

This is a combination of a halachic review, practical suggestions, useful information, Chanuka fun, and more. Do not take anything written here as "the final word"; if you have any doubts or confusion, check things out with your Rav.

SETTING UP THE CHANUKIYA

In general, one should prepare his Chanukiya well in advance of lighting time, so that there will not be a delay in lighting at the proper time. This is especially so on Friday of Chanuka because things get kind of hectic as Shabbat approaches. (And especially **NOT SO** for Motza'ei Shabbat lighting - Obviously, no preparation for lighting after Shabbat may be done on Shabbat - but one should set up for Motza'ei Shabbat on Friday - see further).

Some have the custom of setting up their Chanukiya in the morning for the evening (this goes for every day - except Shabbat, of course). This not only serves the practical purpose of being ready to light on time without undue delay, but it also commemorates the practice in the Beit HaMikdash called HATAVAT HANEIROT, whereby the Kohen (Gadol) tended the Menora and prepared it in the morning for kindling in the late, late afternoon. Since our lighting on Chanuka directly commemorates the lighting of the Menora in the Beit HaMikdash, this suggestion provides a nice "added touch" to the mitzva and symbolism of Chanuka lighting.

AL HANISIM is added to every Amida & Birkat HaMazon throughout Chanuka.

Forgetting AL HANISIM does NOT invalidate either the Amida or Birkat HaMazon. That means that neither is to be repeated because AL HANISIM was omitted.

If you catch your omission before saying HaShem's name in the MODIM (Amida) or NODEH L'CHA (Birkat HaMazon) brachot, go back and say it.

However, if one realizes the omission after the end of the bracha but before the end of the Amida (before taking 3 steps back), AL HANISIM can be said right before YIHYU L'RATZON, with the modified introduction, below.

In Birkat HaMazon, an omitted AL HANISIM becomes a HARACHAMAN, right before HARACHAMAN HU Y'ZAKEINU, as follows (there are variant texts for this)...

הַרְחָמֵנוּ, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה לָנוּ נִסִּים וּנְפִלְאוֹת
כְּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בְּיָמֵים הָהֵם בְּזְמַן
הַזֶּה. בְּיָמֵי מַתְתִּיאוֹ...
...

There is no reference to Chanuka in BRACHA MEI'EIN SHALOSH (a.k.a. AL HAMICHYA).

BRACHOT BEFORE LIGHTING

Brachot should be recited BEFORE beginning to light the candles. This complies with the general rule for Mitzva-Brachot, that they be recited immediately before performance of the mitzva (there are exceptions - Chanuka lighting is not one of the exceptions). This means, that on the first night, wait until all three brachot are said before lighting the candle. And, even on the eighth night, don't start lighting the candles until you finish both brachot.

(Some hold that this applies to the first b'racha - the mitzva b'racha, but not necessarily to the other b'rachot. Check with your Rav if you are not sure which opinion to follow.)

LOADING THE CHANUKIYA

Opinions differ, but a common practice is to place the first candle (or oil cup) in the right side of the Chanukiya.

If one lights at the doorpost, then the first candle should be closest to the doorpost, even if it is the left side of the Chanukiya.

From the second night on, the custom (one of the customs) is to "load" the Chanukiya from right to left, and to light it, left to right.

At the doorpost, one loads it from the

doorpost out, and lights it starting with the candle closest to the doorpost.

Loading and lighting direction are not crucial to the performance of the mitzva, but there are reasons for the various practices.

It should be stated that if you light on a window sill, then right and left are different for you and for someone looking from the outside. Check with your Rav which way to load and light in that case.

ESSENCE and HIDUR

The essential performance of the mitzva of Chanuka Lights is the lighting of a single candle each night. The custom that we follow of increasing the number of candles each night is a HIDUR MITZVA (enhancement of the mitzva). This is not to suggest that anyone should follow the original practice of (just) one candle each night. The Jewish People "across the board" accepted upon itself - a long time ago - the current practice of lighting the number of candles that correspond to the day of Chanuka.

It is because the first candle you light fulfills the mitzva, that the b'rachot should be said before any lighting.

In loving memory of

ר' משה יצחק ב"ר מרדכי ז"ל

on his 24th yahrzeit, 26 Kislev 

We miss you Dad and Grandpa

יהי זכרו ברוך

One practice that has developed because of the distinction between the first candle and the others, is to begin reciting/singing HANEIROT HALALU after the first candle is lit, while lighting the others.

Alternatively, one can wait until the lighting is done to say HANEIROT HALALU. Stick to family practice on this, unless you have a good reason to switch.

RIGHT AFTER LIGHTING

One should not just light the Chanuka candles (and sing Maoz Tzur) and then go on to business as usual, but rather one should look at the candles for a while, ponder G-d's miracles, spend some time with the family talking about the message of Chanuka and how it relates to our time, play a little dreidel, sing a song or two, have a special Chanuka snack, have some Chanuka fun.

TORAH sh/b PART OF LIGHTING

It is recommended to learn some Torah, share a Dvar Torah, have a family shiur, or something like that, right after candle lighting (or sometime in the evening). The decrees of the Greeks included a ban on learning Torah. Our celebrating Chanuka marks our freedom from Greek oppression, including the ability to learn Torah in public without fear. So let's do just that!

Make 4-word Hebrew and/or English sentences with ע ה ל ו &/or N G H P

Here's a MASHAL (analogy) to the above point. (You can use it as the DT for one of the nights.) There was a dancer who had a terrible accident - badly breaking his/her leg. The leg required two surgeries to repair the damage, a subsequent third operation to adjust things properly, and lots and lots of physiotherapy and recuperation time. Finally, after almost a year and a half, the dancer is given the good news that the leg is now as good as new. The dancer throws a party to celebrate the restoration to good health. At the party there is food and drink, good music, speeches, even some party favors and games. But the main element of the party is the Dance. When the dancer does his/her dance, then the celebration is complete.

After years of Greek oppression, during which time Torah Learning and Mitzvot Observance was forbidden under pain of death, there was a series of operations (military, in this case) and miracles that finally restored the Jewish People to good, spiritual health. We celebrate by the lighting of candles, the saying of Al HaNisim and Hallel, with traditional foods, even party games (dreidel). But the highlight of our celebration should be Torah Learning and increased attention to Mitzvot. If we have a personal CHANUKA, a rededication of ourselves to Torah and Mitzvot, then we will know that Chanuka is real.

**Why have wine during dreidel-play?
(in Israel but not abroad)**

TEXT OF THE BRACHA

Notice on the "Chanuka Lighting" page (below and as a separate link) that the word SHEL in the first bracha is in parentheses. There is a dispute as to whether the bracha ends L'HADLIK NER SHEL CHANUKA or L'HADLIK NER CHANUKA. One should follow his own (or family) minhag, if you have one. If not, ask your Rav which wording you should use. (A third opinion is to combine the words: L'HADLIK NER SHE-L'CHANUKA.)

The following comments are not meant to encourage you to go with the NER CHANUKA version, but they might help explain why some people embraced this text for the bracha. BTW, Rinat Yisrael siddur has NER CHANUKA. So does the GR"A siddur, Eizor Eliyahu. Koren siddur & ArtScroll have NER SHEL CHANUKA. So does T'filat Kol Peh. T'filat Yosef has (SHEL).

Candles for Shabbat are candles, in the sense that they produce light (which is their main function), heat, fire - just like "regular" candles. Therefore, the appropriate term for them is NER SHEL SHABBAT, candles of or for Shabbat. So too, SHEL YOM TOV and SHEL YOM HAKIPURIM. Chanuka candles are not "regular" candles. We are not allowed to use them - not their light nor heat nor fire. As we say, ELAH LIR-OTAM BILAVAD, (they are) exclusively to look at them, to see them. That's it. They are not candles that are being used for Chanuka. They're CHANUKA CANDLES.

[Here's a MASHAL... It's like the difference between the flowers one buys for his Shabbat table - here and outside Israel. In most other places of the world, one would go to a flower shop and buy flowers, using the flowers to honor Shabbat. They are flowers for Shabbat. But in Israel, one usually buys Shabbat flowers. They are flowers that are being sold for Shabbat by vendors who only sell flowers on Erev Shabbat and Chag. Same flowers, but different.]

