Chanukkah At Home

"The commandment of lighting Chanukkah candles is extremely beloved and a person must be steadfast in this so as to make the miracle known..."
—Maimonides, Laws of Chanukkah 4:12

Unlike Jewish holidays celebrated in synagogues, Chanukkah is primarily celebrated in the home—at our tables and in our kitchens. The central ritual of Chanukkah is lighting the menorah to recall the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after the invasion of the Seleucid Empire's army and the Maccabee-led revolt against them in 165 B.C.E. We also tell the story that a single flask of oil, expected to burn for only one day, instead lasted for eight days. Tradition teaches that Jews must place their lit menorahs in a window or doorway for everyone to see. (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 21b). Many Jews relate to this ritual as a public expression of pride and celebration. But there have been times throughout history when the act of visibly affirming Jewish identity came with great risk. It made Jews vulnerable to stigma, discrimination and persecution.

Today, too many people around the world face similar vulnerabilities when they express themselves in the public sphere. Systemic racism continues to disenfranchise members of our community. Women, LGBT people and ethnic minorities worldwide face relentless abuse from their communities, families and governments. To protect themselves from harm, they are forced to hide. This Chanukkah, while the candles glow in our windows, let us reflect on how our light can extend to those concealed by darkness. May we build a world in which all people can live with safety and equity and express their truest selves.

Place candles in the menorah from right to left, the number of candles corresponding to the number of the night of Chanukkah, plus the shamas or "helper." Recite the following prayers and then kindle the shamas candle first. Use it to kindle the others, from the left-most candle to the right.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav, v'tsivanu l'hadlik neir shel Chanukkah.

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

Blessed is Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who hallows us with mitzvot,
and commands us to kindle the Chanukkah lights.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech haolam, sheasa nisim la-a-voteinu ba-yamim haheim baz'man hazeh.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ וּלְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בַּזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

Blessed is Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe,
who performed miracles for our ancestors in days of old, at this season.

On the first night only add:

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech haolam, shehe-chei-yanu v'ki-y'amanu v'higi-anu laz'man hazeh.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֶחֱיָנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

Blessed is Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, for giving us life, for sustaining us,
and for enabling us to reach this season.

One for Each Night, They Shed a Sweet Light: Jewish Values in Our Time

One way to build a world of equity is to refocus Chanukkah on our values. We offer here a value for each night so that you may discuss how you already live out this value in the world, or how you can live the value even better.

RESPECT – כבוד

Judaism teaches us to treat ourselves and others with respect. According to the Torah, even the stranger is to be treated with respect. Kavod is a feeling of regard for the rights, dignity, feelings, wishes, and abilities of others. Teasing and name-calling disrespect and hurt everyone, so learn to respect people's differences. The Torah tells us that we are all created "*b'tzelem Elohim*" (Bereshit 1:26), in the image of God. This is a simple and profound idea that should guide our interactions with all people. How have we embodied kavod this year? How can we do better?

PEACE IN THE HOME – שלום בית

Our synagogue community and the groups within it are our second homes. Our goal is for everyone to feel comfortable, safe, welcome, and respected at home. We work hard to welcome those who are different from us. We strive to settle disagreements in peaceful and respectful ways that allow everyone to maintain their dignity. How have we contributed to shalom bayit at home and in our community? How can we do better?

COMMUNAL RESPONSIBILITY – כל ישראל ערבים זה בזה

The Jewish principle that "All Israel is responsible for one another" (Shavuot 39a) means each of us must take action and inspire others to create a community in which we can all take pride. It is connected to the injunction to "love your neighbor as yourself." (Lev. 19:18) We must love and accept our whole selves first, and in doing so create the capacity for extending that love and acceptance to others. How have we shown that we are responsible for our fellow Jews? How can we do better?

GUARDING ONE'S USE OF LANGUAGE – שמירת לשון

The Talmud warns us that we must take care in how we speak. Talking about others behind their backs, even if what we are saying is true, is prohibited. The guidelines for "*sh'mirat halashon*" remind us that what we say about others affects them in ways we can never predict. Words can hurt or heal depending on how we use them. How have we been diligent in the way we speak? How can we do better?

EDUCATION AND DEDICATION – חינוך / חנוכה

It is no accident that the word "*Chanukkah*," which means "dedication" and "*chinukh*," which means "education" come from the same Hebrew root. Education is life-long and to be a dedicated member of the community means constantly to be learning, showing up, and performing acts of kindness and social justice within our Temple Sinai family and throughout the greater community. When we are educated about the needs of the world, we can re-dedicate ourselves to addressing them. Similarly, when we study Torah, we gain tools and wisdom to ask important questions and make decisions about how best to dedicate our energies. How have we become more educated about the world this year? How can we do better?

