

EDMOND J. SAFRA  
SYNAGOGUE

HANUKKAH 5786

# HANUKKAH

## 5786-2025

### **Sunday, December 14 – Ereb Hanukkah**

#### **Azkara of Edmond J. Safra 'A"H**

Shahrit..... 7:30 AM, 8:30 AM & 9:30 AM  
Classes..... following each minyan  
Uplighting, get in the Hanukkah Zone for the  
Azkara of Edmond J. Safra 'A"H ..... 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM  
Children's Hanukkah Carnival ..... 11:00 AM - 1:30 PM  
Minha followed by Arbit ..... 4:10 PM  
1st Candle Lighting of Hanukkah ..... after 5:00 PM

### **Monday, December 15 – First Day Hanukkah**

Shahrit..... 6:30 AM, 7:30 AM, & 8:00 AM  
Classes..... following each minyan  
Minha followed by Arbit ..... 4:10 PM  
2nd Candle Lighting of Hanukkah ..... after 5:00 PM

### **Tuesday, December 16 – Second Day Hanukkah**

Shahrit..... 6:30 AM, 7:30 AM, & 8:00 AM  
Classes..... following each minyan  
Minha followed by Arbit ..... 4:10 PM  
3rd Candle Lighting of Hanukkah ..... after 5:00 PM

### **Wednesday, December 17 – Third Day Hanukkah**

Shahrit..... 6:30 AM, 7:30 AM, & 8:00 AM  
Classes..... following each minyan  
Minha followed by Arbit ..... 4:10 PM  
4th Candle Lighting of Hanukkah ..... after 5:00 PM

### **Thursday, December 18 – Fourth Day Hanukkah**

Shahrit..... 6:30 AM, 7:30 AM, & 8:00 AM  
Classes..... following each minyan  
Minha followed by Arbit ..... 4:10 PM  
5th Candle Lighting of Hanukkah ..... after 5:00 PM

## **Friday, December 19 – Fifth Day Hanukkah**

Shahrit.....	6:30 AM, 7:30 AM, & 8:00 AM
Classes.....	following each minyan
6th Candle Lighting of Hanukkah .....	before 4:12 PM
Shabbat Candle Lighting .....	4:12 PM
Minha.....	4:15 PM
Shir HaShirim .....	4:35 PM
Kabbalat Shabbat followed by Arbit.....	4:45 PM
Torah Insights .....	following

## **Saturday, December 20 – Sixth Day Hanukkah - Shabbat Mikess - Rosh Hodesh Tebet - First Day**

Shahrit – Early Minyan (7:05 AM Korbanot).	7:15 AM
Shahrit – Main Minyan (8:50 AM Korbanot).	9:00 AM
Minha.....	3:50 PM
Se’udah Shelisheet.....	4:20 PM
Arbit .....	4:55 PM
Habdalah – End of Shabbat.....	5:13 PM
7th Candle Lighting of Hanukkah .....	after 5:13 PM*

\*At home light after habdalah, at synagogue light before habdalah

## **Sunday, December 21 – Seventh Day Hanukkah - Rosh Hodesh Tebet - Second Day**

Shahrit.....	7:30 AM, 8:30 AM & 9:30 AM
Classes.....	following each minyan
Minha followed by Arbit .....	4:15 PM
8th Candle Lighting of Hanukkah .....	after 5:00 PM

## **Monday, December 22 – Eighth Day Hanukkah**

Shahrit.....	6:30 AM, 7:30 AM, & 8:00 AM
Classes.....	following each minyan
Minha followed by Arbit .....	4:15 PM

# THE FESTIVAL OF HANUKKAH

The miracle of Hanukkah occurred approximately 22 centuries ago. When the Greek-Hellenistic Empire ruled over Israel, Antiokhos the Governor, decreed that no Jew would be allowed to practice the Mitzvot of the Torah. This decree meant that the Jews would not be able to keep Shabbat, eat kosher, circumcise their children, celebrate Pesah, Sukkot, Shabuot, Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur, etc. Antiochus wanted the total spiritual annihilation of the Jews.

