

## Lighting the Hanukkah Lamp – Sephardi Instructions

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The purpose of lighting the Hanukkah lamp is to publicize the miracle of the oil, which burned for eight days when there was only enough for one day. This miracle is also a symbol of Jewish culture's "drive to survive" against all odds. Hence, we light our lamps in a place and time that passersby will be likely to see them and be reminded of these themes.

The Talmud declares that "the commandment of Hanukkah applies from sunset until there are no wayfarers in the street" (Shabbat 21b), which translates to about 30 minutes of total burn time. However, because of the uncertainty about what "sunset" means in Judaism, there is a dispute about whether the Talmud is telling us to begin lighting from *sheki'a* (sunset) or from *tset hakokhavim* (when three stars of medium brightness are visible in the sky). The Ben Ish Hai, an important codifier of Iraqi customs, calls for us to light at *tset hakokhavim*.

If the lamp cannot be lit at the proper time, the premier work of Jewish law known as the Shulhan Arukh rules that one may light as early as *pelag haminha* (the final period of daylight, which varies by geography and season but is roughly an hour before *sheki'a* in LA in the winter). Similarly, if one missed the end of the preferred time entirely, the lamp can be lit as long as it is still night (*BIH*, Hanukkah 7; *SA, OH 672:1-2*). For the exact times of *pelag haminha*, *sheki'a*, and *tset hakokhavim*, consult a detailed hardcopy *luah* or a reputable online "zemanim calculator" such as [myzmanim.com](http://myzmanim.com)

It is the custom among many Sephardim to light exactly one lamp per household regardless of the number of people living there. By contrast, Ashkenazim light one lamp per family member, including even children under the age of majority. If a traveler is a guest in someone else's home and no other relative will light on their behalf somewhere else, they should give a small coin to the homeowner to become a financial stakeholder in the lamp that is being used where they are staying.

Ideally, a Hanukkah lamp should be placed just outside a doorway that faces the street, on the side of the door opposite the mezuzah. However, because this can be unsafe or impossible for many people, the prevalent custom is to simply place it in a location where it would be most likely to be witnessed by others, such as at a window that faces the street.

We light the lamp after it has been placed in the location where it will burn, using candles or oil capable of burning for half an hour or more. Because the lights can only be used to publicize the miracle, we light one extra candle called a *shamash* (some Syrians have two *shamashim*).

On the first night, we say all three blessings, and thereafter, we say the first two only. If one missed the first night, the third blessing can be said on the first night that a properly lit Hanukkah lamp is encountered. We light the candles directly after saying the blessings, and begin reading *hanerot halalu* immediately after lighting the first candle.

The candles are assembled from right to left as we face the Hanukkah lamp. Hence, only the rightmost candle is lit on the first night, the rightmost two on the second night, and so on. However, the direction of lighting goes from left to right, i.e., from the newest candle to the oldest. Those who have a family tradition of lighting the other direction may do so, since it is validated in several medieval and early modern sources.

On Friday evening, the Hanukkah lamp must be lit before sunset, and many opinions also hold that it must be lit before the Shabbat candles. On Saturday evening, Havdala must be read before lighting the Hanukkah lamp. Some synagogues allow lighting the Hanukkah lamp first on Saturday evening during the service because of the personal *havdala* that appears in *ata honantanu* (*BIH*, Hanukkah 21).

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'. אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו. וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק גֵּר חֲנֻכָּה:

ba-ROOKH a-TA a-do-NAI e-lo-HE-nu ME-lekh ha-o-LAM a-SHER ki-de-SHA-nu be-mits-vo-TAV ve-tsi-VA-nu le-had-LIK NER ha-nu-KA

*Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments, and ordained that we kindle the Hanukkah light.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'. אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. שְׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ. בְּיָמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמְן הַזֶּה:

ba-ROOKH a-TA a-do-NAI e-lo-HE-nu ME-lekh ha-o-LAM she-a-SA ni-SIM la-a-vo-TE-nu ba-ya-MIM ha-HEM ba-ze-MAN ha-ZE

*Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who has performed miracles for our forefathers, in the days of old and at this season.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'. אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. שְׁהַחֲיֵנוּ. וְקִיְּמָנוּ. וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה:

ba-ROOKH a-TA a-do-NAI e-lo-HE-nu ME-lekh ha-o-LAM she-he-he-YA-nu ve-ki-ye-MA-nu ve-hi-gi-A-nu la-ze-MAN ha-ZE

*Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who has given us life and sustained us, and brought us to this happy occasion.*

