



Chanukah -

Dedicated against assimilation



וַיְהִי בִּימֵי הַתְּנַפְּחָה בִּימֵי הַתְּרָף בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם:

Ἐγένετο δὲ τὰ Ἐγκαίλια ἐν Ἱερουσαλῦμοις, καὶ χειμῶν ἦν·

And it was at Jerusalem the feast of Chanukah, and it was winter.

- John 10:22

The Hebrew word *chanukah* means "dedication" and marks an eight day winter celebration (from Kislev 25 - Tevet 3) that commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple after a small group of Jewish believers defeated the forces of assimilation at work in their world. As such, Chanukah represents the victory of *faith* over the ways of speculative *reason*, and demonstrates the power of the *miracle* in the face of mere *humanism*.



The Story of Chanukah

According to mainstream Jewish tradition, the story of Chanukah goes something like this. In 333 BCE, Alexander the Great conquered Syria, Egypt and Babylonia, and promoted a lenient form of Hellenistic culture, encouraging the study of the language, customs and dress of the Greeks. Alexander was not necessarily bad to the Jews, and a legend tells that when he marched through Jerusalem he asked the High Priest to erect a statue to his honor within the Temple. The High Priest told Alexander that such was forbidden, though the Jewish people would construct a "living memorial" by naming all their firstborn sons after the great king. Alexander agreed to this and things went fairly well for the Jews. Nevertheless, the encounter of the Jewish people and their Torah-based ethics with the worldview of ancient Greece proved to be a traumatic shock which ultimately threatened to undermine the very existence of Judaism.

Over a century later, in 167 BCE, the ripened fruit of Hellenization began to appear in the form of one of Alexander's successors, the Syrian king Antiochus IV ("Epiphanes"), who began to openly persecute the Jews. Among other atrocities, Antiochus appointed a Hellenistic "High Priest" to the Temple, prohibited the study of the Torah, and desecrated the altar by requiring pigs to be sacrificed on it (the Jews referred to Antiochus not as *Epiphanes*, "God (i.e., Zeus) made manifest," but rather as *Epimanes* - "the madman.")

These outrages finally incited rebellion, and by 165 BCE the Hasmonean family of Mattathias the High Priest and his youngest son, Judah "Maccabee" (the "Hammer"), organized a revolt that eventually succeeded in evicting the Syrian-Greeks from Israel. The Temple in Jerusalem was liberated but needed to be rededicated for Jewish worship.



According to later tradition (as recorded in the Talmud (*Shabbat 21b*)), at the time of the rededication (on Kislev 25), there was very little oil left that had not been defiled by the Syrian-Greeks. Oil was needed for the menorah to burn continually in the Temple, but there was only enough to last for one day. Miraculously, the sanctified oil burned for eight days -- the time needed to prepare a fresh supply of oil for the menorah. An eight day festival was declared to commemorate this miracle.

A Wintertime Sukkot?

Interestingly, the story outlined above derives from extra-biblical literature, as well as from the Apocrypha (Books of the Maccabees), *except* that there is no mention of the oil nor of the miracle of the oil in these sources. Only until we reach the time of the *Gemara* (the later part of the Talmud that was commentary on the Mishnah, completed around 500 AD) do we hear anything about the miracle of the oil in connection with the rededication of the Temple.

This has led some Jewish scholars to suggest that perhaps Chanukah was originally intended to be a later celebration of Sukkot, generally considered to be the most important of all the Jewish holidays, which the Hasmoneans did not have a chance to celebrate during their warfare with the Syrians.

Customs of Chanukah

Regardless of the relative obscurity of the origins of Chanukah, Rabbinic tradition has instituted various rules (*mitzvot*) and customs (*minhagim*) for the observance of this eight-day festival to commemorate the Jews victory over their enemies. Among these are:

- Celebrating Chanukah for eight days, from Kislev 25 to Tevet 3 on the Jewish calendar (*Talmud: Shabbat 21b*)
- Lighting the *Chanukiah*, a special form of menorah designed to recall the miracle of the eight days in which the sanctified oil burned in the temple. The nightly kindling of the Chanukiah with its increasingly brighter light is a symbol of godly resistance to both tyranny and the forces of assimilation (*Talmud: Sukkah 46a*).
- Be joyous on Chanukah and avoid signs of sadness (i.e., no mourning or fasting, except in the case of shiva [*Talmud: Shabbat 21b*]).