Again, this is not meant to discredit referring to them in the bracha as NER SHEL CHANUKA. The gemara and many authorities since, have given the text as NER SHEL CHANUKA. The above was just meant to explain why other sources go for NER CHANUKA as the ending of the bracha. If you do, then you've got another nice DT to share with your family and guests.

Additionally, with NER CHANUKA, the first bracha has 13 words, corresponding to the 13 MIDOT of G-d's mercy. With the second bracha also having 13 words, the two brachot add to 26 words, 26 being the numeric value of HaShem's name. (NER CHANUKA and NER SHEL'CHANUKA both fit this numeric observation.)

INDOORS/OUTDOORS

The original place for lighting and displaying of the Chanukiya was outdoors at the entrance to one's home or courtyard.

Over many generations in exile, where lighting outdoors was inconvenient (weather-wise) to say the least, and often dangerous ("neighbors"), the practice evolved to light indoors.

In some circumstances, the lighting was to be done at a window, so that the candles would be visible to passersby in the street. In other cases, the Chanuka lights were lit in a conspicuous location for the attention of the members of the household, especially when it was dangerous to light at the window.

When lighting inside the home - for whatever reason - the one place that the Chanukiya should not be placed is where the Shabbat candles usually are. They need to be in an eye-catching, attention-grabbing location so they can serve their function of Publicizing the Miracles.

Many people who have come to Israel, still light inside, at the window, as they had been doing in their countries of origin. Others have gone back to the original practice of lighting outdoors, which is common in Israel - especially in Jerusalem.

When lighting outdoors, the candles are usually protected from getting blown out by being placed inside a fish-tank-like box, specifically made for that purpose.

If you are considering changing any aspect of your Chanuka candle lighting routine, (candle to oil or vice versa, sunset to stars-out or vice versa,

indoors to outdoors or vice versa, window to door or vice versa, boys and girls to boys only or vice versa, each family member to one for the family or vice versa...), you should consult a Rav.

AGAIN, we remind you... These pages should be considered a review of some - but not all - of the many Chanuka topics. Even when we've presented more than one opinion, there might be others that we haven't mentioned. We've said it often, but we repeat, it is best to consult your Rav to clear up any doubts you might have.

CANDLE LIGHTING

The following applies to

FIRST CANDLE: SUN, December 18th

SECOND CANDLE: MON, Dec 19th

THIRD CANDLE: TUE, Dec 20th

FOURTH CANDLE: WED, Dec 21st

FIFTH CANDLE: THU, Dec 22nd

Sixth candle - FRIDAY and seventh candle - MOTZA"SH are presented separately, see further on.

EIGHTH CANDLE: SUN, Dec 25th

In other words, the six nights of Chanuka that are neither Erev Shabbat nor Motza"Sh.

WHEN TO LIGHT

There are two opinions as to when is the ideal time to light Chanuka lights during the week (i.e. except for Friday and

Motza'ei Shabbat, when Shabbat affects the timing, as we will soon present).

Minhag Yerushalayim (which many, but not everyone in Jerusalem follow - and some outside Jerusalem do follow) is to light with the setting of the sun.

CONCERNING SUNSET...

In Yerushalayim, the custom is to calculate sunset taking into account the elevation of the city (about 800m above sea level). Most other locations use the sunset at sea level. You should check with your local rabbinate or religious council (or someone else who knows about these things), exactly what timings to use for Chanuka candles (and anything else that uses sunset as a beginning or ending point).

This year - 5783, Chanuka occurs at the time of year that sunset is just starting to get later and later. Times of sunset for Jerusalem, for the six nights of Chanuka listed above (not including Friday and Motza"sh lighting - sunset is not used - it is either to late or too early) sunsets are 4:44pm, 4:44pm, 4:44pm, 4:45pm, 4:45pm, and 4:47pm.

Other locations in Israel will vary from these times a few minutes earlier or later. If you need exact timing, check the internet or ask someone who knows the details. You might want to use 4:50pm as your lighting time.

Those who light with sunset should have already davened Mincha, and should subsequently daven Maariv at the

appropriate time, obviously after lighting candles.

THE OTHER OPINION

The "rest of the Jewish world" lights when the "light of the sun has left the sky", i.e. Stars-Out a.k.a. Tzeit HaKochavim.

CONCERNING TZEIT...

There are different opinions as to when Stars-Out occurs. Except for Friday (too late) and Motza'ei Shabbat (too early), the earlier times are available to use for candle lighting. The times of Stars-out can be as little as 13 minutes after sunset, 17 minutes, 20 minutes, 25 minutes. The Shabbat out time is about 35 minutes after sunset (in Israel; more as your location's latitude increases) and Rabbeinu Tam is 32 minutes later than that. Check with your Rav to fine-tune your stars-out Chanuka candle time. (Remember that Friday & Motza'ei Shabbat have different timing.)

Those who light with Stars-Out should light right after Maariv, unless they have a fixed time later in the evening for davening, in which case they can light before davening.

Stars-Out lighters should favor the earlier times for TZEIT (except, of course for Motza"Sh). 5:10pm might be a good time to strive for. (But after Maariv, as mentioned above.)

Remember: Customs vary.

UNTIL WHEN?

Candles must burn at least a half hour after stars-out. This was the original (in the time of the Gemara) time-period after dark that people were still around outdoors and it became the definition of the time range for PIRSUMEI NISA, publicizing the miracle.

Although in our day, people are out later than this time, the halacha only requires the half hour after stars-out.

However, it is recommended that one use longer candles or more oil to extend this time (somewhat), in recognition of the expansion of the current-day Pirsumei Nisa time-frame. We would further suggest that one's candles should stay lit at least a half hour after the latest stars-out time, (i.e. Rabbeinu Tam time). This is only a recommendation, not in any way meant to be a halachic ruling.

Again, using Jerusalem timing - adjust for other locations, as is necessary - the stars-out time for Shabbat-out is 5:18-5:22pm this year. That's a generously later TZEIT time, which we are suggesting because of the above point. Candles, then, should burn (every night of Chanuka) at least to 5:48-5:53pm, and 'somewhat more' will bring the time to around 6:00pm.

However, since Rabbeinu Tam's Stars-Out is 5:56-5:59pm during Chanuka week (this year), one might try to have his Chanuka lights burn at least until

6:30-ish. This is not a requirement, but it does acknowledge the different opinions concerning Stars-Out. Treat this - as mentioned earlier - as an off-the-record suggestion, especially in light of the reality that the Pirsumei Nisa time is later into the night today, than it was in the time of the Gemara.

HOW EARLY CAN ONE LIGHT?

When necessary, one may light as early as PLAG MINCHA (a halachic hour and a quarter before sunset). This is by no means preferable, but if circumstances are such that you have to light early - leaving town, and the like, then PLAG is the earliest.

For Jerusalem, 3:40pm should be the red line for early lighting (we added a few minutes). Remember, that the candles must burn until at least a half hour after stars-out, regardless of how early you light. Extra large candles or a lot of oil might be necessary to accomplish this, when lighting soon after PLAG.

Early is not so good, so the closer to sunset, the better.

SIXTH CANDLE: FRI, Dec 23rd

It is preferable to daven Mincha before lighting Chanuka candles, but one should not miss out on a minyan to daven before lighting.

Check if you have a Mincha Gedola minyan in a shul, courtyard, playground, parking lot... near you.

Chanuka candles should be lit BEFORE Shabbat candles - even if different people are lighting each. Count on 5-10 minutes before the posted Shabbat lighting time; adjust according to your household's experience. Save Ma'oz Tzur for the Shabbat table - it saves some time and also helps us bring Chanuka to the Shabbat Chanuka table.

IN JERUSALEM...

Many in Jerusalem light according to the regular timing, even though Shabbat candle lighting is 40 minutes before sunset.

Some follow the practice of delaying Shabbat candle lighting for 20 minutes or so and lighting Chanuka candles right before Shabbat candles.

For anywhere else, one should consult a Rav as to whether to stick to regular candle lighting time or earlier for just this one time.

Care should be taken when lighting early (as on Friday, but even during the week for a variety of reasons) to...

[1] Never light before PLAG mincha - use 3:40pm as the red line. Outside of Israel, the times are most likely to be different - a local calendar should definitely be consulted.

