

**Kahal B'raira**  
*Community of Choice*

**HANUKKAH**

Song: "I Have a Little Dreidel"

READER:

Welcome to our celebration of Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights

SONG: *Shalom Chaverim* (Greetings of Peace to Our Friends)

*Sha-lom Cha-ver-im, Sha-lom Cha-ver-im,  
Sha-lom, Sha-lom;  
La-hit ra--ot, la-hit ra--ot,  
Sha-lom, Sha-lom*

READER:

We light candles on this holiday for many important reasons. Our days are now short and the nights are long. Winter is dark and cold. A winter holiday is an ancient tradition. The ancient Feast of Lights, *Nayrot*, was an important part of our early religion and was a tribute to the season. The sun was very important to these early farmers because it gave them light, warmth, and energy to make food grow. They lit oil lamps to remind them of the sun. We, too, light candles to remind ourselves how important the sun is.

SONG: *Oh Hanukkah*

Oh Hanukkah, Oh 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;  
Dreidels to play with, and latkes to eat.  
And while we ... are dancing,  
The flickering candles in a row,  
One for each night, they ... shed a sweet light,  
To remind us of days long ago.

READER:

At the time of Hanukkah, we celebrate the resistance and triumph of the Maccabees. For the first time in history, a war had been fought for an idea, to secure religious freedom for the Jewish people. The light of truth that inspired them shines across the ages, borne now in *our* hearts and minds

## The Story of Hanukkah

READER:

More than 2,000 years ago, the Jews lived in the land of Israel. The land was taken over by the Greeks, and came to be ruled by a wicked king named Antiochus IV. He would not tolerate people who had different beliefs, and did not want the Jews to have their own religion. The Jewish people continued to worship their own God and observe their own traditions and customs. Antiochus marched his soldiers into Jerusalem, took over the Temple and destroyed it. He ordered that anyone observing Jewish customs or laws was to be killed. The Jews were forced to run into the countryside to escape.

A great Jewish leader emerged named Judah, who said that he would teach the Jews to become soldiers so that they could win back their Temple and be able to practice their religion freely. This band of soldiers were called the Maccabees. After three years of fighting, the Maccabees won and the Greeks were forced to leave the city. When the Jews entered the Temple, they saw that it was in terrible shape. Many holy things had been destroyed and it was filthy. They set about cleaning and rebuilding. Finally, on the 25th day of the month of Kislev, all was ready. They lit the eternal flame in the great Menorah. There was only pure oil enough for one day but the legend tells that the Menorah continued burning brightly for a full eight days! The people took this as a sign. Judah declared, "Let these events be celebrated with gladness for all time to come."

So we light candles at this time to remember the courage of the Maccabees soldiers who fought hard for their beliefs. We celebrate the eight days that the oil burned in the Great Menorah.

SONG: *Who Can Retell (Mi Y'Ma-le)*

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

Hark! In days of yore, in Israel's ancient land,  
Brave Maccabees ... led the faithful band.  
But now all Israel must as one arise,  
Redeem itself through deed and sacrifice.

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

READER:

Long ago, our ancestors lit lamps to remember the sun. The Maccabees asked people to light lamps to remember winning back the Temple. We too light these candles. We also light candles to remind us of the goodness within ourselves: our goodness is our inner light.

SONG: *Ay-foh O-Ree: Where Is My Light?*

*Ay-fo o-ree? O-ree ... bee.*  
*Ay-fo tik-va-tee? Tik-va-tee ... bee.*  
*Ay-fo ko-chee? Ko-chee bee.*  
*V-gam b'chah.*

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.

READER:

The word *Hanukkah* means “dedication” in Hebrew. In Hebrew and in English, “dedicate” has several meanings which serve to enhance our celebration of this holiday.

Dedicate means to set aside for special attention and devotion.

CONGREGATION:

We set aside the 25th day of Kislev, on the Hebrew calendar, as the beginning of our eight day observance of Hanukkah. We set aside a special time for togetherness, gifts, special food, and celebration.

READER:

Dedicate means to inscribe something as a mark of respect and remembrance.

CONGREGATION:

At Hanukkah we *remember* our brave ancestors and others who fought for religious freedom. At Hanukkah we dedicate our thoughts to freedom.

READER:

Dedicate also means to commit oneself to a particular idea, to make a promise to oneself.

CONGREGATION:

At Hanukkah we make a promise to ourselves to work toward a world of peace.

READER:

Hanukkah is a Festival of Lights. We give *special attention* to these days by lighting the candles on the menorah each night.

## Candle Lighting

READER, then CONGREGATION:

*Baruch ha-or sheh-b'chol eh-chod.*  
Blessed is the light in each of us.