Chanukah Candle Lighting Blessings



The procedures for lighting the *chanukiah* (Chanukah menorah) are as follows. On the first night, set the first candle in the rightmost holder (as you face the chanukiah). Next, light the *shamash* (servant candle), recite the Hebrew blessings, and then light the first candle using the shamash. After kindling the first candle, set the shamash in its holder. Recite the *Haneirot Hallalu* (see below) and begin to *celebrate!*

On the second night, set the candles from right to left in the chanukiah. That is, beginning at the rightmost holder, put one candle, then put another candle in the holder to its left. Next, light the shamash, recite the Hebrew blessings, and then light the candles from left to right in the chanukiah (in other words, you begin lighting the *newest* candle first). Recite the *Haneirot Hallalu* and then celebrate!

This procedure continues until the eighth night, when the entire chanukiah is lit up:



Place right to left; Kindle left to right

Note: The last night of Chanukah is called *Zot Chanukah*, “This is Chanukah,” and sometimes includes additional meditations. It marks the grand finale of the Chanukah celebration, where the supernatural light burns brightest!



The Hebrew Blessings

הַדְּלַקַת נְרוֹת חֲנוּכָּה

When lighting the candles for Chanukah, the following blessing is said:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ

kid-de-sha-nu 'a-sher ha-'o-lam me-lekh e-lo-hei-nu Adonai at-tah ba-rukh
sanctifies us who King of the universe our God LORD You Blessed

בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנוּכָּה.

cha-nuk-kah shel ner le-had-lik ve-tsi-va-nu be-mits-vo-tav
Chanukah of light to kindle and commanded us with his mitzvot

Blessed art thou, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who sanctifies us with Thy commandments and commanded us to kindle the light of Chanukah.

Barukh attah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, asher kideshanu bemitzvotav, vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel chanukah.

The second blessing (*she'asah nissim – the One who works miracles*) is then recited (just before or immediately following the candle lighting):

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים

nis-sim she'a-sah ha-'o-lam me-lekh e-lo-hei-nu Adonai at-tah ba-rukh
miracles Who performed King of the universe our God LORD You Blessed

לְעִבּוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם, בַּזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

haz-zeh ba-ze-man ha-hem ba-yamim la'avoteinu
at this time in those days for our fathers

Blessed art thou, Lord our God, Master of the universe, who performed miracles for our fathers in those days at this time.

Barukh attah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, she'asah nissim la'avoteinu bayamim hahem, ba-zeman hazzeh.



On the first night of Chanukah (*only*), we add the following blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 ha'olam me-lekh elo-hei-nu Adonai at-tah ba-rukH
 King of the universe our God LORD You Blessed

שֶׁחַיֵּינוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה. [אֲמֵן]
 a-mein haz-zeh laz-ze-man ve-hi-gi'a-nu ve-ki-ye-ma-nu she-he-che-ya-nu
 Amen to this season and has and has who has kept
 brought us sustained us us alive

Blessed art thou, Lord our God, Master of the universe, who has kept us alive and sustained us and has brought us to this special time.

*Barukh attah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
 she-hecheyanu v'ki-yemanu v'higianu lazeman hazeh.*



Haneirot Hallalu - the closing paragraph

After one candle has been kindled, the *Haneirot Hallalu* may be recited while lighting the other candles:

הַנֵּרוֹת הַלָּלוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מְדַלִּיקִין עַל הַנִּסִּים וְעַל הַנִּפְלְאוֹת,
 han nif la 'ot ve al han nis sim al mad li kin a nach nu hal la lu ha nei rot
 and for the wonders for the miracles kindle we these lights

וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת וְעַל הַמְּלַחְמוֹת, שְׁעָשִׂיתָ לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ
 la'a-vo-tei nu she 'a si ta ha mil cha mot ve al ha te shu 'ot ve al
 that You did for our forefathers the battles and for the salvations and for

בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמְן הַזֶּה, עַל יְדֵי כַּהֲנֵיךָ הַקְּדוֹשִׁים.
 ha ke do shim ko ha ne kha ye dei al haz zeh ba ze man ha hem ba ya mim
 the hands of your holy priests. by at this time in those days

וְכֹל שְׂמוֹנַת יָמֵי חֲנֻכָּה, הַנֵּרוֹת הַלָּלוּ קֹדֶשׁ הֵם.
 hem ko desh hal la lu ha nei rot cha nu kah ye mei sh 'mo nat ve khol
 are holy these lights eight days of Chanukah And all

וְאִים לָנוּ רְשׁוּת לְהִשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בָּהֶם, אֲלֵא לְרֵאוֹתָן בְּלִבָּד,
 bil vad lir 'o tan 'ella ba hem le hish ta meish re shut la nu ve ein
 only to behold them but of them to make use and we have no right

כִּדְרֵי לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְהַלֵּל לְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל עַל נִסֶּיךָ וְעַל
 ve al nis se kha al ha ga dol le shim kha ul ha lel le ho dot ke dei
 and for your miracles for to Your great Name and praise to give thanks in order

נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְעַל יְשׁוּעָתְךָ.
 ye shu 'a te kha ve al nif le 'o te kha
 Your salvation and for your wonders

(See next page for transliteration.)