[2] Make sure the candles are long/fat enough - or that there is sufficient oil - to last the required amount of time after stars-out, and then some.

If Shabbat candles were inadvertently lit before Chanuka candles, then - if it is still before sunset, anyone who has not yet taken Shabbat, may light Chanuka candles. If there is any doubt as to whether the sun has set or not, candles should NOT be lit.

7th Candle: Motza"Sh, Dec 4

Candles for Motza'ei Shabbat should be set up from before Shabbat so as not to delay the Chanuka candle lighting any more than is necessitated by Shabbat. (This is not required by halacha, but it is a highly desirable thing to do, and it reflects a love and care for this mitzva.)

This year, since we will use 6 candles plus shamash for Friday and 7 candles plus shamash for Motza'ei Shabbat, you might consider setting up two Chanukiyot to prevent undo delay on Motza"Sh, which is praiseworthy since we light later than 'regular' because of Shabbat. Having your matches and helper candles close by, also cuts down on the delay. If not practical, have your candles or oil cups and matches available.

Many shuls will daven Maariv on Motza'ei Shabbat Chanuka earlier than usual (13-17 minutes after sunset is an acceptable Tzeit HaKochavim time for the reciting of the Sh'ma - even though Shabbat is not over yet). This allows people to get home closer to "right after Shabbat" and maximize the time that Chanuka candles will be lit during their "prime time". OBVIOUSLY, one cannot

light Chanuka candles - or even set them up - before Shabbat is out. But by having set up for Motza"sh on Friday, and by davening Maariv a little earlier, and by hurrying home, unnecessary delay can be avoided and the prime time for candles can be maximized.

WHICH GOES FIRST?

Havdala or Chanuka candles. This is a topic that bears yearly review because of how fuzzy our memories can sometimes be.

TWO MITZVOT TO PERFORM -

Havdala and Chanuka candles. By the rule of TADIR (that which is more frequent should be done first), havdala should be said first. And by logic, one should "finish" with Shabbat and then light candles for the next day of Chanuka, which is Sat. night and Sunday. Many authorities hold that on Motza'ei Shabbat, one should say havdala first and then light Chanuka candles. This opinion is followed by the majority of Chanuka-candle-lighting Jews all over the world. The Maharal (among others) is vehement in his insistence that we cannot possibly consider doing something so "week-day-ish" as lighting candles, unless we have first said havdala. He rejects any contrary arguments. Even if you want to point to the halachic permission we have on Motza'ei Shabbat to do certain things before havdala, provided, of course, it is after Shabbat time and we've either davened Maariv with ATA

CHONANTANU or at least said BARUCH HAMAVIDIL... - for example, answer the phone, with Chanuka candles the objection would be based on instituting candle lighting as a fixed yearly task before havdala. This first opinion objects to the formalizing of such a weekday activity before the havdala ceremony. And, as mentioned earlier - most Jews follow this opinion and say Havdala before lighting Chanuka candles on Motza"Sh.

ON THE OTHER HAND...

There is a strong argument for lighting Chanuka candles before havdala. First of all, Shabbat is over at the posted time) AND when one has said Havdala in davening (ATA CHONANTANU in the Maariv Amida) OR at least said BARUCH HAMAVIDIL BEIN KODESH L'CHOL. The Havdala with wine, spices, candle, is NOT what ends Shabbat - it is what honors the departing Shabbat (and permits eating and drinking). Even so, havdala should go first, except for one very important factor: The prime time (and according to some opinions, the only time) for Chanuka candles is ticking away - namely, the first half-hour after dark. We cannot, of course, light Chanuka candles when it is still Shabbat. But we should maximize the portion of time of the "half-hour after" once we are allowed to light. Havdala will wait; Chanuka candles will not.

Therefore, the OTHER opinion is that Chanuka candles go first and then

havdala. Remember: Shabbat must be over - both with time and havdala words - before one may light Chanuka candles.

And this procedure comes with the additional reminder not to use the Chanuka candles for havdala (or even to light the havdala candle from one of the Chanuka candle), since one may not benefit from the Chanuka lights, and the bracha in havdala is specifically upon using the light (examining of fingernails, etc.). Chanuka candles first is the opinion of the Vilna Gaon and others, and is Minhag Yerushalayim. (Remember that not everyone in Yerushalayim follows the practices known as Minhag Yerushalayim and some people elsewhere do.)

SO WHICH IS IT?

This dispute is one of the few in halacha that is resolved in this way: D'AVAD K'MAR AVAD UD-AVAD K'MAR AVAD. "Whichever opinion you follow, you have performed correctly." Either procedure may be followed. Family and community custom should play a deciding role in this issue. Again, a Rav should be consulted, especially if one is considering a change of his/her practice.

Some add that those who light outdoors should follow the custom of lighting before havdala. Those who light indoors can take their pick.

REMEMBER: Shabbat is paramount. In case of doubt as to whether Shabbat is being encroached upon, one should

NOT light Chanuka candles yet. It must be DEFINITELY after Shabbat before lighting. But one should not unnecessarily delay the fulfillment of the mitzva of Chanuka candles.

A note for Rabeinu Tam people:

Those who end Shabbat throughout the year 72 minutes after sunset and consider it to be the correct halachic time, must keep it on Motza'ei Shabbat Chanuka, even though it means losing "prime time" for Chanuka candles.

Those who hold Rabeinu Tam as a CHUMRA (a strict measure, a way of extending Shabbat, but consider the earlier time as halachic), may end Shabbat earlier on Motza'Sh Chanuka, in order to fulfill the mitzva of Chanuka candles at their better time. Check this out with your Rav if you are not sure what to do.

IN SHUL, by the way, it is the universal practice to light Chanuka candles before saying havdala, this to maximize Pirsumei Nisa in a situation where everyone present will be leaving for home shortly.

At home, people will still be there for the Chanuka candles, so there is no need to light before havdala (according to those who follow the first opinion).

A NICE TOUCH... Those who say havdala first can light the Shamash for the Chanuka candles with the havdala candle before extinguishing it, thus

dovetailing the two mitzvot.

Those who follow the second opinion can light the havdala candle from the Shamash (not one of the Chanuka candles), thereby dovetailing one mitzva into another.

On Motza'ei Shabbat, when we light after Stars-Out, it is sufficient for the candles to burn for half an hour. Still, it is preferable that they last longer. This has to do with the fact that in our time, people are out in the streets later than in times past and Pirsumei Nisa (publicizing the miracle) applies later than the original "half-hour after stars-out" (according to most opinions).

MORE ON (WEEKDAY) TIMING...

If, because of one's work or travel schedule, one has to choose between lighting early or late, or between lighting early or appointing someone to light for you in your home at the proper time, or between lighting late and appointing someone to light for you at the proper time - one should consult a Rav for a p'sak based on how early and how late, and any other relevant factors.

Sometimes a less-than-perfect performance of a mitzva is a fine, acceptable "second best". Sometimes, not. Lighting Chanuka candles early or late is a poor second, at best (except when Shabbat insists on early or late, depending upon which end of Shabbat is at issue).

Lighting early lacks an element of Pirsumei Nisa at the time of lighting -

which is when the mitzva is performed - because a candle flame is not eye-catching during full daylight.

Lighting late is not so great because of the time-period for Pirsumei Nisa from the days of the Gemara remains the optimum time (and some say the ONLY time) for the fulfillment of the mitzva.

Although we follow other opinions, and basically allow lighting any time of the night, it is far less than ideal to light late. A "good" excuse is okay, but not great.

One should consult a Rav especially for recurring situations, such as coming home late from work or school, and the like. Remember that having someone light for you in your home is a valid alternative to your lighting for yourself, and sometimes it is even the preferred alternative. Ask your Rav.

OTHER MATTERS...

Many shuls sing L'CHA DODI to the tune of MA'OZ TZUR on Leil Shabbat Chanuka. And, of course, at the table, there are many Chanuka songs to add to your usual Friday night and Shabbat day repertoire of Z'mirot and songs. Remember, although Chanuka does not require a SEUDAT MITZVA, any meal (especially, but not only, on Shabbat) with songs, stories, and relevant Divrei Torah becomes a special Chanuka Seudat Mitzva.

