

I Lit the Chanukah Candles. Now What?

written by Ozer Bergman
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The time after lighting the Chanukah menorah is a beautiful time, very special and full of potential for growing...

OK. I lit the Chanukah candles. Now what?

One of the many beautiful things I like about Chanukah, is that it's so easy. Don't have to build a sukkah, get rid of all my cake and bourbon during pre-Pesach cleaning, try to stay awake all night as on Shavuot. I don't even have to worry about a possible hangover as happens to some the day after Purim. Just show up and light a candle. Even I can do that!

But in some ways, for some people, that's all it is. And for

some people it's, "Is that all it is?" For the first group, like hardcore Gemara junkies, this works really well and good for them. (Listen, if you're going to have a vice, learning Gemara is one of the best.)

But most of us are in the second group. You said the *berakhot* (blessings) and sang *Maoz Tzur*. Now what are you supposed to do? The candles are supposed to burn for at least half an hour. Do we just sit there till then?

The time after lighting the Chanukah menorah is a beautiful time, very special and full of potential for growing Jewishness, your own and your family's. Here are some suggestions. Hopefully you will find some practical for your particular situation. Pick and choose what works for you, experiment to your heart's content. Just remember that any of these suggestions take time, so make sure you know your "budget." In our home, from lighting till the last song and the dance that follows, takes about an hour.

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You can pray. Every Chassidic circle has its own "liturgy," of Psalms and songs, but there is some commonality. Many of the psalms recited refer or allude to light, menorah, the Beit HaMikdash (Temple) and/or salvation. There are at least 20 different post-lighting "liturgies." I won't mention them all. (You're welcome.) If I left out your favorite, my apologies. It's late and I'm tired. **NOTE:** *When Psalm 91 is said, it is preceded by the final verse of Psalm 90!*

Breslov:

1. *HaNeirot HaLalu*
2. *Maoz Tzur*
3. Psalm 30

4. Psalm 67
5. Psalm 33
6. *Ana B'koach*
7. Psalm 91
8. Psalm 124

Boston:

1. *HaNeirot HaLalu*
2. Psalm 91
3. Psalm 67
4. *Ana B'koach*
5. Psalm 30
6. Psalm 133
7. Psalm 33
8. Psalm 98
9. Psalm 122–124
10. Psalm 111–112
11. *Maoz Tzur*

Bobov:

1. *HaNeirot HaLalu*
2. Psalms 120–134 (The 15 *Shir HaMaalot*), two/night

Kretchnif:

1. *HaNeirot HaLalu*
2. Psalm 91, seven (7) times
3. *Maoz Tzur*
4. The *Ketoret* (as said in Shacharit and Minchah)
5. The *Birkat Kohanim* (Numbers 6:24–26)
6. *Ana B'koach*
7. Psalm 30
8. Psalm 67
9. Psalm 33
10. Psalms 113–118
11. Psalm 136
12. *Nishmat*
13. *YaHalelukha*
14. *Ein KeiLoKeinu*

15. *Atah Hu–Gibor Naaratz*

16. Numbers 8:1–4

17. Psalm 133

Lubavitch:

HaNeirot HaLalu (that's all)

Satmar:

1. *HaNeirot HaLalu*

2. Psalm 91, seven (7) times

3. Psalm 67

4. *Ana B'koach*

5. Psalm 30

6. Psalm 133

7. Psalm 33

8. *Maoz Tzur*

Toldos Aharon:

1. *HaNeirot HaLalu*

2. Psalm 91, seven (7) times

3. Psalm 30

4. Psalm 67

5. Psalm 133

6. *Ana B'koach*, seven (7) times

7. *Keil Mistahter*

8. Psalm 119 (three letters each night)

Vitzhnitz:

1. *HaNeirot HaLalu*

2. Psalm 91, seven (7) times

3. Psalm 67

4. *Ana B'koach*

5. Psalm 30

6. Psalm 133

7. Psalm 33

8. *Maoz Tzur*

You can also do some *hitbodedut*, talk to God in your own words

about whatever you like.

If the surroundings allow, this is a great time to meditate. Gazing at the flames is a good way to focus. You can follow your thoughts, or direct them. Some major Chanukah themes are Jewish redemption, Jewish education, your own, but particularly of (grand)children, yours or other people's, and universal peace.

Play dreidel! It's lots of fun, even if you don't win. And there's much more to it than meets the eye. [Click here](#) to see what we wrote about it earlier this week.

Eat potato latkes. (It's an English word, in the Merriam-Webster, so no italics.) Eat them with applesauce, sugar or sour cream. Maybe try *sufganiyot* (jelly donuts). Don't overdo it. While you're eating, maybe discuss what it took for Maccabees to start the revolt; courage, love of Jewishness and what else? Do you—we—have what it takes to be a Maccabee?

Chanukah sameach!

Happy Chanukah!