Haneirot Hallalu - transliteration

We kindle these lights (to commemorate) the miracles and wonders and the saving acts that You have performed for our forefathers, in those days at this time, by Your holy priests. And all throughout the eight days of Chanukah, these lights are holy, and we are not permitted to make use of them, but only to behold them, in order to offer thanks and praise to Your great Name for Your miracles, for Your wonders and for Your salvation.

*Haneirot hallalu anachnu madlikin al hanissim ve'al hanifla'ot,
ve'al hateshu'ot, ve'al hamilchamot, she'asita la'avoteinu
bayamim hahem, bazeman hazeh al yedei kohanekha hakedoshim.
Vekhol sh'monat yemei Chanukah Haneirot hallalu kodesh hem.
Ve'ei lanu reshut lihishtamesh bahem ela lir'otam bilvad
kedei lehodot ulhallel lishimkha hagadol al nisekha ve'al
nifle'otecha ve'al yeshuatekha.*

Note: On Friday night the Chanukah lights are lit before the Shabbat candles (and on Saturday night they are light during Havdalah). No practical use may be made of the Chanukah lights, such as the illumination of a room: they are sacred for the occasion.

Displaying the Chanukiah

It is an old custom to display the chanukiah where its lights will be visible from the outside. Note that if you place the chanukiah near a window, the candles should appear lit right to left from the point of view of the one seeing them from outside. Many families have multiple chanukiahs, one for each child of the household, and perhaps a larger one for the entire family.





Spinning the Dreidel

The playing of games has long been associated with Chanukah. The most popular is the game of Dreidel (or *Sevivon*). The dreidel is a four-sided top. On each side is written one of the Hebrew letters Nun, Gimmel, Hey, or Shin. The letters stand for the phrase, *Nes gadol hayah sham*, “a great miracle happened there.”



The rules are simple. Each player puts something into the pot - perhaps a penny or a couple nuts. Then the players take turns spinning the dreidel. If Nun comes up, nothing happens. For Gimmel, the player gets the whole pot. For Hey, the player takes half the pot. For Shin, the player has to share, or add to the pot.

Note: In Israel, the dreidel uses a Pey for *poh* (“here”) instead of a Shin for *sham* (“there”).

Other Chanukah Customs

It is customary to eat dairy dishes during Chanukah, as well as food cooked in oil, such as potato Latkes or jelly doughnuts. Many people also exchange gifts during Chanukah or give “gelt” (coins or small amounts of money) to children. Special songs (such as Ma’oz Tzur) are also sung during this time.

Chanukah Torah Readings

Because Chanukah is an eight-day holiday, and a week is only seven days, there has to be at least one day when Shabbat and Chanukah overlap (on years when Chanukah begins on a Shabbat, there are actually two overlapping Shabbats). For best results, always consult a good Jewish calendar. In general, however, the Torah readings are as follows:

Day	Torah	Haftarah	Brit Chadashah
Chanukah 1 (Kislev 25)	Numbers 7:1-7:17		John 9:1-7; John 10:22-39
Chanukah 2 (Kislev 26)	Numbers 7:18-7:29		John 9:1-7; John 10:22-39
Chanukah 3 (Kislev 27)	Numbers 7:24-7:35		John 9:1-7; John 10:22-39
Chanukah 4 (Kislev 28)	Numbers 7:30-7:41		John 9:1-7; John 10:22-39
Chanukah 5 (Kislev 29)	Numbers 7:36-7:47		John 9:1-7; John 10:22-39
Chanukah 6 (Rosh Chodesh)	Numbers 28:1-17; Numbers 7:54-59	Zech. 2:14-4:7 (only if Shabbat)	John 9:1-7; John 10:22-39
Chanukah 7 (Tevet 1)	Numbers 7:48-7:59		John 9:1-7; John 10:22-39
Chanukah 8 (Tevet 2)	Numbers 7:54-8:4		John 9:1-7; John 10:22-39



On the first seven days of Chanukah we read of the sacrifices and gifts offered by the first seven tribal leaders. On the eighth day we read of the offerings of the remaining five leaders, and we continue to the next Torah portion, reading about God's commandment to Aaron to kindle the Menorah in the Tabernacle. On the Shabbat of Chanukah we add the Haftorah reading (from the Book of Zechariah) that speaks of Zechariah's prophecy concerning a menorah. (On Rosh Chodesh Tevet, usually the 6th day of Chanukah, additional readings are performed.)