**We say Full Hallel
on all 8 days of Chanuka**

CHANUKA TORAH READING

Torah reading for Chanuka is from Parshat Naso, Bamidbar 7 (known as Parshat HaN'si'im) and the beginning of Bamidbar 8 (beginning of B'haalot'cha). It is the portion of the Torah that tells of the dedication (CHANUKA) of the Mishkan (and Mizbei'ach) during the time of Moshe Rabeinu and the generation that came out of Egypt. On Chanuka, we celebrate the rededication of the Beit HaMikdash during the time of the Chashmona'im - hence the choice of Torah reading.

Furthermore, we have sources that say that the original Mishkan was ready to be put in service on the 25th of Kislev, but the inauguration of the Mishkan was held over to Rosh Chodesh Nissan in honor of Yizchak Avinu who was born in Nissan. So reading about the dedication of the Mishkan is perfectly appropriate for our Chanuka, which begins on 25 Kislev.

On "regular" days of Chanuka, one Torah is read from; three people are called to the Torah. On Rosh Chodesh (that is a weekday - Sunday this year), two Torahs are read from; four Aliyot (3+1). On Shabbat Chanuka this year, we use three Sifrei Torah - see further.

FIRST DAY OF CHANUKA

Mon, 25 Kislev - December 19

On each day of Chanuka, the portion of the Nasi (tribal leader) of the day will be read.

On the first day, the reading starts with the introduction to Chanukat HaMizbei'ach (the dedication of the Altar/Mishkan) and continues to include the day one Nasi of Yehuda (Nachshon b. Aminadav). For the first Aliya, we read the 11-pasuk intro with the allocation of wagons and oxen to the Levi families for carrying the parts of the dismantled Mishkan (except for K'hat, who carry the sacred vessels on their shoulders).

Some communities begin with the 6-pasuk portion of Birkat Kohanim which immediately precedes parshat HaNesi'im. This is appropriate because the battles and dedication of the Second Beit HaMikdash, which we celebrate with Chanuka, were done by the Kohein family of Chashmona'im.

The portion of Yehuda's Nachshon b. Aminadav is made up of 6 p'sukim, which are divided between the second and the third Aliyot.

SECOND DAY OF CHANUKA

Tue, 26 Kislev - Dec 20th

The 6-pasuk portion of Yissachar's Netanel b. Tzu'ar is read. First half (3 p'sukim) for the Kohein, second half (3 p'ukim) for a Levi, and the full 6 p'sukim are repeated for the Yisrael. (In Chutz La'Aretz, instead of repeating the 6 verses of day, the following day's portion is read for the third Aliya.)

Zevulun is odd; Gad is triangular, Levi is square - how many candles does each one need for Chanuka? (incl. Shamashim)

THIRD DAY OF CHANUKA

Wed, 27 Kislev - Dec 21st

One Torah, 3 people. The 6-pasuk portion of Zevulun's Eliav b. Cheilon is read. Same pasuk breakdown as the 2nd day: 3 + 3 + all 6 repeated.

FOURTH DAY OF CHANUKA

Thu, 28 Kislev - Dec 22nd

One Torah, 3 people. The 6-pasuk portion of Reuven's Elitzur b. Sh'dei-ur is read. Same pasuk breakdown as the 2nd day: 3 + 3 + all 6 repeated.

FIFTH DAY OF CHANUKA

Fri, 29 Kislev - Dec 23rd

One Torah, 3 people. The 6-pasuk portion of Shimon's Sh'lumiel b. Tzuri-shadai is read. Same pasuk breakdown as the 2nd day: 3 + 3 + all 6 repeated.

SHABBAT CHANUKA

6th day, 30 Kislev - Dec 24th

First day of Rosh Chodesh

A 3-Torah Shabbat!

Three possibilities for what is read on Shabbat Chanuka. The most common is only Mikeitz (71½% of the time). When Chanuka is Shabbat to Shabbat, we read Vayeishev on the first Shabbat Chanuka, and Mikeitz on the second one (18.4%). Rarest is when Chanuka is Friday to Friday, in which case only Vayeishev is Shabbat Chanuka and Mikeitz is the day after Chanuka (10.1%).

Way before there was Chanuka

The Gemara in Masechet Avoda Zara tells us that when Adam HaRishon noticed that the day was getting shorter and shorter (as winter approached), he said: Woe unto me, perhaps because I sinned (by eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil), the world is getting darker and darker and is returning to TOHU VAVOHU (chaos and nothingness), and this is the death for me declared by Heaven. He stood (decided) and sat for 8 days in fasting and prayer. When he noticed that the days were beginning to get longer after T'kufat Tevet (the winter solstice), he said, this is the way of the world. He went and made an 8-day holiday. The following year, he made both 8-day periods into holidays. He acted for the sake of Heaven, but they (future generations) turn them (the mid-winter holidays) towards paganism and idolatry.

That's the Gemara. Here's an added thought...Adam HaRishon established an 8-day holiday in the middle of the winter, when the days begin to get longer. Pagans and idolaters perverted Adam's sincere motives with their mid-winter holidays.

More than 3600 years after Adam's holiday, the Chashmona'im declared an 8-day mid-winter holiday, for the sake of Heaven, to thank G-d for victories and miracles... and perhaps to restore Adam's original celebration, that for so long had lost its way, to the original goal of thanking the One G-d. Gives you something to think about (and another DT for one of the nights).

In the first Torah, this year, we read Parshat Mikeitz. We call six people to the Torah and we complete the sedra by combining SHISHI and SH'VI'I to make SHISHI for this Shabbat.

In the second Torah, we read the Shabbat & Rosh Chodesh reading from Parshat Pinchas. This aliya is SH'VI'I.

In the third Torah (after Chatzi Kaddish), we read Maftir for Chanuka, namely, the 6-pasuk portion of Gad's Elyasaf b. D'u'el.

The HAFTARAH, which is exactly the same as the one for Parshat B'haalo-t'cha, is from the book of Zecharia and includes the description of a vision of a golden Menora.

It ends with a message that is as fresh today as it ever has been. "Not through armies and not through might , but through My (HaShem's) spirit..."

Yes, we need an army, and tanks and planes, etc. etc. But our ultimate and foolproof weapon against our enemies is the spirit of G-d, which we are granted when we remain faithful to Him, keep His Torah and Mitzvot, and live by His values. We merit victory via faithfulness in HaShem and our efforts.

At Mincha of Shabbat Chanuka, we read the first part of Parshat Vayigash.

SEVENTH DAY OF CHANUKA **Sun, 1 Tevet - December 25th**

Two Torahs read from. To the first one



Here are some AL HANISIM words to pay attention to:

chash-mo-NAI (totally silent ALEF)

k'she-a-M'DA (not am-da)

a-M'CHA (not am-cha)

a-MAD-ta (not a-ma-d'ta)

RAV-ta, DAN-ta, na-KAM-ta, ma-SAR-ta - all mil'eil accent

o-S'KEI (not os-kei)

lid-VIR (not l'd'vir even though the word without the prefixed LAMED is D'VIR, here the LAMED takes the DALET to it making the first syllable LID and the second syllable VIR gets the accent)

v'ka-V'U (not v'kav-u)

ul-ha-LEIL (not u-l'ha-leil)

Paying more attention to these words will slow down our AL HANISIM but will give us a chance to better thank G-d for all of the miracles and victories He has wrought.

And since the whole AMIDA is full of similar words to pay attention to, the result can be a slower, better pronounced and better understood davening.

In brachot #2 and #3 for the candles:

ba-Z'MAN (not baz-man)

la-Z'MAN (not laz-man)

we call three people for the Rosh Chodesh reading from Parshat Pinchas. (We don't need to repeat a pasuk or two as we would on just a weekday Rosh Chodesh.)

In the second Torah, we read the portion of the tribal leader of the day. That would be Gad's Elyasaf b. D'u'el. Total number of Aliyot is 4, as for every Rosh Chodesh (& Chol HaMoed).

EIGHTH DAY OF CHANUKA **a.k.a. ZOT CHANUKA** **Mon, 2 Tevet - December 26th**

First and second Aliyot split the Nasi's portion of the 8th day, Gamliel b. P'datzur of Menashe.

