

Rosh Yeshiva & Community Rabbi:
Dayan Abraham David Shli"ta

Please Note, this newsletter has holy writings and should be disposed of in Geniza

The festival of Hanukka brings its message of light during the cold winter month of Kislev which falls about December. A great light was kindled at a very dark period in our history. It happened at the time of the Second Temple; our people were oppressed by the Greeks (Yevanim) to submit to their way of life, a life of indulgence, worship of physique and idolatry – they did their utmost to make the Jews forsake the Torah and G-d. They made decrees punishable by death to break the spirit of our people, the study of Torah was forbidden and so was the keeping of Shabbat and the fixing of Rosh Hodesh by the Rabbis. They entered the Holy Temple and defiled and desecrated it. Everything seemed lost and hopeless – a large part of the Jewish people were converted to Hellenism through force and persuasion and a great darkness fell upon our people.

But there remained some faithful, who would not give in. The Hashmonaim, led by Mattityahu, the son of Yohanan the High Priest, an old man and his 5 sons, stood up for G-d and the Torah, thus rekindling the sparks of faith dormant in the hearts of their Jewish brethren.

The odds seemed impossible; a handful of untrained Jews against the largest and best equipped army in the world. But G-d in His mercy came to their salvation and after many battles they miraculously defeated their enemies. On the 25th of Kislev the Temple was recaptured and the Cohanim entered the Hechal to light the Menorah. But all the oil had been defiled and made unclean and only one flask of undefiled oil with the seal of the High Priest was found. This was sufficient to light the Menorah for one night but G-d repaid their faith with another miracle and the oil lasted eight days until new oil could be had.

The following year, our Rabbis declared the celebrations of Hanukka, with the lights as we know them, the Hallel and Thanksgiving we say in our prayers.

Let us learn from the lesson of Hanukka. Numbers do not matter even a few dedicated faithful can bring salvation, for only a small spark is needed to awaken the Jewish heart, a little light can drive away much darkness and bring back our people to the ways of our forefathers and the Torah.

MAY WE ALL HAVE AN INSPIRING AND HAPPY HANUKKA. AMEN

Dayan Abraham David

Some laws of Hanukka according to the Shulchan Aruch (1st night falls on the night of Wednesday 25th December 2024)

1. Both men and women are obliged to light the Nerot of **Hanukka**, but in any one household, only one Menorah is lit. This is usually done by the father of the house. If two or more families live together in the same house but eat separately, then they should share the cost and light together. When a child brings a menorah from school, and wishes to light it, he/she should hear the Beracha from the parent before lighting. The Minhag Askenaz is that every member of the household light
2. The **Hanukka** lights should be lit preferably with olive oil. We have the minhag to put water in the glass containing the oil. We can now buy excellent floating wicks for the Menorah. Candles can also be used they should all be of the same size.
3. The correct time for lighting is at the beginning of night; this year, this will be about 4:50 pm, and into the next half-hour. However, it is possible to light throughout the night as long as two members of the family are awake. If not, then one should light without a Beracha.

4. Sufficient oil must be put in the Menorah to last at least half an hour. On Erev Shabbat, we must put enough oil or use large enough candles to last until about 5:20pm or about 2 hours. We have to kindle the Hanukka lights before the Shabbat lights are lit (Kabalat Shabbat is at 3:42pm). We should not kindle the lights of Hanukka or Shabbat before 3:01pm. Preferably, one should pray Mincha early on Erev Shabbat before lighting the Nerot Chanukka. On Motzei Shabbat, at home, we should make Havdalah on wine etc. before we kindle the Hanukka lights. But in synagogue we light the menorah before Havdalah because of *Pirsum*. If less oil than the required quantity was put, the menorah must be re-lit with the required amount of oil.
5. Since we light inside the house, the Menorah should be placed by the doorpost opposite the Mezuzah where it can be seen by the members of the household. Preferably the lights should be at a height of about 56cm / 7 tefachim above the floor, but a height of up to 9.6 metres / 20 amot is permitted. If we have a window facing the street at a height of less than 9.6 metres from the street, it is preferable to place the Menorah there and not by the door inside the house.
6. The first night we start with one light (plus the Shamash, which is lit at the end) and we increase by one for every night until the last night when we have eight lights. We position the lights so that we always light from left to right, eg. On the second night we would start from the new light placed on the left side of the first light and so on.
7. The Menorah must be in position when we light and not moved after lighting. For example, if the Baal Habiet is ill in bed, he cannot light it there, and then have it moved to its correct position, but he can make the Beracha and his Shliach who hears the Beracha will go and light it in its correct position. The Menorah must not be placed where it can be knocked over or blown out by the wind.
8. We must not benefit from or use the lights of **Hanukka**. We therefore place the Shamash on a position higher than the other lights. The full Hallel is recited on all 8 days with the Beracha. We mention Al Hanissim in the Amida and in Birkat Hamazon, but if we forget to say this, we do not have to go back.
9. The family should be present at the time of lighting. Women should not work while the **Hanukka** lights are on, i.e. for that half-hour.
10. Once the Beracha is said, one should not speak until he has lit all the lights.
11. A child under Bar Mitzvah is permitted to light only the Shamash on his father's Menorah for Chinuch.
12. There is a minhag to eat milky foods on **Hanukka** to remember the miracle through the milk Yehudith fed the wicked Greek emperor. We also have the Minhag to eat Zalebi / Zangola which is fried in deep oil to commemorate the miracle of the flask of oil. Nowadays people eat doughnuts for the same reason.
13. The oil and wicks which did not burn in the Hanukkiah on the last day, should not be used for any other purpose. They should be burned away.

There will be an earlier Minyan on Erev Shabbat, 27th December for Mincha at 1:30 pm besides the normal at 3:20 pm so as to enable us to pray Mincha before the lighting for Hanukka

ON WEDNESDAY 25TH & THURSDAY 26TH DECEMBER AND AGAIN ON WEDNESDAY 1ST JANUARY,
SHACHARIT WILL BE AT 8:00AM FOLLOWED BY BREAKFAST AND SPECIAL SHIURIM IN SHUL -
NOT TO BE MISSED!
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MINCHA 1:30PM ; ARVIT 7:30PM