הַנִּירוֹת הַלָּלוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מִדְּלִיקוֹן. עַל הַנִּסִּים. וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת. וְעַל הַנִּפְלְאוֹת. שְׁעָשִׂיתָ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ. עַל יְדֵי כַּהֲנֵיךְ הַקְּדוֹשִׁים: וְכָל־שְׂמוֹנֵת יָמֵי חֲנֻכָּה הַנִּירוֹת הַלָּלוּ קִדְּשׁ. וְאֵין לָנוּ רְשׁוֹת לְהַשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בָּהֶם. אֶלָּא לְרְאוֹתָם בְּלִבְדָּ. כְּדֵי לְהוֹדוֹת לְשִׁמְךָ. עַל נִסִּיךָ. וְנִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ. וְיִשׁוּעוֹתֶיךָ:

ha-ne-ROT ha-LA-lu a-NAH-nu mad-li-KIN AL ha-ni-SIM ve-AL ha-te-shu-OT ve-AL ha-nif-la-OT she-a-SI-ta la-a-vo-TE-nu AL ye-DE ko-ha-NE-kha ha-ke-do-SHIM ve-KHOL she-mo-NAT ye-ME ha-nu-KA ha-ne-ROT ha-LA-lu KO-desh ve-EN LA-nu reh-SHOOT le-hish-ta-MESH ba-HEM E-la lir-o-TAM bil-VAD ke-DE le-ho-DOT lish-ME-kha AL ni-SE-kha ve-nif-le-o-TE-kha vi-shu-o-TE-kha

*We kindle these lights to mark the miracles, salvation, and wondrous deeds that You did for our forefathers through Your holy Kohanim. For all eight days of Hanukkah, these lights are sacred, and we are not permitted to use them, but rather only to look at them so as to give thanks to Your name for your miracles, wondrous deeds, and salvation.*

**Psalm 30**

(1) A Psalm of David, a Song at the Dedication of the Temple. (2) I will extol You, O Lord, for You raised me up, and did not let my enemies rejoice over me. (3) O Lord my God, I cried to You, and You healed me. (4) O Lord, You brought up my soul from the netherworld; You kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. (5) Sing praises to the Lord, righteous ones, and give thanks to His holy name. (6) For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but joy comes in the morning. (7) I had said in my security: 'I will never falter.' (8) In Your favor You established my mountain as a stronghold; you hid Your face and I was afraid. (9) I called to you O Lord, and made supplication to my God: (10) 'What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise You?! Will it declare Your truth?! (11) Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me; O Lord, be my helper.' (12) You turned my mourning into dancing; You loosened my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness (13) So that my glory may sing praise to You, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever!

(א) מזמור שיר חנכת הבית לְדָוִד: (ב) אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ ה' כִּי דָלִיתָנִי וְלֹא שִׂמְחָתָ אֵיבֵי לִי: (ג) ה' אֶל־הִי שׁוֹעֲתִי אֵלָיֶה וַתִּרְפְּאֵנִי: (ד) ה' הֶעֱלִיתָ מִן שְׂאוֹל נַפְשִׁי חַיִּיתָנִי מִיַּרְדֵּי בּוֹר: (ה) זָמְרוּ לֵה' חֲסִידָיו וְהוֹדוּ לְזִכְרֶךָ קְדוֹשׁ: (ו) כִּי רָגַע בְּאִפּוֹ חַיִּים בְּרַצוֹנִי בְּעֶרְבַי לַיּוֹן כִּכְּי וְלִבְקָר רָנָה: (ז) וְאַנִּי אֶמְרָתִי בְּשִׁלְוִי כִּל אַמוּט לְעוֹלָם: (ח) ה' בְּרַצוֹנֶךָ הֶעֱמַדְתָּה לְהִרְרִי עוֹז הַסְתַּרְתָּ פְנֶיךָ הֵייתִי נִבְהָל: (ט) אֵלָיֶה ה' אֶקְרָא וְאֵל אֲדֹנָי אֶתְחַנֵּן: (י) מֶה בָּצַע בְּדַמִּי בְּרַדְתִּי אֵל שְׂחַת הַיּוֹדֶה עֶפֶר הַיְגִיד אֶמְתָּה: (יא) שְׁמַע ה' וְחַנּוּנִי ה' הִנֵּה עֵזֶר לִי: (יב) הִפְכָתָ מִסְפְּדֵי לְמַחּוֹל לִי פִתְחָתָ שִׁקִּי וַתִּאֲזַרְנִי שְׂמֵחָה: (יג) לְמַעַן יִזְמְרֶךָ כְּבוֹד וְלֹא יִדָּם ה' אֶל־הִי לְעוֹלָם אֲוֹדְךָ:

ז' אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ ה' כִּי דָלִיתָנִי וְלֹא שִׂמְחָתָ אֵיבֵי לִי

הַמִּזְמֹר  
הַזֶּה  
הוֹדֵיָהוּ  
לְפָנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ  
בְּיָמֵינוּ

שִׁיר	אלהים יחננו ויברכנו יאר פניו
מִזְמֹר	לדעת בארץ רובך בכל גוים
תְּהִלָּתְךָ	יודוך עמים אלהים יודוך עמים
נֵי	ישמחו וירננו לאמים בני תשפט עמים מישר ולאמים
נֶגֶד	יודוך עמים אלהים יודוך עמים
יִצְחָק	ארץ נתנה יבולה יברכנו אלהים
לִפְנֵי	יברכנו אלהים ויראו אותנו כל

הַמִּזְמֹר  
הַזֶּה  
הוֹדֵיָהוּ  
לְפָנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ  
בְּיָמֵינוּ

אֲבָנֵי יִתְחַזַּק קִרְעֵי שִׁטְנֵי נִגְדֵי יִבְשֵׁי בִטְרֵי צִתְּנֵי

## Ma'oz Tsur

**Rock** of my salvation! It is pleasant to sing Your praises.

Restore my house of prayer, and there we will give thanks.