For the third Aliya, we read the portions of days 9, 10, 11, and 12, and then the summary of the gifts from all twelve days, and then the first part of B'haalot'cha, the portion of the Menora. The name ZOT CHANUKA comes from the Torah reading - and for another reason - see the following.

This is Chanuka!

Yes, we call the 8th day, ZOT CHANUKA because the Torah reading of that day has the phrase ZOT CHANUKAT HAMIZBEI'ACH. That would explain "This is Chanuka", but there is more to it than that. We need to explain the ""

We sing in Ma'oz Tzur: B'NEI VINA Y'MEI SH'MONA, KAV-U SHIR URNANIM - Men of deep understanding established 8

days for joyous celebration.

It does not take "deep understanding" to make an 8-day holiday because a miracle lasted 8 days. And if it lasted 5 days or 12 days? How long would Chanuka be?

The Greek oppression was designed to take us away from Torah. Banning Shabbat, Torah learning, other mitzvot... that was the Greek's plan.

There was one part of their challenge to Judaism that wasn't based 'merely' on attempting to strip us of that which makes us different. It was a serious philosophical issue. The Greeks venerated the human body and considered it a mutilation of that body to be circumcised. They banned Mila under penalty of death partly because that made us different, but partly because they actually considered Mila highly offensive (there's probably a better word).

Our Sages, men of BINA, deep understanding, created an 8-day holiday to make the statement that Mila is that which G-d commanded us to complete the human form and raise us to greater spiritual heights. The development of lighting one the first night and counting to 8, says to the world, ZOT CHANUKA, this is what Chanuka means. We are still here. The Greeks are gone. Thank G-d!

Chanuka Mon-Mon (like this year) is the most common situation (27.9%). Followed by Wed-Wed and Shab to Shab (22%, 18.4%). Sun-Sun, Thu-Thu, Fri-Fri (11.5-10.0%). Tue-Tue, not in our calendar.

Here are some Chanuka challenges that can be fun at a family party or get-together (or by yourself)

Take the 8-letter word **MIRACLES** and see how many words of three letters or more you can make from its letters.

Differently, see how many anagrams you can make from **MIRACLES**, such as RICE SLAM

Start with the word 'A'. Add one letter at a time and make a new word - you can scramble the letters. Next make a 3-letter word by adding another letter. Continue until the 8th word is **MIRACLES**. You should end up with a list of 8 words, increasing in number of letters from 1 to 8.

CHANUKA GELT: Challenge your Chanuka gelt intended recipients with this challenge. I want to give you two shekels. How can I do it with 8 coins? So too with 5, 10, 18 shekels - and - different numbers of coins - whatever you plan on giving. Make your children or grandchildren work a little for it. Remember, Chanuka fun is the goal - not frustration. So go easy when that is called for.

As a group game, you can sit around in a circle, spin a dreidel and when it "lands", each player tries to be the first to call out a Chanuka word beginning with that letter. Do a couple of rounds for Chanuka words, and then call out a different category. Animals, fruits, items of clothing, parts of the body, and so on. If you find it too hard with only the NUN, GIMEL, HEI, and PEI, you can add the letters of the words they each represent: NUN includes NUN and SAMACH for NEIS. GIMEL is also DALET, VAV, and LAMED. Etc. For one or more rounds, you can have the spinner sing a song beginning with that letter.

Use the numbers 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 in order, with the four basic arithmetic symbols [+ , - , * , ÷ , parentheses, when necessary] - you can also concatenate numbers - that is, put 1 and 2 together to form 12 - to form expressions that equal 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. For example: $(12 \div 3 - 4) \times 5678 = 0$. We didn't ask for zero, but this is how you can get it. Your challenge is to form the numbers 1 through 8. You can set other goals to extend the challenge. Those goals can be any numbers at all, of they can be Chanuka related. 36 or 44, for example. Connection? Total number of candles - without or with Shamash. 89 or 83? Gimatriya of Chanuka, with or without the VAV.

CHANUKA CANDLE LIGHTING

KAVANA: One should have in mind to fulfill the Rabbinic Mitzva (with Torah backing) of **NER CHANUKA** plus the **HIDUR MITZVA** of the extra candles (each night after the first).

One should acknowledge G-d and thank Him for the Chanuka miracles in particular, and for all His miracles and kindnesses in general.

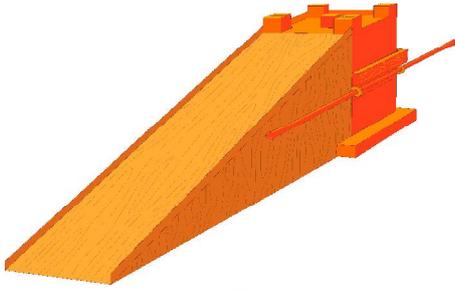
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר (שֶׁל) חֲנֻכָּה.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמַּן הַזֶּה.

On the first night add

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהִחַיֵּנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמַּן הַזֶּה.

הַנִּרְוֹת הַלָּלוּ אֲנַחְנוּ (or אָנוּ) מִדְּלִיקִים עַל הַנִּסִּים וְעַל
הַנִּפְלְאוֹת וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת וְעַל הַמְּלַחְמוֹת, שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ
לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמַּן הַזֶּה, עַל יְדֵי כְּהֻנֵּיךָ
הַקְּדוֹשִׁים. וְכָל שְׂמוֹנֵת יָמֵי חֲנֻכָּה הַנִּרְוֹת הַלָּלוּ קִדְּשׁ
הֵם, וְאֵין לָנוּ רִשׁוּת לְהִשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בָּהֶם, אֲלֵא לְרִאוֹתָם
בְּלָבָד, כְּדֵי לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְהַלֵּל לְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל עַל נִסֶּיךָ וְעַל
נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְעַל יְשׁוּעָתֶךָ.



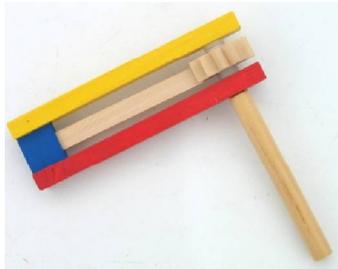
מעוז צור ישועתי לך נאה לשבח,
תכון בית תפילתי ושם תודה נזבח,
לעת תכין מטבח מצר המנבח,
אז אגמר בשיר מזמור חנכת המזבח.



רעות שבעה נפשי ביגון כחי כלה,
חיי מררו בקשי בשעבוד מלכות עגלה,
ובידו הגדולה הוציא את הסגלה,
חיל פרעה וכל זרעו ירדו כאבן במצולה.



דביר קדשו הביאני וגם שם לא שקטתי,
ובא נוגש והגלני, כי זרים עבדתי,
ויין רעל מסכתי כמעט שעברתי,
קץ בכל, זרבבל, לקץ שבעים נושעתי.



כרת קומת ברוש בקש אגגי בן המדתא,
ונהיתה לו לפח ולמוקש וגאותו נשבתה,
ראש ימיני נשאת, ואויב שמו מחית,
רב בניו וקניניו על העץ תלית.



יונים נקבצו עלי אזי בימי חשמנים,
ופרצו חומות מגדלי וטמאו כל השמנים,
ומנותר קנקנים נעשה נס לשושנים,
בני בינה ימי שמונה קבעו שיר ורננים.

השוף זרוע גדשך וקרב קץ הישועה,
נקם נקמת דם עבדיך מאמה הרשעה,
כי ארכה לנו הישועה, ואין קץ לימי הרעה,
דחה אדמון בצל צלמון הקם לנו רועים שבעה.