*Baruch ha-or b'olam*  
Blessed is the light that brings joy into the world.

*Baruch ha-or ha-atid.*  
Blessed is the light of the future.

*Baruch ha-or shel Hanukkah.*  
Blessed is the light of Hanukkah.

*Congregation will sing this blessing.*

READER:

*(light the First Candle)*

We light the first candle to remember the sun. Like the dreidel turns, so do the seasons; the darkness of winter gives way to the lightness of spring, as night gives way to day.

READER:

*(light the Second Candle)*

We light the second candle to remember the courage of the Maccabees. Courage allows to work for what we believe in.

*Song: "Light One Candle" - p. 9*

READER:

*(light the Third Candle)*

We light the third candle for peace and freedom. Peace keeps us safe from harm and lets us turn our efforts to positive goals. Freedom allows us to follow the dictates of our own conscience and our tradition.

READER:

*(light the Fourth Candle)*

We light this candle for reason and responsibility. Reason gives us the ability to distinguish right from wrong. We have the responsibility to use our freedom wisely, and to care for those who need our help

READER:

*(light the Fifth Candle)*

We light this candle for the goodness that is in all of us. The goodness inside us shines like sunlight, and guides us on the right path.

READER:

*(light the Sixth Candle)*

We light the sixth candle for love and loyalty. Love brings happiness and joy to ourselves and our community. Loyalty means keeping our promises to those who depend on us.

READER:

*(light the Seventh Candle)*

The seventh candle is lit for our inner strength. Our inner light will give us energy; our inner goodness will be our strength. We build our inner strength with learning and understanding.

READER:

*(light the Eighth Candle)*

We light our eighth candle for hope. Hope helps us find strength for the hard work of making a better world. Hope gives us something to live for.

CONGREGATION:

Let us dedicate ourselves to helping bring peace and freedom to everyone. Let us use wisdom and understanding, love and friendship, as we seek to make this world a better place. Let Hanukkah be a celebration of the light that shines within each of us. Let us share our inner lights.

*(members of the congregation light their menorahs)*

SONG: This Little Light of Mine

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine;  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine;  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

All ... over the world, I'm gonna it let it shine;  
All ... over the world, I'm gonna it let it shine;  
All ... over the world, I'm gonna it let it shine;  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

Everywhere that people go, I'm gonna let it shine;  
Everywhere that people go, I'm gonna let it shine;  
Everywhere that people go, I'm gonna let it shine;  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

Don't let anyone [whoof!] it out! I'm gonna let it shine;  
Don't let anyone [whoof!] it out! I'm gonna let it shine;  
Don't let anyone [whoof!] it out! I'm gonna let it shine;  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

READER:

The struggle of the Maccabees for religious freedom took place many, many years ago. Throughout the ages, Jews have clung tenaciously to the inner light of their culture and beliefs. Alas, throughout the ages, discrimination and hardship have time and again been visited upon Jews and other peoples. Even today there are many people in our world who are persecuted because of their beliefs, their heritage, or their culture.

We are gladdened to hear of new freedoms granted in one corner of the world; and saddened to hear of a new outbreak of intolerance in another country. In Eastern Europe and other places, many Jews are once again able to live and study and worship as they please; yet in many other parts of the world, people of many creeds are not allowed to practice their religion openly.

## Light One Candle\*

Light one candle for the Maccabee children.

Give thanks that their light didn't die.

Light one candle for the things they endured, when a right to exist was denied.

Light one candle for the terrible sacrifice, justice and freedom demand.

Light one candle for the wisdom to know, when the peacemakers' time is at hand!

### CHORUS

Don't let the light go out.

It's lasted for so many years.

Don't let the light go out.

Let it shine through our love and our tears.

Light one candle for the strength that we need to never become our own foe.

Light one candle for those who are suffering, the pain we learned so long ago.

Light one candle for all we believe in. Let anger not tear us apart.

And light one candle to bind us together with peace as the song in our heart.

### CHORUS

Don't let the light go out.

It's lasted for so many years.

Don't let the light go out.

Let it shine through our love and our tears.

What is the memory that's valued so highly that we keep alive in that flame?

What's the commitment to those who have died,

when we cry out they've not died in vain?

We have come this far, always believing that justice will somehow prevail.

This is the burden and this is the promise and this is why we will not fail.

### CHORUS

Don't let the light go out.

It's lasted for so many years.

Don't let the light go out.

Let it shine through our love and our tears.

### ***final ending:***

Don't let the light go out.

Don't let the light go out.

Don't let the light go out!

\*Sung by Peter, Paul, and Mary