In the synagogue, on each of the eight days of Chanukah, the full *Hallel* is recited. In addition, the *Al Hanissim* is included as part of the Hoda'ah blessing (of the Amidah) and *Birkat Hamazon*. *Al HaNissim* praises God for delivering the Jewish people at the time of the Maccabees.

Jesus and Chanukah

In the Gospel of John we read that the LORD Jesus was at the Temple during the “Feast of Dedication,” or Chanukah:

At that time the Feast of Dedication (Chanukah) took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. (John 10:22-24, ESV)

During a season of remembering miracles (*nissim*), Jesus pointed out that the works that He did attested to His claim to be the long-awaited Mashiach of the Jewish people (John 10:37-38). His works and character clearly displayed the true Light of who He was, and these works still shine to us today. Jesus was and forever shall be the greatest Jew who ever lived upon the earth.

And of course, as *Mashiach ben Yosef*, our Suffering Servant, Yeshua is the Ultimate *Shamash* - He is our Light who enables us to shine a sacred fire of sacrificial love to the darkened outside world. Yeshua commanded “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt 5:16). He told us that He is the Light of the world, and that whoever follows Him will not have darkness, but the Light of Life:

אֲנִי אֹרֶת הָעוֹלָם הַהֹלֵךְ אִתִּי לֹא יֵלֵךְ בְּחֹשֶׁךְ כִּי־לֹא אֹרֶת הַחַיִּים

*I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness,
but shall have the light of life. (John 8:12)*



The LORD Jesus gives us light, the very “light of life.” What does this mean to you who claim to know Him and His message? How does this impact you as His follower in this darkened age?

We are called to be part of His Temple, His Body, and at this time we should reflect on rededicating ourselves to the eradication of all that compromises us and tempts us to assimilate with the hell bound world around us.

It is only by the Light of Jesus that we gain victory over the powers of darkness, since the darkness cannot comprehend the light. When we walk in the Light, we have fellowship, unity, *echdut*, with one another, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against such divinely sanctioned communion. May the LORD God of Israel, the Father of the Blessed One Yeshua, help us all to behold the glory of His Light by abiding in His love! And may we turn to Him now and rededicate our own lives as temples cleansed and readied by His Spirit to honor His abiding Presence. Amen.



Further Thoughts about Chanukah

Chanukah is a story about remaining committed to God in a godless, and therefore *insane*, world. After all, if ultimate reality is the “handiwork” (i.e., conscious design) of a single, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving, morally perfect, purposive, personal, and spiritual Agency that has been revealed in the Jewish Scriptures, then those who deny this Reality are living in a state of *delusion* (that is, a protracted “hallucination” that indicates radical departure from what is real). In a sense, the history of humanity - especially as it has been expressed *politically* -- has been nothing less than the collusion to define reality as something that it *isn't*. Spiritual warfare is therefore the fight for sanity and truth in a world that prefers madness and self-deception.



Despite being an anti-Semite, the early Church father Tertullian (160-220 AD) once asked a very good question: "What does Athens have to do with Jerusalem?" He was right for asking the question, though ironically, as a Greek-minded "replacement theologian," he was wrong for categorically libeling the Jewish people (see *Adversus Iudaeos*, c. 200 AD). Historically speaking, religious Jews have always loved the Torah and resisted the pull toward assimilation... Indeed, what other nation has survived over the millennia as have the Jewish people? Sadly, it is a continuing sin of many of today's "church leaders" to disregard the miraculous existence of Israel - including the modern State of Israel - by refusing to give the LORD God of Israel glory for His faithfulness.... Look, if God isn't faithful to the promises made to ethnic Israel, what makes these people think He won't change His mind regarding the Church? *But I digress here...*

Historically, Chanukah remembers the Maccabee's resistance to the forced Hellenization (i.e., the spread of pagan Greek culture) of the Jewish people, though more generally it represents the ongoing struggle against assimilation to the prevailing "world system." In modern day America, for instance, the pressure to assimilate takes the form of "political correctness" and the acceptance of official propaganda that multicultural pluralism/cultural relativism is the truth. For those of us who follow Jesus, Chanukah is the bold proclamation that the Light of the World has come, "but people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil" (see John 3:19).