SHIR SHEL YOM FOR CHANUKA

According to MINHAG YERUSHALAYIM (MY - mostly based on minhagim of the GR"A, brought to Eretz Yisrael by his students and followers over 200 years ago), there is a special chapter of T'hilim said on each day of Chanuka (Ps.30) which preempts the regular Shir shel Yom. That is, except for Shabbat. Shabbat's perek, 92, is said on Shabbat Chanuka, not 30. The chapter for Rosh Chodesh (104) also trumps that of Chanuka (and even that of Shabbat, when they coincide). The chart covers all possible arrangements of Chanuka in our fixed calendar. For this year, 5783, use the row marked with the pointing finger.

code	%	total	🕯	🕯	🕯	🕯	🕯	🕯	🕯	🕯
פבח מבח	5.7 5.8	11.5%	SUN 30	MON 30	TUE 30	WED 30	THU 30	FRI 104	מקץ 92	SUN 30
פבש מבש פגכ מגכ	11.8 4.7 6.2 5.2	27.9%	MON 30	TUE 30	WED 30	THU 30	FRI 30	מקץ 104	SUN 104	MON 30
פהכ	18.1	22.0	WED 30	THU 30	FRI 30	מקץ 92	SUN 30	MON 104	TUE 104	WED 30
מהח	3.9	%	WED 30	THU 30	FRI 30	מקץ 92	SUN 30	MON 104	TUE 30	WED 30
פהש מהש	3.3 6.7	10.0%	THU 30	FRI 30	מקץ 92	SUN 30	MON 30	TUE 104	WED 104	THU 30
פזח מזח	4.3 5.8	10.1%	FRI 30	וישב 92	SUN 30	MON 30	TUE 30	WED 104	THU 30	FRI 30
פזש מזש	13.7 4.7	18.4%	וישב 92	SUN 30	MON 30	TUE 30	WED 30	THU 104	FRI 104	מקץ 92

NOTE:

Example: Those who follow Minhag Yerushalayim, will say only Psalm 30 on the first day of Chanuka. They will not say the Psalm for Monday. However, according to Ramban (and others), referring to Monday as YOM SHEINI B'SHABBAT is a fulfillment of ZACHOR ET YOM HASHABBAT L'KAD'SHO, Remember the Shabbat day to sanctify it. Therefore, those who follow MY, should also declare each day (without the day's Psalm):

HAYOM YOM so-and-so B'SHABBAT

T'hilim 30 is the introduction to P'sukei D'Zimra (or the bridge between Korbanot and P'sukei D'Zimra) and is said by some not only at the end of Shacharit on Chanuka, but also at the end of Maariv and/or at candle-lighting. (FYI - According to the GR"A, it is not said every day before ברוך שאמר; only on Chanuka.) This year, we say it on Friday Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

מְזֻמָּר שִׁיר חֲנֻכַּת הַבַּיִת לְדָוִד: אַרְוֹמְמֶךָ ה' כִּי דָלִיתָנִי, וְלֹא שִׁמְחָתָ אִיבֵי לִי: ה' אֱלֹהֵי, שְׁוַעַתִּי אֵלֶיךָ וַתִּרְפָּאֵנִי: ה' הֶעֱלִיתָ מִן שְׂאוֹל נַפְשִׁי, חֵייתָנִי מִיַּרְדֵי בּוֹר: זָמְרוּ לַה' חֲסִידָיו, וְהוֹדוּ לְזִכְרֵךָ קְדָשׁוֹ: כִּי רָגַע בְּאֵפוֹ, חַיִּים בְּרִצּוֹנוֹ, בְּעָרַב יָלִין בְּכִי, וְלִבְּקָר רָנָה: וְאֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי בְשִׁלוֹי, כֹּל אָמוּט לְעוֹלָם: ה' בְּרִצּוֹנְךָ הֶעֱמַדְתָּה לְהַרְרֵי עֵז, הַסְתַּרְתָּ פְּנֶיךָ, הָיִיתִי נִבְהָל: אֵלֶיךָ ה' אֶקְרָא, וְאֵל אֲדֹנָי אֶתְחַנֵּן: מַה בָּצַע בְּדַמִּי, בְּרַדְתִּי אֶל שַׁחַת, הַיּוֹדֵךְ עֶפֶר הַיְגִיד אֶמְתֶּךָ: שְׁמַע ה' וְחַנּוּנִי, ה' הִיָּה עֵזֶר לִי: הַפְּכֵת מִסִּפְדֵי לְמַחֹל לִי, פִּתְחֵת שִׁקִּי וַתִּאֲזַרְנִי שְׂמֻחָה: לְמַעַן יִזְמְרֶךָ כְּבוֹד וְלֹא יָדָם, ה' אֱלֹהֵי לְעוֹלָם אֲוֹדֶךָ:

Psalm 92: For Shabbat Chanuka, when it's not also R"Ch
(some say this even on Shabbat Rosh Chodesh, in addition to Ps. 104)

הַיּוֹם יוֹם שַׁבַּת קָדֵשׁ, שְׁבוּ הָיוּ הַלְוִיִּם אוֹמְרִים בְּבֵית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ:

מְזֻמָּר שִׁיר לְיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת: טוֹב לְהַדוֹת לַה' וּלְזַמֵּר לְשִׁמְךָ עֲלִיּוֹן: לְהַגִּיד בְּבִקְרָה חֲסִדְךָ וְאַמוּנָתְךָ בְּלִילוֹת: עָלִי עֲשׂוֹר וְעָלִי נָבֵל עָלִי הַגִּיּוֹן בְּכִנּוֹר: כִּי שִׁמְחָתָנִי ה' בְּפַעֲלֶךָ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יָדֶיךָ אֲרַנֵּן: מַה גָּדְלוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ ה' מְאֹד עָמְקוּ מַחְשַׁבְתֶּיךָ: אִישׁ בְּעַר לֹא יֵדַע וּכְסִיל לֹא יִבִּין אֶת זֹאת: בְּפֶרֶחַ רִשְׁעִים כְּמוֹ עֵשֶׂב וַיִּצְיָצוּ כָּל פְּעָלֵי אֹן לְהַשְׁמַדָּם עַד־עַד: וְאַתָּה מְרוֹם לְעֵלָם ה': כִּי הִנֵּה אִיבֵיךָ ה' כִּי הִנֵּה אִיבֵיךָ יֵאבְדוּ יִתְפָּרְדּוּ כָּל פְּעָלֵי אֹן: וַתֵּרֶם כְּרָאִים קִרְנֵי בִלְתִּי בְשֶׁמֶן רַעֲנָן: וַתִּבֵּט עֵינַי בְּשׁוּרֵי בְקָמִים עָלִי מְרַעִים תִּשְׁמַעְנָה אֲזֹנָי: צְדִיק כִּתְמָר יִפְרַח כְּאֶרֶז בְּלִבְנוֹן יִשְׁגָה: שְׁתוּלִים בְּבֵית ה' בְּחִצְרוֹת אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִפְרִיחוּ: עוֹד יִנוּבוּן בְּשִׁיבָה דְשָׁנִים וְרַעֲנָנִים יִהְיוּ: לְהַגִּיד כִּי יִשָּׂר ה' צוּרֵי וְלֹא עוֹלָתָה בּוֹ.

