְקָרַב קִץ הַיְשׁוּעָה
נָקַם נִקְמַת עֲבָדֶיךָ מֵאִמָּה הַרְשָׁעָה
כִּי אֲרָכָה הַשְׁעָה וְאִין קִץ לִימֵי הַרְעָה
דָּחָה אֲדָמוֹן בְּצַל צִלְמוֹן הִקָּם לָנוּ רוּעִים שְׁבָעָה:</p> | <p>4 בְּרוֹת קוֹמַת בְּרוֹשׁ בְּקִשׁ אֲנִי בֵּן הַמִּדְבָּר
וְנִהְיֵתָה לֹו לְפַח וְלִמּוֹקֶשׁ וְנִאֲנוֹתוֹ נִשְׁבַּתָּה
רֹאשׁ יְמֵינִי נִשְׂאָתָּ וְאוֹיֵב שְׂמוֹ מִחֵית
רַב בְּנִי וְקִנְיָנִי עַל הָעֵץ תְּלִית:</p> | <p>2 רְעוֹת שְׁבָעָה נִפְשֵׁי בִּגְזוֹן בְּחֵי בְּלָה
חַיִּי מִרְרוּ בְּקִשֵׁי בְּשַׁעֲבוּד מַלְכוּת עֲגִלָּה
וּבְיָדוֹ הַגְּדוּלָּה הוֹצִיאָ אֶת הַמַּגְלָה
חֵיל פְּרַעְיָה וְכָל זֶרְעוֹ יָרְדוּ בְּאֶבֶן בְּמִצּוּלָה:</p> |

This song of "Ma'oz Tzur" recalls the various exiles that the Jewish people endured, praises God for redeeming us from each of them, and prays for the restoration of the Temple and for the dawn of the Messianic Redemption. (Artscroll siddur)