



Berachot Chanukah -

Blessings said during Chanukah

וַיְהִי בֵּימֵינוּ תְּחִנָּה בֵּימֵינוּ תְּחִרָף בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם:

Ἐγένετο δὲ τὰ Ἐγκαίνια ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, 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 2) that commemorates the victory of *faith* over the ways of speculative *reason*, and demonstrates the power of the *miracle* in the face of mere *humanism*.

Chanukiah Lighting Procedures

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 sequence continues night after night, until the eighth night, when the entire chanukiah is lit up:



Place right to left; Kindle left to right



Honoring the Light of the World

Of course *everything* centers on our beloved Savior Yeshua - including the festival of Chanukah. Indeed, as Jewish tradition readily affirms, “All the world was created for the Messiah” (*Sanhedrin 98b*), and therefore during the candle lighting ceremony we first of all reaffirm the glorious truth that Yeshua is the Light of the world. Those who follow Him will never walk in the darkness because in Him is the light of life (John 8:12)

Before performing the Chanukah candle lighting ceremony, you may want to offer up a prayer of thanks and then ask everyone present to listen to the words of the Messiah:

אֲנֹכִי אֹר הָעוֹלָם הַהֹלֵךְ אַחֲרַי

a-charai ha-ho-lekh ha-o-lam or a-no-khi
after me the walking the light of the world I am

לֹא יֵלֵךְ בַּחֹשֶׁךְ כִּי-לוֹ אֹר הַחַיִּים

ha-chay-yim or ki-lo ba-cho-shekh ye-lekh lo
the light of life for in him (is) in the darkness will not walk

I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall never walk in the darkness, for in him is the light of life.

anokhi or ha'olam, ha-holekh acharai, lo yelekh bacho-shekh, ki-lo or ha-chayim.





Candle Lighting Blessing (rabbinical)

When lighting the candles for Chanukah, most Jews recite Hadlakat Nerot Chanukah, the traditional blessing established by the rabbis:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
 kid-de·sha·nu 'a-sheer ha-'o·lam me·lekh e·lo·hei·nu Adonai at-tah ba-rukḥ
 sanctifies us who King of the universe our God LORD You Blessed

 בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה.
 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 be-mitzvotav, vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel chanukah.

Candle Lighting Blessing (Messianic)

Most followers of Yeshua do *not* accept rabbinical authority and therefore object that we are “commanded” to light the Chanukah candles. The following Messianic blessing may therefore be recited instead:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 ha-'o·lam me·lekh E·lo·hey·nu Adonai at-tah ba-rukḥ
 the universe king (of) our God Lord are you Blessed

 אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ חַגִּים, חֻקֹּת, וּמוֹעֲדִים לְשִׂמְחָה,
 le-sim·chah u'-mo·a·dim chuk·kot chag·gim la·nu natan a-sheer
 for gladness and seasons customs holidays has given to us who

 לְכָבוֹד יֵשׁוּעַ הַמָּשִׁיחַ אֲדוֹנֵינוּ, אֹר הָעוֹלָם.
 ha-'o·lam or A·do·nei·nu ha-ma·shi·ach Ye·shu·a likh·vod
 the light of the world our Lord Yeshua the Messiah for the glory of



She'asah Nissim Blessing

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-rukḥ
 miracles Who performed King of the universe our God LORD You Blessed

לְעַבְוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם, בְּזֶמַן הַזֶּה.
 haz-zeh ba-ze-man ha-hem ba-yamim la'a-vo-tei-nu
 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 ba-yamim hahem, ba-zeman hazzeh.

The Shehecheyanu Blessing

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

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 שְׁהַחַיְנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

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 ve'ki-yemanu ve'higianu laz'man hazeh.



Hanerot 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
 ve al ha te shu 'ot ve al ha mil cha mot she 'a si ta la 'a vo tei nu
 and for the salvations and for the battles that You did for our forefathers

בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזֶמַן הַזֶּה, עַל יְדֵי כַּהֲנֵיךָ הַקְּדוֹשִׁים.
 ba ya mim ha hem ba ze man haz zeh ba ze man ha hem ba ya mim
 in those days at this time by the hands of your holy priests.

וְכֹל שְׂמוֹנַת יָמֵי חֲנֻכָּה, הַנֵּרוֹת הַלָּלוּ קֹדֶשׁ הֵם.
 ve khol sh' mo nat ye mei cha nu kah ye mei sh' mo nat ve khol
 And all eight days of Chanukah these lights are holy

וְאִים לָנוּ רְשׁוּת לְהִשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בָּהֶם, אֲלֵא לְרִאוֹתָן בְּלִבְדָּ,
 ve a'im la nu re shut ba hem le hish ta meish re shut la nu ve ein
 and we have no right to make use of them but to behold them only

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

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



Henerot Translation - 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'ein lanu reshut lihishtamesh bahem ela lir'otam bilvad
kedei lehodot ulhallel lishimkha hagadol al nisekha ve'al
nifle'otecha ve'al yeshuatekha.*

Some of the sages have said the word Messiah (i.e., mashiach) should be regarded as an acronym for the phrase: Madlikin (מ) Shemonah (ש) Yemei (י) Chanukah (ח), i.e., "we light throughout the eight days of Chanukah." During the eight days of Chanukah we kindle lights in commemoration of the "miracles, deliverance, mighty deeds salvations, wonders and solace" that our Heavenly Father performed for us "in those days, at this time" -- and this is thought to prefigure the greater deliverance to come in the power of the Messiah.

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.



So let us celebrate the true Light of the World, Yeshua our beloved Savior and Messiah! Let your light shine, *chaverim!* Let's put away the sin that so easily besets us and rededicate our lives to the Lord. *Chag Chanukah Same'ach!*

חַג חֲנֻכָּה שְׂמֵחַ!