Psalm 104: Rosh Chodesh Tevet - This year, Shabbat & Sunday

בְּרָכִי נַפְשִׁי אֶת ה', ה' אֱלֹהֵי גְדֻלַּת מָאד הוֹד וְהִדְר לְבִשְׁתָּ: עֹטָה אוֹר
כְּשִׁלְמָה נוֹטָה שָׁמַיִם כִּירִיעָה: הַמְקָרָה בַּמַּיִם עֲלִיּוֹתָיו הַשָּׁם עֲבִים
רְכוּבוֹ הַמְהִלָּךְ עַל כַּנְפֵי רוּחַ: עֲשֵׂה מְלֹאכְיוֹ רוּחוֹת מְשַׁרְתָּיו אֲשֶׁר לֵהִט:
יִסַּד אֶרֶץ עַל מְכוּנָיָהּ בַּל תִּמּוּט עוֹלָם וָעֶד: תְּהוֹם כְּלָבוּשׁ כִּסִּיתוֹ, עַל
הָרִים יַעֲמְדוּ מַיִם: מִן גְּעַרְתָּךְ יְנוֹסוּן מִן קוֹל רַעֲמָךְ יִחַפְּזוּן: יַעֲלוּ הָרִים
יִרְדוּ בְקָעוֹת, אֶל מְקוֹם זֶה יִסְדַּת לָהֶם: גְּבוּל שְׁמֵתָ בַּל יַעֲבְרוּן בַּל
יִשְׁבוּן לְכִסּוֹת הָאָרֶץ: הַמְשַׁלַּח מַעֲיָנִים בַּנְּחָלִים בֵּין הָרִים יִהְלִכוּן: יִשְׁקוּ
כָּל חֵיתוֹ שְׂדֵי יִשְׁבְּרוּ פְּרָאִים צְמָאִם: עֲלִיהֶם עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׁכּוּן מִבֵּין
עֲפָאִים יִתְנוּ קוֹל: מִשְׁקָה הָרִים מַעֲלִיּוֹתָיו מִפְּרִי מַעֲשֵׂיךָ תִּשְׁבַּע הָאָרֶץ:
מִצְמִיחַ חֲצִיר לְבַהֲמָה וְעֵשֶׂב לְעִבְדַת הָאָדָם לְהוֹצִיא לָחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ: וַיִּין
יִשְׁמַח לֵבֵב אָנוּשׁ לְהַצְהִיל פָּנִים מִשֶּׁמֶן וְלָחֶם לֵבֵב אָנוּשׁ יִסְעֵד: יִשְׁבְּעוּ
עֲצֵי ה' אֲרָזֵי לְבָנוֹן אֲשֶׁר נָטַע: אֲשֶׁר שָׁם צִפְרִים יִקְנְנוּ חֲסִידָה בְּרוּשִׁים
בֵּיתָה: הָרִים הַגְּבֹהִים לִיעֲלִים סִלְעִים מַחֲסֵה לְשִׁפְנִים: עֲשֵׂה יָרַח
לְמוֹעֲדִים שֶׁמֶשׁ יָדַע מְבוֹאוֹ: תִּשְׁתַּחֲשֹׁךְ וַיְהִי לַיְלָה בּוֹ תִרְמַשׁ כָּל חֵיתוֹ
יַעַר: הַכְּפִירִים שֹׁאֲגִים לְטָרֵף וּלְבִקֵּשׁ מֵאֵל אֲכָלָם: תִּזְרַח הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ יֵאֲסַפּוּן
וְאֵל מְעוֹנָתָם יִרְבְּצוּן: יֵצֵא אָדָם לְפַעֲלוֹ וּלְעִבְדוֹתוֹ עֲדֵי עָרֵב: מָה רַבּוֹ
מַעֲשֵׂיךָ ה' כָּלֵם בְּחַכְמָה עֲשִׂיתָ מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ קִנְיָנְךָ: זֶה הַיָּם גְּדוֹל וּרְחֹב
יָדָיִם, שָׁם רָמַשׁ וְאִין מִסְפָּר חֵיּוֹת קִטְנוֹת עִם גְּדֻלוֹת: שָׁם אֲנִיּוֹת יִהְלִכוּן
לְוִיתָן זֶה יִצְרַת לְשַׁחֵק בּוֹ: כָּלֵם אֲלֶיךָ יִשְׁבְּרוּן לְתַת אֲכָלָם בְּעֵתוֹ: תִּתֵּן
לָהֶם יִלְקִטוּן תִּפְתַּח יָדְךָ יִשְׁבְּעוּן טוֹב: תִּסְתִּיר פָּנֶיךָ יִבְהַלּוּן תִּסְף רוּחָם
יִגּוּעוּן וְאֵל עֲפָרָם יִשׁוּבוּן: תִּשְׁלַח רוּחְךָ יִבְרָאוּן וּתִחַדֵּשׁ פָּנֵי אֲדָמָה: יְהִי
כְבוֹד ה' לְעוֹלָם יִשְׁמַח ה' בְּמַעֲשָׂיו: הַמְבִיט לְאָרֶץ וּתְרַעַד יִגַּע בְּהָרִים
וַיַּעֲשֶׂנוּ: אֲשִׁירָה לָהּ בְּחַיֵּי אֲזַמְרָה לֵאלֹהֵי בְעוֹדֵי: יַעֲרֹב עָלָיו שִׁיחֵי
אֲנֹכִי אֲשִׁמַּח בָּהּ: יִתְמוּ חַטָּאִים מִן הָאָרֶץ וּרְשָׁעִים עוֹד אֵינָם בְּרָכִי
נַפְשִׁי אֶת ה' הַלְלוּיָהּ:

Note: Many do not follow the One-Psalm-a-Day custom of MY. Some will add the Chanuka Psalm (and Rosh Chodesh Psalm) to the regular Psalm of the day.

PONDER THIS...

The Rambam, in Hilchot Megila v'Chanuka, devotes chapters 3 and 4 to Chanuka. In the first 'halacha' of Perek Gimel, he writes:

During (the time of) the second Beit HaMikdash, when Greece ruled (over Eretz Yisrael), they decreed (harsh) decrees upon Israel (the Jewish People), (attempted to) nullify their religion, did not allow them to study Torah or practice Mitzvot, plundered their possessions and their daughters, and entered the Mikdash - caused damage, defiled the pure, and pained Israel greatly and put tremendous pressure on them - until the G-d of their fathers took pity on them and saved them, and strengthened the sons of Chashmonai the Kohanim, and restored kingship to Israel for more than 200 years, until the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash.

But that's not the whole story. Read on...

(The following is based on Binizri's Seder HaDorot HaKatzar)

The Chanuka miracles occurred in 3622 (138^{BCE}).

For a period of 26 years from then, no foreign nation ruled in Israel, however, the battles of the Maccabees against the Greeks continued.

After these 26 years, the Romans gradually increased their control over Eretz Yisrael. This gradual increase in Roman power continued for 180 years, until the Churban.

Yehuda HaMakabi ruled for six years, until he was killed - after having killed 15,000 Greek soldiers.

Yehonatan ruled for six further years.

Then Shimon ruled for 8 years. He and his wife were killed by their son-in-law Ptolemy, Macedonian ruler of Egypt. Two of their sons were taken captive - one was killed and the other escaped...

Yochanan Hyrcanus Yanai ruled after his father Shimon... killed many of the elders of Israel...

So what are we pondering?

The second Beit HaMikdash was a pale shadow of the first one - spiritually. The Jewish population in Eretz Yisrael at the time was, sadly, a small minority of the greater Jewish population.

And, as you have just reviewed, the victory of the Chashmona'im was nowhere near the "and they lived happily ever after" ending that the kindergarten version of the Chanuka story implies.

Not even 200 years. Not even a smooth 26 years. A totally rocky period that got progressively worse and worse.

And yet...

B'nei Vina (as we sing in Ma'oz Tzur) - men of deep understanding, saw fit to establish a joyous 8-day holiday with full Hallel and more, to thank HKB"H for what we got - a renewed dedication to Torah and Mitzvot and the chance to continue to grow spiritually. They taught us to be thankful, even if the glass is not full yet.

Towards Knowing Our Calendar

The first 5 days of Chanuka each can fall on any of 6 days of the week.

The 25th of Kislev cannot be on a Tuesday; all other days are possible.

It follows that the 26th cannot fall on a Wednesday, the 27th cannot fall on a Thursday, the 28th cannot fall on a Friday, and the 29th cannot fall on a Shabbat.

The 30th of Kislev (which there is most years, like this one, 5783) can fall on 4 different days of the week. 30 Kislev is LO ADU, but not linked to the 295 calendar dates that are in the LO ADU ROSH pattern.

The last days of Chanuka (and all of Tevet) can fall on 5 days. First day of Tevet cannot be Thursday or Shabbat. 2 Tevet cannot be Friday or Sunday. And 3 Tevet (which is sometimes Zot Chanuka, but not this year) cannot be Shabbat or Monday.

Happy Birthday Tal Yadid!

The 6th day of Chanuka is ALWAYS Rosh Chodesh. The seventh is sometimes (like this year) but not always.

On a related matter: The only Nasi that is never read on Shabbat is Sh'lumiel, which, Dr. Avshalom Kur suggests, might be an origin of the Yiddish word Shlemiel.

The culmination of the confrontation between Eliyahu HaNavi and the false prophets of Baal was an open miracle wherein the sacrifice to G-d offered by Eliyahu was consumed by divine fire, even though it and the altar had been doused and saturated with water. The people's reaction was a clear declaration of commitment to G-d:

HASHEM HU HA-ELOKIM,
HASHEM HU HA-ELOKIM.

These stirring words share a gimatriya with NEIS GADOL HAYA PO

This Gimatriya Match serves as a numeric pointer to the concept of B'CHOL DOR VADOR... in every generation...