The Hashmonaim, a family of Kohanim, served in the Temple in Jerusalem at that time. They were not able to perform the sacred duties required. One of these duties they were not able to perform, was the duty to light the “Eternal Light” – the Ner Tamid, since the oil used to light the Ner Tamid had to have the seal of the High Priest and could not be touched by strangers.

On the 25th day of Kislev 3591, the Hashmonaim with the help of the Almighty, overthrew the Greeks. They reconquered the Holy Temple and found enough “pure oil” to burn for less than one day. Miraculously though, it lasted for eight days, until the Kohanim were able to procure more “pure oil”. The miracle of the oil and the successful military triumph over the Greek empire confirmed the everlasting pact that exists between G-D and the Children of Israel, and restored their freedom to practice anew the Torah and their sacred religion. They rededicated the Temple and renewed Jewish sovereignty over the Land of Israel. Once again, the spiritual and physical survival of the Jews was assured for eternity. Our sages recognized the importance of this miracle and declared the eight days of Hanukkah as “Days of Praise and Thanksgiving to the Almighty,” and instituted that every Jewish household must celebrate Hanukkah by lighting the Hanukkiah (or Menorah) for eight days, symbolizing the eight days during which the oil burned miraculously.



# SELECTED LAWS OF HANUKKAH

## 1. HOW DO WE CELEBRATE HANUKKAH?

Every year on the 25th day of Kislev, the eight days of Hanukkah begin. These days are to be celebrated with happiness and joy; with praise and thanksgiving to the Almighty. Therefore, one may not eulogize, fast or show any sign of mourning during these days, even if it is a memorial day. While there is no obligation to make feasts or a commemorative dinner, it is fitting to sing pizmonim and zemirot during the meals on these days.

Some homes are accustomed to eat all kinds of pastries such as mamul, gheraibe, karabij, sambusak (borekas), sufganiot (fried donuts), etc. One may not engage in any activity one half hour before the Hanukkiah lighting time, such as eating a meal, studying Torah, or any other activity that might distract one from lighting the Hanukkiah on time.

It is customary for women to refrain from doing housework during the first and last day of Hanukkah, especially during Rosh Hodesh. It is also customary for women to refrain from doing any work during the first half hour in which the Hanukkiah is lit. Some say that even men should refrain from doing any work during that time, but one may be lenient for men when necessary. Hanukkah presents and gifts are not a Sephardic custom.

## 2. WHO IS OBLIGATED TO LIGHT?

Men and women are obligated to light, but they may light for one another. It is the Sephardic custom that the father lights for the entire family. In the absence of the father, the mother should take the responsibility upon herself to light. Therefore, children even above the age of bar or bat missva should not light by themselves, although they may participate by lighting the additional candles of a given night (beyond the first candle). Children under five years of age may light only the “shamash” - the extra candle. Sephardic children in dormitories of high schools, colleges, universities or yeshivot, that are supported financially by their parents do not have to light their own Hanukkiah, and they can rely on the yeshiba or the Ashkenazi students. Those wishing to go beyond the required halakha, may light but without the blessings.

### 3. WHERE DO WE PLACE THE HANUKKIAH?

The Hanukkah should be placed in open view of as many people as possible. If possible it should be placed on the left side of the door from without; if that is not possible, place it from within opposite the side where the mezzuzah is. If the door does not face the street where people walk, one may put it near the window. This also applies to people living in apartments above the first floor. However, for people living higher than the third floor - if the window is either not in the public view, or it is not possible to put it near the window, then the Hanukkah should be placed on the dinner table, where the family members will notice it. The Hanukkah must be placed at least one foot, and no more than forty feet, above the floor.

All candles must be placed in a straight line, and should be at the same height, except the “shamash”. Therefore Hanukkiot that are multi-leveled may not be used.