When You will have completed the barking foe's demise,

Then we will sing a psalm of the altar's dedication.

**My** soul was sated with misery, my strength spent with grief.

They soured my life with hardship in my slavery in Egypt.

But God took out His treasured people with a mighty hand,

While Pharaoh's entire host sank into the deep like a stone.

**He** brought me to His holy abode, yet I found no rest there.

The oppressor exiled me because I served strange gods,

And drank of their poisoned cup until I was nearly lost,

Yet Babylon fell, and within seventy years I was saved!

**Haman** ben Hamedata plotted to cut Mordecai down,

But it proved a snare to him, and his insolence was silenced.

You raised the Jews' heads and erased the enemy's name;

And hanged his many sons and household upon the gallows.

**The** Greeks gathered against me in days of the Hasmoneans.

They broke my towers' walls, and defiled all the oils.

But from the last flask a miracle was wrought for the Jews!

Hence the Sages ordained these eight days for joyful song.

**O** bare Your holy arm and hasten the time of salvation.

Wreak vengeance on the evil nation for Your servants.

For salvation is long delayed; the evil days are endless.

Push them to the shadows, and set up our deliverance!

מְעוֹז צוֹר יְשׁוּעָתִי. לָךְ נִאֶה לְשַׁבַּח:

תִּכּוֹן בַּיִת תְּפִלָּתִי. וְשָׁם תּוֹדָה נִזְבַּח:

לַעֲת תִּכְיֶן מִטְבַּח. מִצָּר הַמְּנַבַּח:

אֲז אֲגַמֵּר בְּשִׁיר מִזְמוֹר. חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּזְבֵּיחַ:

רַעוּת שָׁבְעָה נִפְשֵׁי. בְּיָגוֹן כֹּחִי כָּלָה:

חַיִּי מִרְרוּ בְּקִשֵׁי. בְּשִׁעְבוּד מַלְכוּת עַגְלָה:

וּבְיָדוֹ הַגְּדוּלָּה. הוֹצִיא אֶת הַסַּגְלָה:

חֵיל פִּרְעֹה וְכָל זַרְעוֹ. יָרְדוּ כְּאֶבֶן בַּמַּצּוּלָה:

דְּבִיר קִדְשׁוֹ הִבִּיאֲנִי. וְגַם שָׁם לֹא שָׁקֵטִי:

וּבֵא נוֹגֵשׁ וְהִגְלִנִי. כִּי זָרִים עָבַדְתִּי:

וַיִּין רַעַל מִסִּבְּתִי. כִּמְעַט שָׁעַבְרַתִּי:

קִיץ בָּבֶל וְרַבְבָּל. לְקִיץ שְׁבַעִים נוֹשַׁעְתִּי:

כָּרוֹת קוֹמַת בְּרוּשׁ בְּקֵשׁ. אֲגַגִּי בֶן הַמְּדַתָּא:

וְנִהְיָתָה לוֹ לַפַּח וּלְמוֹקֵשׁ. וְגֵאוֹתוֹ נִשְׁבַּתָּה:

רֹאשׁ יְמִינִי נִשְׂאָתָה. וְאוֹיֵב שָׁמוּ מְחִיתָ:

רֹב בָּנָיו וְקִנְיָנָיו. עַל הָעֵץ תָּלִיתָ:

יְוֹנִים נִקְבְּצוּ עָלַי. אֲזִי בִימֵי חֲשֻׁמְנַיִם:

וּפְרָצוּ חוֹמוֹת מְגִדְלִי. וְטָמְאוּ כָּל הַשְּׁמָנַיִם:

וּמִנּוֹתָר קִנְיָנַיִם. נַעֲשָׂה גַם לְשׁוֹשְׁנַיִם:

בְּנֵי בֵינָה יְמֵי שְׁמוֹנָה. קָבְעוּ שִׁיר וּרְנָנַיִם:

תְּשׁוּף זְרוּעַ קִדְשֶׁךָ. וְקָרַב קִיץ הַיְשׁוּעָה:

נִקֵּם נִקְמַת עֲבָדֶיךָ. מֵאֵמֶה הַרְשָׁעָה:

כִּי אַרְכָּה הַשָּׁעָה. וְאִין קִיץ לִימֵי הַרְעָה:

דַּחַה אֲדַמּוֹן בְּצַל צְלֻמוֹן. הִקֵּם לָנוּ רוּעִים שְׁבַעָה: