

חנוכה

Kahal B'raira Chanukah Service



(Sing this song to gather us to begin the service)



I have a little dreydl

*I have a little dreydl
I made it out of clay
And when it's dry and ready
Then dreydl I shall play*

CHORUS:

*Oh dreydl dreydl dreydl
I made it out of clay
And when it's dry and ready
Then dreydl I shall play*

*It has a lovely body
With legs so short and thin
And when it is so tired
It drops and then I win!*
CHORUS

*My dreydl's always playful
It loves to dance and spin
A happy game of dreydl
Come play now, let's begin!*
CHORUS

Honoring the Holiday

(Read Responsively)

Reader: Welcome to our celebration. On Chanukah we commemorate the strength of light to illuminate and the right of religious freedom and freedom of expression.

Congregation: On Chanukah we treasure the principles and ideas and values whose fruits nourish us and sustain us in life.

Reader: On Chanukah we cherish the light of hope that leads us to a vision of a better world.

Congregation: On Chanukah we appreciate our happiness and good fortune, that are all the greater when they are shared.

Reader: On Chanukah we proclaim the day a delight, we rejoice in its joy. We treasure our tranquility, and we celebrate our freedom.

Adapted from Rabbi Peter H. Schweitzer

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.

Hide it under a bushel? NO!
I'm gonna let it shine
Hide it under a bushel? NO!
I'm gonna let it shine
Hide it under a bushel? NO!
I'm gonna let it shine, (3 x)

The Holiday of Chanukah

Ancient Origin – darkest nights (not just shortest days)

Many of our holidays originated with people observing the world around them. We trace the origins of Chanukah to those times when our ancestors lit fires on hilltops as signal fires and maybe also at the darkest time of year, in an attempt to bring back warmth and light. This may have later become a festival which was repeated in people's homes and called Nayrot (meaning "light").

The winter season begins when the Sun is lowest in our sky and the days are shortest. The Jewish calendar also relies on the Moon, making Jewish holidays occur on different dates of the secular calendar every year. We note that the beginning of Chanukah, the 25th of Kislev, is when the moon shrinks daily to become a sliver in the morning sky. In the middle of Chanukah, there is no moon visible at all. Thus, although this holiday is not always on the shortest day of the year, it always falls on the darkest of nights. After the New Moon, we can see the barest crescent moon visible around sunset, growing larger each night, like the menorah increasing in light.

Over two thousand years ago, there was an ancient city called Jerusalem in a country called Judea. Jerusalem was where the temple of the Jewish people was located. The city of Jerusalem still exists to this very day, though that Temple does not. The Jewish People have been around for an exceptionally long time. Sometimes, we governed ourselves and sometimes others ruled over us and then we had to decide which of our ways we would keep and which we would give up.

In 165 BCE (Before the Common Era), the people of Judea were ruled by Antiochus (an-tai-uh-kuhs), the Greek king of Syria. Antiochus did not like the Jewish religion. He placed statues of Greek gods in the Jewish temple and forced the Jews to worship them and bow down before them. Some Jews accepted the Greek traditions. Some Jews would not submit to the new laws. Just as in all eras, Jews lived their lives in many different ways.

One Jewish man, Mattathias (mat-ta-ti-us), refused to submit. He had five sons, the oldest was named Judah. All together, they were known as the Maccabees, which means hammer. They would not bow down to the statues of the Greek gods. The Maccabees became the leaders of the Jewish army. They hid in the Judean hills, and attacked Antiochus and his armies whenever they could.

After three years of fighting, the Maccabees drove the Syrians out of Judea and reclaimed the Temple. They cleaned the building and removed the hated Greek statues. They celebrated an eight day holiday modeled on the eight days of Sukkot which was a much more important holiday in the days of the temple.

On the 25th day of the month of Kislev, the temple was rededicated. The word Chanukah means "dedication."

This successful rebellion by the Judeans against the Greeks and Syrians became the basis for a story passed down from Roman times as the story of Chanukah and a struggle of freedom from oppression.

The rabbis who lived several hundred years later, under Roman rule, were not so comfortable with this story about the Maccabean victory. In fact, it made them nervous. They feared that it might inspire others to rise up against the Roman oppressors of their own day who were all-powerful. They feared that this would only lead to defeat of the Jews.

So the rabbis downplayed the Maccabee's victory by inventing the legend of the tiny vial of holy oil that miraculously lasted for eight days, the time needed to prepare a fresh supply of oil for the lamp in the Temple. The focus shifted away from a human story of rebellion to one of divine intervention and rescue.

Today, we once again acknowledge the original connection of Chanukah to Nayrot and we reclaim the real story of Chanukah that celebrates the Maccabees' courage to defend their religious and personal identity. Like them, we take responsibility for our own lives and declare that we can shape our Jewish identity in ways that will be meaningful for us today. In fact, this service, with its innovative readings and contemporary Humanistic

candle blessings, is an example of how we can link ourselves to our heritage as well as articulate our modern understanding of this holiday.