### 4. WHAT KIND OF HANUKKIAH MAY BE USED?

An electric Hanukkah is not acceptable and cannot be used to fulfill the Mitzva of Hanukkah. If someone wishes to light an electric Hanukkah in addition to the regular Hanukkah, he may do so - but without the blessings.

Any type of oil, wax, or fat may be used to light the Hanukkah. Olive oil, however, is preferred. All Hanukkiot should be cleaned every night after usage. Hanukkiot made out of glass, metal, or wood may be used. Hanukkiot made out of clay should be avoided.

### 5. HOW, AND HOW MANY CANDLES DO WE LIGHT?

When facing the Hanukkah, one should place the candles beginning from the right side of the Hanukkah and start lighting from left to right. When adding a candle each night, it should be added to the left of the candle of the prior day. Recite the blessings and start lighting the new candle. The lighting must take place where the Hanukkah will remain; it is not to be moved once lit.

On the first night one candle is lit plus the “shamash” (the extra candle).

On each successive night another candle is added until the eighth night when eight candles are lit, plus the “shamash” for a total of nine. It is the custom of some Syrian Jews, descendants of the Franco-Spanish Jews, to begin by lighting the first night with two candles plus the “shamash” – for a total of three candles, and on each successive night another candle is added until the eighth night

when nine candles are lit plus the shamash for a total of ten. It is a Sephardic custom to light the candles with an extra candle and to light the “shamash” last. One should be careful not to light the “shamash” first.

## 6. WHEN DO WE LIGHT?

The proper time to light is at nightfall, with the whole family gathered together. If by the time the whole family would be gathered is past the designated time to light, then the family should light with the blessings as soon as they can get together. The Hanukkiah should contain enough oil, or wax to burn for 30 minutes after nightfall. On Friday evening, the Hanukkiah should be lit before the Shabbat candles, thus the Hanukkiah should burn at least for seventy minutes after the proper time for lighting. On a Saturday night the proper time to light is after Shabbat's end, even though it is already after nightfall. In the Synagogue, the Hanukkiah is lit prior to Habdalah. At home the Hanukkiah should be lit after Habdalah.

The Hanukkiah should burn for at least thirty minutes after nightfall. If the candles blew out by themselves before the required 30 minutes after nightfall, one is not required to rekindle them, however one may re-light them (on any night other than Friday) by using the “shamash” or an extra candle only (though not from one of the other Hanukkah candles), without saying the blessings. Since it is forbidden to use the light emanating from the Hanukkiah even to learn Torah, it is therefore customary to have the “shamash” candle to serve that purpose, should it be necessary. If for a compelling reason one was not able to light the Hanukkiah on time, or if no one lit the Hanukkiah for him, one may light the Hanukkiah throughout the night with all the required blessings.

## 7. WHAT ARE THE BLESSINGS?

On the first night, before lighting the candles one should recite the following berakhot in the order:

1. **Barukh Ata....Asher Kideshanu Bemissvotav Vessivanu Lehadlik Ner Hanukkah. (note: do not recite “Shel Hanukkah”)**
2. **Barukh Ata....She’asa Nissim La’abotenu Bayamim Hahem Bazeman Haze.**
3. **Barukh Ata... .Shehehiyanu Vekiyemanu Vehigianu Lazeman Haze.**

On subsequent nights one should recite only the first two blessings. However, if someone forgot to recite the third blessing on the first night, he may recite it on the second, or any subsequent

night. When someone has finished lighting the first candle, he may not recite the blessings any more for that night. After reciting the blessings and lighting the candles, it is customary to recite “Hanerot Halalu” and “Mizmor Shir Hanukkat Habayit LeDavid”.

## 8. WHAT DO WE PRAY ON HANUKKAH?

During the entire eight days of Hanukkah, one is obligated to recite the full Hallel with its blessings. “Yehi Shem” is recited in both Shahrit and Minha; Tahanun is omitted. The paragraph of “Al Hanissim” continuing with “Bime Matitya” is added during the Amida in the blessing of “Modim” and in the Birkat Hamazon in the blessing of “Nodeh”. If Al Hanissim is omitted one does not go back.