The story of Chanukah goes back to ancient Greece and the pagan worldviews of Hesoid and Homer, Plato and Aristotle. Alexander the Great (r. 336-323 BC), the tutelage of Aristotle, became a militant King of Macedon who swept across Syria, Egypt, and Babylonia to defeat the mighty Persian Empire. Alexander's rapid military conquests extended Greek culture and influence throughout the civilized world. When he later died (323 BC), Alexander's kingdom was divided into four parts and the land of Israel became a province of Syria under the rule of the Seleucid dynasty.

In 175 BC, a new king, Antiochus IV (also called "Epihpanes") ascended the throne in Syria. Under the "auspices" of his regime, Jerusalem began to look more and more like a Greek city as Hellenistic culture was officially promoted. Antiochus allowed Hellenistic Jews to have prominent roles in the Holy Temple - so much so that even a non-priest (named Menelaus) was given the role of being the Temple's *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest). This enraged many Jews, however, who then called for Egyptian rule instead of Syrian (the Egyptians were more tolerant of local customs and did not force Hellenization). Later, when Antiochus returned from an unsuccessful military campaign against Egypt, he decided to quell the Jewish call for Egyptian rule and murdered some 40,000 people in Jerusalem. Soon after this, he decreed that Jews must abandon their faith in the Torah and to cease offering sacrifices in the Temple. The Holy Temple itself was desecrated and images of the god of Zeus (the "sky god") were placed on the altar and in the sanctuary. Pagan altars were soon erected throughout Judea and pigs were regularly sacrificed upon them. The study of Torah was outlawed (as well as the observance of Shabbat, holidays, and ritual circumcision), and the penalty for disobedience to these decrees was death.



Many Jews fled and hid in the wilderness and caves and many died *kiddush HaShem* - as martyrs (see Heb. 11:36-39). Eventually Jewish resistance to this imposed Hellenization meant literal war. In 164 BC, in Modin, a small town about 17 miles from Jerusalem, Mattityahu (Matthias), a Hasmonean priest, and his five sons took refuge. When Antiochus' soldiers arrived at Modim to erect an altar to Zeus and force the sacrifice of a pig, Mattityahu and his sons rose up and killed the Syrians. They then fled to the Judean wilderness and were joined by other freedom fighters. After some organizing, they soon engaged in successful guerrilla warfare against their Syrian/Greek oppressors.

Mattityahu died about a year later and his son Judah became the leader of the resistance. Judah came to be known as the "Maccabee" -- a title that either was an acronym of the phrase, *mi komocha ba'elim Adonai*, "Who is like You among the gods, LORD?" (Exod. 15:11) or else was derived from the Hebrew word for "hammer" (*makevet*), indicating his ferocity in battle. According to legend (*Shabbat 21b*), on the 25th of Kislev, three years to the day after the Syrian/Greeks had defiled the Holy Temple by making it a shrine to Zeus, the Maccabees vanquished their oppressors and recaptured the Temple. When the faithful Jewish priests searched for the holy olive oil to light the menorah, however, they found only one jar that was not defiled (i.e., only one still had the seal of the High Priest). The oil in this jar was sufficient to burn for only one day, and it would take eight days until a new supply could be produced. According to tradition, the one-day supply of oil miraculously burned in the menorah for eight days, and later, this eight day period was commemorated as *Chunukah*, "Dedication," also known as the Festival of Lights.

Interestingly, Chanukah is mentioned only a couple times in the Talmud (i.e., Shabbat 20a, 21b), perhaps because the Maccabean dynasty (the forefathers of the Sadducees) eventually became entirely corrupt, and the Talmud (which grew out of Pharisaic tradition) did not want to draw much attention to them. Therefore the Talmud's statements (recorded centuries after the Maccabean rebellion) focus on the miracle of the oil rather than on the merits of the Maccabean resistance. This approach has been adopted in normative (rabbinical) Judaism, and today Chanukah primarily centers on the miracle of the lights (i.e., the lighting of the candles) rather than the militant overthrow of religious persecutors.

Chanukah is alluded to in the Torah itself. First, the 25th word of the Torah is *or* (אור), "light," as in "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3), and some of the sages say that this suggests Kislev 25. Second, immediately after the festivals (moedim) of the Jewish year are enumerated in Leviticus 23, the commandment to "bring clear oil from hand-crushed olives to keep the menorah burning constantly" is given (Lev. 24:1-2), and this is said to foresee the time of Chanukah.