Song - Who Can Retell/Mi Y'Ma-lel

*Mi y'ma-lel g'vu-rot Yis-ra-el
O-tan mi yim-neh
Hen b'khol dor
Ya-kum ha-gi-bor go-el ha-am*

*Sh'ma
Ba-ya-mim ha-hem ba-z'man ha-zeh
Ma-ka-bi mo-shi-a u-fo-deh
Uv'ya-me-nu kol am Yis-ra-el
Yi-ta-heid ya-kum l'hig-ga-el*

*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.*



The Strength of the Small - Responsive Reading

Reader: A candle is a small thing. But one candle can light many others, and see how its own light increases as one candle gives its flame to another.

Congregation: We are such a light. Light is the power to dispel gloominess. We have this power to move back the gloom in ourselves and in others.

Reader: To do so with the birth of light created when one mind illuminates another, when one heart kindles another, when one person strengthens another.

Congregation: And yet its flame enlarges within you as you pass it on.

Reader: Our daily part is to increase this light. We must remember that a candle is a small thing, a person alone is a small thing, a nation alone is a small thing.

Congregation: Remembering this, we must recognize something much more than our indispensability to others. We must remember their indispensability to us.

Reader: We cannot hope, either as individuals or nations, to reach our highest capabilities, until we help those around us reach theirs.

Congregation: These lights we now kindle.

Adapted from Klezmer Conservatory of Music *Oy Chanukah*

Lighting of the Candles - (Read Responsively)

Reader: On the first night of Chanukah, we voice our gratitude for being alive for yet another year:

Congregation: Barukh ha-or b'tokh-ay-noo, sheh-hekh-ee-ay-noo, v'ki-ah-ma-noo, v'higg-ee-ah-noo lahz-mahn ha-zeh.

Congregation: We cherish the light within us that has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.

Reader: On every night, we recite the nightly blessing each time we kindle the Chanukah lights

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

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

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

Congregation: Baruch ha-or shel Chanukah. Blessed are the Chanukah lights.

Song - Oh Chanukah

*Chanukah, Oh Chanukah, 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
Dreydls to play with and latkes to eat.*

*And while we are playing
The candles are burning low
One for each night, they shed a sweet light
To remind us of days long ago.
One for each night, they shed a sweet light
To remind us of days long ago.*

Chanukah Symbols and Traditions

The Menorah/Chanukiah

An eight branched candelabra used on Chanukah is called a *chanukiah*. There are eight equally spaced holders for each of the eight days of Chanukah, along with a ninth holder for the helper candle, called the shamash. The role of the shamash is to light each of the other candles.

Many Jews have the tradition of placing their lit chanukiah in a window, so that the twinkling lights may be seen by people walking by. The Chanukah lights are supposed to remain lit for at least thirty minutes after dark. Families play a game of guessing which candles will stay lit the longest.

How to set up and to light the candles? Chanukah lights are placed from left to right, but are lit from right to left. This topic was debated extensively for years and years by the Jewish sages, who ultimately decided on this order of things.

Spelling Chanukah - The name of this holiday is spelled many ways including Chanukka or Hanukkah or Hanukka or Khanuka or **חנוכה** or create your own.

Dreydl (Sivivon in Hebrew)

The dreydl is a four-sided top with Hebrew letters. Originally, this was a German betting game. Jews in Europe adopted it and substituted Yiddish letters, which are written with the Hebrew alphabet. The four letters are: Nun, Gimel, Hey and Shin. Later, these letters were made to represent the Hebrew phrase: *Nes Gadol Haya Sham* which means "A great miracle happened there," referring to the story of the oil that lasted for eight days.

A game played with the dreydl uses the letter that shows on top to determine how much of a pot of chocolate gelt a player wins or loses. We try to make sure that the youngest players win the most.

The Dreydl Game



Every player contributes one counter into a central pile.
This becomes the "pot."

Players spin the dreidel in turn and contribute or collect items from the pot based upon which letter faces up when the dreidel stops its spin.

נ - Nun - Nisht - The player collects **nothing** from the pot.

ג - Gimmel - Gantz - The player **gets** it all.

ה - Hey - Halb - The player collects **half** of the pot.

ש - Shin - Shtetl - The player **puts** one of his own items into the pot.

Latkes and Donuts

There is a tradition to eat oily foods on Chanukah as a reference to the story of the oil that lasted for eight days.

In Israel, the food of choice is a deep-fried jelly donut. In North America and Europe, latkes -- fried potato pancakes -- are commonly enjoyed.

Happy Hanukkah



This service was initiated by KB members Jon Levine and Amy Schneider who were joined by the KB liturgy committee in its completion in 2012. We were inspired by services written by Rabbi Adam Chalom and Rabbi Peter H. Schweitzer. It was updated by Jon Levine in 2018 Kahal B'raria © 2018

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