

Chanukah Blessings: Lighting the Nine Candles

While there is no absolute consensus about exactly how the candles should be lit (all in a row from the same side, or the first on the right side of the menorah, the second on the left, the third, next to the first, etc.), or where the lit menorah should be placed, most Jewish traditions stress that one candle (plus the **Shamash** or servant candles which is used to light all the other ones) should be lit for each day of the festival. However many are lit each day, the following order is usual. Two are lit on the first day, and another candle is added for each day of the festival.

Traditionally, the first candle we light must be at our **right**, when we face the Chanukah menorah; subsequent candles are lit from the **left to the right**. That is on day **one**, the **Shamash** (or servant) is lit first, then candle number **one**. On day **two**, the **Shamash** is lit first, and then candles number **two**, and number **one**. On day **three**, the **Shamash** is lit first, then candle number **three**, followed by candles number **two**, and number **one**. On the last day, you light the **Shamash** and starting from the left, you light all eight candles on the Chanukah menorah (Chanukiah).

The same procedure is followed for each evening's candle lighting, so that the candles are always lit from the left to the right, when you are facing the menorah, beginning with the **Shamash**. By the end of the festival, you will have used a total of 44 candles. When we light the **Shamash**, we take it in our hand, and speak the **Berachot** (Blessings).

1. The first blessing (recited every night):

Barookh atah Adonai Elohaynu Melech ha-olam Asher kidishaynu b'mitzvatov vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel Hanukkah (Blessed are You, O L-rd, our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and who has commanded us to kindle the light of Hanukkah) ***Barookh atah Adonai Elohaynu Melech ha-olam she-asah nissim la-avotenu bayamim hahem ba-z'man hazeh*** (Blessed are You, O L-rd, our G-d, King of the universe, Who has performed miracles for our fathers in ancient days, at this season.)

2. Shehecheyanu: (recited on the first night only)

Barookh atah Adonai Elohaynu Melech ha-olam, she-he-che-yanu ve-kee-ye-manu ve-hee-gee-anu laz'man hazeh (Blessed are You, O L-rd, our G-d, King of the universe, You are He Who has kept us in life, has sustained us, and has permitted us to reach this moment.)

Once the candles are lit, we say the following prayer ***each night of the festival***:

3. Hanayrot hallalu (these lights):

We kindle these lights on account of the miracles, the rescuing deeds, the wars You carried out for our fathers through the hands of Your holy priests. And throughout all of these eight Hanukkah days these lights are holy and we are not permitted to make use of them, only to look at them, in order to give praise to Your Name for Your miracles, for Your rescuing deeds, and for Your marvelous acts.

On the eve of the Sabbath, the Chanukah candles are lit ***before*** we light the Sabbath Candles and at the end of the Sabbath, they are lit before we kindle the Havdalah candle.

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