# HANUKKAH CUSTOMS OF ALEPPO JEWRY

JEWISH PRESS PROFILE BY TOVIA PRESCHEL

The Jewish community of Aleppo, Syria is one of the oldest in the world. The Jews of that community identify their city as the Biblical Aram Soba and call it in short “Aress”. There was a very ancient synagogue in the city which served the community for hundreds of years until it was burned by the Arabs during the anti-Jewish disturbances, which followed the United Nations decision of November 29, 1947 to partition Palestine.

In this synagogue were kept old Bible manuscripts including the famous Aleppo Codex, which was written more than one thousand years ago. During the anti-Jewish disturbances the codex was desecrated and damaged. It is now in Jerusalem.

Great scholars resided in Aleppo. Here taught Baruch Ben Shemuel of Aleppo (known also as Rabbi Baruch of Greece), an early commentator of the Talmud, who came to Aleppo from Southern Europe. Here settled Rabbi Yoseph ben R. Yehuda, a disciple of the Rambam. For him, and such like him, Maimonides wrote his Guide of the Perplexed.

Rabbis and Kabbalists who were active in Aleppo during the last five hundred years include R. Mordecai HaKohen, author of Siftei Kohen, a commentary on the Pentateuch; R. Hayyim Kohen, who wrote Mekor Hayyim, a Kabbalistic commentary on the Shulhan Arukh,



and members of the Laniado family, among them Rabbi Shemuel, popularly known as Ba'al Hakelim on account of his Keli Hemda, Keli Yakar, and Keli Paz, commentaries on various books of the Bible, and Rabbi Rafael Shelomo, author of Beth Din Shel Shelomo (responsa) and HaMa'alot LiShelomo (homiletics). For a period, Aleppo was a very important trading center. Descendants of exiles from Spain and Jews who had emigrated from Southern Europe, especially from France and Italy were very prominent in the city's commerce.

Like many old communities, Aleppo Jews have some unusual customs. On Shabuot, for example they read in addition to the Book of Ruth, the Book of Proverbs (Mishlei).

The descendants of the Spanish exiles who settled in Aleppo used to light an additional light on Hanukkah, which they placed near the Shamash. Their procedure was as follows: On the first night they kindled one light and two shamashim, on the second night they lit two lights and two shamashim and so forth. On the last night eight lights and two shamashim were kindled.

I heard of this custom many years ago from two Jerusalem Rabbis who hailed from Aleppo. The late Rabbi Ovadia Hadaya, the author of several books and longtime member of the Chief Rabbinate of the land of Israel, and the late Rabbi Nathan Salem, whose father was a well known Jerusalem Kabbalist.

They told me of a tradition according to which the ancestors of the Sefardi Jews of Aleppo wandered for months - after their expulsion from Spain - in search of a place of refuge. When they finally settled in Aleppo, they decided to light an additional light on Hanukkah in thanksgiving to the Almighty.

Many Aleppo Jews of Sefardi descent continue to observe this custom. Even in New York there are families who kindle the additional light. However, there are others who stopped keeping this Minhag. "I stopped observing this custom when I didn't find it mentioned anywhere," I was told by the late Rabbi Ezra Attiye who headed Yeshiva Porat Yosef of Jerusalem and was a descendant of Aleppo Sefardim.

Another Hanukkah custom of the Aleppo Jews is to light twelve lights every morning, during the days of Hanukkah (but of course not on Shabbat) in the synagogue. They are called Nerot HaNessi'im - the "Lights of the Chieftains" for on Hanukkah we read from the Torah about the sacrifices offered by the chieftains of the twelve tribes at the dedication of the Tabernacle



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Aleppo Synagogue, Syria. Pre- 1940's