More Chanuka Fun

Take the Hebrew ALEF-BET or the English alphabet (or both) and see if you can come up with a Chanuka-related word for each letter. ALEF and/or A is for Antiochus, BET and/or B is for BEIT HAMIKDASH... now you take over

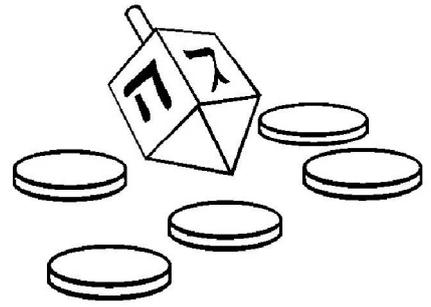
What is more likely to occur when spinning a dreidel four times - getting all the same letter or getting all four different letters? What is the probability of each event? What's the most common result?



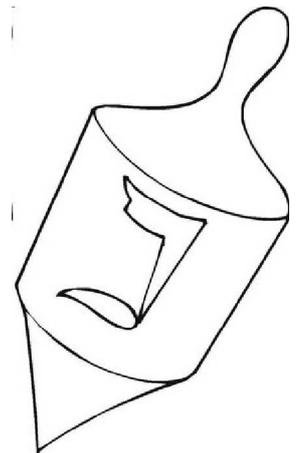
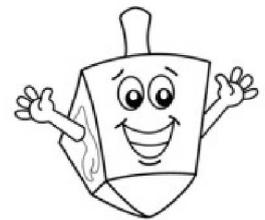
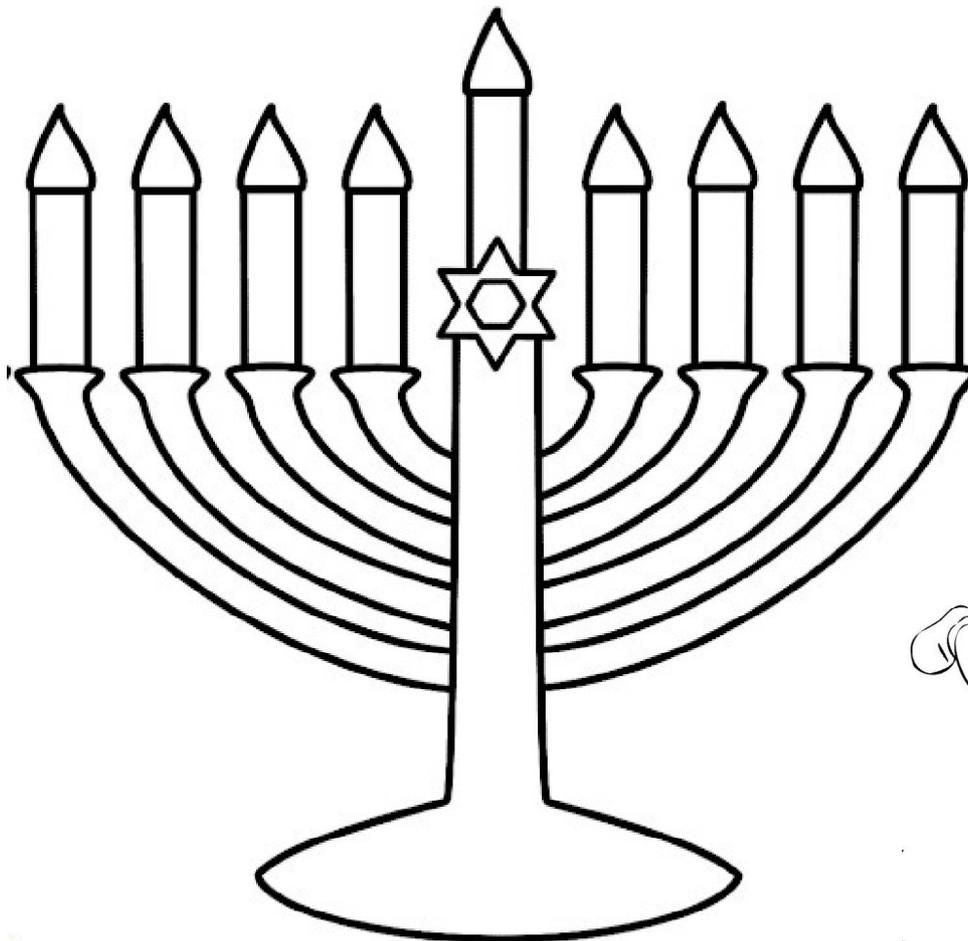
How many candles (incl. shamashim) would Leonardo of Pisa (a.k.a Fibonacci) use for his Chanuka lighting, and why wouldn't it be totally mehadrin min hamehadrin?

CHANUKA COLORING FOR THE YOUNG ONES

(including the Young at Heart)



חנוכה שמח



CHANUKA

Gimayriya Match

Looking for a nice Chanuka gimatriya match, I first searched for NUN, GIMEL, HEI, PEI - the letters on an Israeli dreidel. $50+3+5+80 = 138$. Got 81 words in Tanach with the same gimatriya. Nothing exciting to comment on. No p'sukim. 432 phrases - nothing jumped out as I scanned the list.

So I next looked at NEIS GADOL HAYA PO. At 258, I got another 47 words, no p'sukim, and 449 phrases. Again, nothing exciting presented itself.

So, allow me to introduce a different Gimatriya - MILUI (full spelling):

ALEF is 1 in regular gimatriya; in MILUI, we spell out the letter and then find its gimatriya. ALEF is ALEF-LAMED-FEI = $1+30+80 = 111$. BET is BET-YUD-TAV = 412...

נס גדול היה פה

A great miracle occurred here.

To get the MILUI gimatriya of this four-word sentence, we have to spell out the letters.

NUN is spelled NUN-VAV-NUN, which = 106.

SAMACH = SAMACH-MEM-CHAF = 120.

GIMEL = GIMEL-YUD-MEM-LAMED = 83.

DALET = DALET-LAMED-TAV = 434.

VAV = VAV-VAV = 12.

LAMED = LAMED-MEM-DALET = 74.

HEI = HEI-ALEF = 6.

YUD = YUD-VAV-DALET = 20.

PEI = PEI-ALEF = 81.

Adding up the spellings of NEIS GADOL... we get 948.

And that gives only five matching words (nothing to say about any of them), one pasuk, and 862 phrases.

The one pasuk, whose regular gimatriya matches the MILUI gimatriya of NEIS GADOL HAYA PO, is T'hilim 116:11, which happens to be from Hallel, and specifically, from one of the parts we say only in Full Hallel. So there is something to say, because when we celebrate the NEIS GADOL that HAYA PO, we say Full Hallel.

Nice, but still looking for more.

And then I found something among the 862 phrases. It's from Bamidbar 7:84 and 88, a phrase that goes very nicely with NEIS GADOL HAYA PO.

זאת | נזכרת המזבח...

זאת נזכרת המזבח...

And that finally makes a nice GM for Chanuka.

However... there is a problem with using MILUI gimatriyas in general - namely, the different ways to spell a letter's name. Is VAV spelled VAV-VAV or VAV-ALEF-VAV? Changes to totals. A number of letters have more than one possible spelling. Oh, well. Still nice, but not perfect.

Dreidel Probability

Spin four dreidels (or spin a dreidel four times).

There are 256 possible outcomes. That's $4 \times 4 \times 4 \times 4$.

Only four of those outcomes will give us the same letter on each dreidel. NUN NUN NUN NUN... (a bit more than 1½%)

24 outcomes will give us all four letters. (9.45%)

Two dreidels the same and the other two the same (but a different letter) makes up 36 of the 256 outcomes. (14.17%)

How about three the same and the other one different? That accounts for 48 possible outcomes. (18.9%)

$4 + 24 + 36 + 48 = 112$. That's 112 of the 256 possible outcomes with four dreidels are accounted for with the above situations - all the same, all different, two & two, three & one.

That leaves 144 possible outcomes (56.7%) for two the same and two different. Like GIMEL HEI GIMEL PEI, HEI HEI PEI NUN... and so on. This outcome - two the same and two other different - is by far, the most common for spinning four dreidels.