LOVING-KINDNESS – חסד

Chesed means loving-kindness, and is really the foundation of Jewish life. To give and receive gemillut chasadim, acts of long-kindness, is at the heart of why community matters. What acts of kindness have you done for others lately? What acts of kindness have you been the recipient of? How can you give and receive kindness even more whole-heartedly?

TZEDAKAH – צדכה

Tonight, instead of exchanging gifts, dedicate your gelt to a cause, group or person in need. We best translate *tzedakah* as "righteous giving" rather than "charity" because sharing resources with those in need is an obligation of being Jewish. Where will you donate?

SHABBAT – שבת

More even than our most important holiday, Shabbat is a value. Central to Shabbat is the value of rest. How can you re-dedicate yourself to rest on Shabbat in a way that nurtures your soul even more this season and this year?

Chanukah Song Sheet

Chanukah Oh Chanukah!

English Version

Chanukah, oh Chanukah,
Come light the menorah
Let's have a party,
We'll all dance the horah
Gather 'round the table, we'll give you a treat
S'vivon 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, Oy Chanukah

Yiddish Transliteration

Chanukah oy Chanukah
A yontif a shayner,
A lustiker a freylekher
Nisht do nokh azoyner
Ale nakht mit dreidlech shpiln mir,
Frishe heise latkes, esn on a shir.

Geshvinder, tsindt kinder
Di Chanukah likhtlech on,
Zogt "Al Hanisim", loybt Got far di nisim,
Un lomir ale tantsen in kon.
Zogt "Al Hanisim", loybt Got far di nisim,
Lomir ale tantsen tsuzamen.

Maoz Tzur

Ma'oz tzur y'shuati, l'cha na-eh l'shabei-ach
tikon beit t'filati, v'sham todah n'zabei-ach
L'eit tachin matbei-ach, mitzar ham'nabei-ach

Az egmor b'shir mizmor
chanukat hamizbei-ach

מָעוֹז צוּר יְשׁוּעָתִי, לְךָ נָאֶה לְשַׁבֵּחַ
תִּכּוֹן בֵּית תְּפִלָּתִי, וְשָׁם תּוֹדָה נְזַבֵּחַ
לְעֵת תַּכִין מַטְבֵּחַ, מִצָר הַמְנַבֵּחַ

אָז אֶגְמוֹר בְּשִׁיר מִזְמוֹר
חֲנוּכַּת הַמִזְבֵּחַ

Rock of Ages let our song
praise Your saving power.
You amidst 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.

Children of the Maccabees,
whether free or fettered,
wake the echoes of the songs
where you may be scattered.
Yours the message cheering,
that the time is nearing
which will see all people free,
tyrants disappearing.

I Have a Little Dreidel

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

CHORUS:
Oh, dreidel, dreidel, dreidel
I made it out of clay
Oh, dreidel, dreidel, dreidel
Now dreidel I shall play.

It has a lovely body
With legs so short and thin
And when it gets all tired
It drops and then I win.

[CHORUS]

My dreidel is so playful
It loves to dance and spin
A happy game of dreidel
Come play now, let's begin.

[CHORUS]

S'vivon

S'vivon sov, sov, sov,
Chanukah hu chag tov!
Chanukah hu chag tov!
Svivon sov, sov, sov.

Chag simchah hu laam,
Neis gadol hayah sham,
Neis gadol hayah sham,
Chag simchah hu laam.

סְבִיבוֹן סֹב, סֹב, סֹב,
חֲנֻכָּה הוּא חַג טוֹב!
חֲנֻכָּה הוּא חַג טוֹב!
סְבִיבוֹן סֹב, סֹב, סֹב!

חַג שְׂמָחָה הוּא לָעָם,
נֵס גָּדוֹל הָיָה שָׁם,
נֵס גָּדוֹל הָיָה שָׁם,
חַג שְׂמָחָה הוּא לָעָם!

Dreidle, spin. Chanukah is a good holiday.
A happy holiday for the people. A great miracle happened there!

Al HaNisim

Al hanissim, v'al hapurkan, v'al hag'vurot v'al hat'tshuot v'al hamilchamot sh'asita lavoteinu bayamim hahem baz'man hazeh.

עַל הַנִּסִּים, וְעַל הַפֻּרְקָן, וְעַל הַגְּבוּרוֹת, וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת, וְעַל הַמִּלְחָמוֹת, שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ לַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בַּזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

We thank you also for the miracles, for the redemption,
for the mighty deeds and saving acts, wrought by you,
as well as for the wars which you waged
for our fathers in days of old, at this season.

Light One Candle

Light one candle for the Maccabee children.
Give thanks that their light didn't die.
Light one candle for the pain they endured
When their 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 peacemaker's time is at hand.

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.

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!