

# Hanukkah Blessings: Learn the 3 Hanukkah Prayers

By B'nai Mitzvah Academy

## Hanukkah Blessings: Chant Before Lighting the Candles

One of the most important Hanukkah rituals is to recite the Hanukkah blessings and light the candles on the menorah. We say three blessings on the first night and only two blessings — the first and second blessing — for the following seven nights. There is a chant for each of these blessings (#1 and #2 start with the exact same melody) but it is also completely acceptable to simply speak the words of each Hanukkah blessing.

Place the candles in the menorah from right to left. You will always have one extra candle for each night of Hanukkah. For example, on the first night you will have two candles, the second night you will have three candles, etc. That's because we light the candles with the shamash, or helper candle, which usually sits higher than the rest of the candles and is typically in the center of the menorah.

*Before lighting the candles (but after placing them in the menorah), we recite the following blessings:*

### ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS:

*The Candles are lit by the (eldest) woman of the house no later than 18 minutes before sundown. After kindling the candles, she waves her hands over the flames three times (as if welcoming in the Light of Hanukkah), and covering her eyes with her hands (so as not to see the candles burning) says (<https://hebrew4christians.com/Holidays/Shabbat/Candles/candles.html>):*

## Hanukkah Blessings #1: Blessing Over the Candles

The first blessing — which is sung for all eight nights of Hanukkah — is the blessing over the Hanukkah candles. It is the exact same blessing as the candle blessing we say weekly on Shabbat, except for the last word. Instead of saying *shel Shabbat*, we say *shel Hanukkah*.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של חנוכה

### TRANSLITERATION

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tsivanu l'hadlik ner shel Hanukkah*

### TRANSLITERATION #2: BMA STYLE

BAH-rOOch AH-tAH AH-dOH-nEYE EH-LOH-hAY-nOO MEH-LEHch HA-OH-LAHm AH-shEHr KEEEd-shAH-nOO BEH-mEEtz-vOH-tAHv V-tzEE-vAH-nOO L-hAHd-LEEk NAYr ShEHL ChAH-nOO-kAH

### TRANSLATION

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who makes us holy with your commandments, commanding us to kindle (light) the Hanukkah lights.

### A MESSIAH BELIVER VERSION:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who sanctified us with his commandments, and commanded us to be a light to the nations and Who gave to us Jesus our Messiah the Light of the world.

### HEBREW TRANSLITERATION

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tsivanu l'hadlik ohr le-goyim ve'natan-lanu et Yeshua Meshicheinu or ha-olam.*

## Hanukkah Blessings #2: Blessing about Miracles

We say Hanukkah blessing #2 directly after we finish blessing #1 and before we light the Hanukkah candles on the menorah. This blessing starts off with the traditional “Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha’olam” intro, but quickly gets into some more challenging Hebrew words.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, שעשה נסים לאבותינו ונאמתינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה

#### TRANSLITERATION

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, she-asah nisim laavoteinu v'imoteinu bayamim hahaeim baz'man hazeh*

#### TRANSLITERATION #2: BMA

#### STYLE

BAH-rOOch AH-tAH AH-dOH-nEYE EH-LOH-hAY-nOO MEH-LEHch HA-OH-LAHm ShEH-AH-sAH NEE-sEEem LAH-AH-vOH-tAY-nOO V-EE-mOH-tAY-nOO Bye-yAH-mEEem HAH-chAYm BAHz-mAHn HAH-zEH

#### TRANSLATION

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who performed wondrous deeds for our ancestors in those ancient days at this season.

### Hanukkah Blessings #3: Shehecheyanu

(aka First Night of Hanukkah Prayer)

Why do we say an additional prayer, the Shehecheyanu, on the first night of Hanukkah? The Shehecheyanu is a blessing of firsts. We recite this particular blessing the first time we do something in the Jewish calendar year and to celebrate special occasions. In this case, we recite the Shehecheyanu the first night we light the Chanukah candles on the menorah.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה

#### TRANSLITERATION

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higiyanu laz'man hazeh*

#### TRANSLITERATION #2: BMA STYLE

BAH-rOOch AH-tAH AH-dOH-nEYE EH-LOH-hAY-nOO MEH-LEHch HA-OH-LAHm ShEH-hEH-chEH-yAH-nOO VEH-kEEy-mAH-nOO VEH-hEE-gEE-AH-nOO LAHh-mAHn HAH-zEH

#### TRANSLATION

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.

Once you recite the blessings for Hanukkah, you can go ahead and light the candles. The candles are placed in the menorah from right to left but are lit from left to right. The shamash candle is always the first one lit, and is used to light the others, starting with the left-most one. Essentially, you are lighting the candle representing the newest night first.

One of my favorite Hanukkah pastimes is to turn off all of the lights in the house and silently watch as the candles burn out one by one. Not only is it incredibly peaceful, but it is really beautiful to watch. Each candle does so in its own unique fashion. Give it a good half hour or so, but once you notice that the candles have burned about three quarters of the way down, come back to where the menorah is lit and watch them burn.

<https://bnaimitzvahacademy.com/hanukkah-blessings-hanukkah-prayer/>