Some Bible scholars say that the prophet Daniel foresaw the events of Chanukah centuries beforehand in a vision of a "male goat running from the west" with a conspicuous horn between its eyes (Alexander) that was broken into four (Dan. 8:1-12). Out of the four horns arose a "little horn" (Antiochus) who greatly magnified itself, cast down some of the stars (righteous souls), took away the sacrifices, and cast down the sanctuary in Jerusalem.



Years after the Maccabean revolt, Jesus celebrated Chanukah in the same Temple that had been cleansed and rededicated only a few generations earlier (John 10:22). It was here that many asked if He were the coming Messiah -- harkening back to the liberation of the earlier Maccabees. During a season of remembering miracles (nissim), Jesus pointed out that the works that He did attested to His claim to be the long-awaited Mashiach of the Jewish people (John 10:37-38).

Finally, in an eschatological sense "Epiphany" foreshadows the coming time of the "Messiah of Evil" (anti-christ) who will one day attempt to "assimilate" all of humanity into a "New World Order" (Dan. 9:27, 2 Thess. 2:3; Rev. 13:7-9, etc.). At first he will appear to be a "world savior" who will broker peace for Israel and the Mideast, but after awhile, like his archetype Epiphany, he will savagely betray the Jewish people and set up a "desolating sacrilege" in the Holy Place of the Temple (Matt. 24:15). His satanic rise will occur during *acharit hayamim* - the "End of Days" - otherwise called the period of the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24). The Final Victory of God will be established when Yeshua returns to destroy this Messiah of Evil at His Second Coming. The Holy Temple will then be rebuilt and dedicated by the hand of the true Mashiach of Israel...

Practically speaking, the word *chanukah* (חֲנֻכָּה) means "dedication," a word that shares the same root as the Hebrew the word *chinukh* (חִנּוּךְ), meaning "education." Just as the Maccabees fought and died for the sake of Torah truth, so we must wage war within ourselves and break the stronghold of apathy and indifference that the present world system engenders. We must take time to educate ourselves by studying the Torah and New Testament, for by so doing we will be rededicated to the service of the truth and enabled to resist assimilation into the corrupt world. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world... (1 John 2:15). The "cleansing of the Temple" is a matter of the heart, *chaverim*. The enemy is apathy and the unbelief it induces. We are called to "fight the good fight of faith" and not to conform to this present age with its seductions and compromises (1 Tim. 6:12, Rom. 12:2).

Finally, a quick note about lighting your *chanukiah* (i.e., menorah for Chanukah). Each person of the family should light their own menorah. On the first night, after the stars appear, the first candle is placed at the end of the menorah, facing the right hand. We light the *shamash* candle, recite the traditional blessings (*lehadlik ner shel Chanukah*, *she'ash nissim*, and the *Shehecheyanu*) and then light the rightmost candle. Put the shamash into its holder. We then recite the *Ha-nerot ha-lalu* statement. We let the candles burn all the way down....



Day 1



On the second night, we add one candle to the left (now we have two at the right end of the menorah). We light the shamash, recite the blessings (minus the *Shehecheyanu*), and light the candles left-to-right in the menorah (i.e., the newest candle is lit first). Again we recite the *Ha-nerot ha-lalu* statement. And so on for the eight days of Chanukah.



Day 2

It is customary to eat potato latkes and jelly doughnuts (*sufganiyot*) while celebrating God's providential love and protection at this time. Playing the dreidel game helps us remember that "a great miracle happened there." Giving *tzedakah* ("charity") is also encouraged at this time. (In Israel, on *erev Chanukah* (just before the first night), marathon runners carry a torch from the flame of the menorah at the village of Modin to the Western Wall of the Temple to kindle a giant-sized menorah there.)

It is an old custom to place the *chanukiah* where its lights will be seen from the outside. Often this means placing at least one *chanukiah* in front of a window. Note that the candles should appear right-to-left from the vantage point of someone looking from the outside of your house or apartment....

Here's a practical tip. To clean your *chanukiah* after Chanukah, use a hairdryer -- set on low -- and heat up the menorah wherever you see the wax drippings. Use a butter knife to peel away the warmed wax....

Wishing you a joyful time of celebrating the overcoming victory of the Light of the World, *chaverim* (John 1:5).



אור אמת זורח

or *emet zore'ach*

“the true light shineth.”