

The Mitzvot of Chanukah

written by Chaim Kramer
November 28, 2021



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Chanukah has finally arrived. The family gathers by the menorah and one person lights the candles. Depending on how steady his hand is, it takes less than a minute to perform the most important mitzvah of Chanukah: Lighting the candles! If you add up the total amount of time it takes to light the candles each night, you've spent about two minutes, altogether, celebrating Chanukah according to our Sages.

Is that it? Is that what the eight days of Chanukah are all about? For those few minutes our Sages established eight days

of celebration, with the addition of Al HaNissim in our prayers and Birkat HaMazon, as well as the full recitation of Hallel? A festive meal is not called for; it only becomes a mitzvah if we speak about the miracles of Chanukah or expound some words of Torah. Otherwise, no matter how many latkes you eat, it just serves to add a few pounds to the body and a few inches to your waistline! So what are the eight days of Chanukah all about?

Rebbe Nachman teaches, "The days of Chanukah are days of thanks" (Likutey Moharan II, 2:1). As we say in Al HaNissim, following the story of Chanukah where the Maccabees defeated their enemies, "Our Sages established these eight days to thank and praise HaShem for His miracles."

It develops, then, that although the main mitzvah of Chanukah is to light the eight candles, beginning with one and adding another candle each night, we still have eight full days. How are we supposed to fill them with meaning? It's up to us to understand that these are days of thanksgiving, when we can recall the good and kindness that HaShem bestowed upon us all our lives! We should be happy that we are still alive, and reflect upon the many things to be thankful for, our health, finances, stability and the many other reasons we have to be joyous. True, we all have our challenges and frustrations, but we can focus on the good things, too.

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One of Rebbe Nachman's major ideas is to always seek the good and to impress upon your mind how fortunate you are. This practice puts your focus on the wonderful things available to you, and on the many moments of kindness that HaShem bestowed upon you. Why concentrate on the rough moments when you can experience the good?!

But how can we truly experience all the good and kindness that were given to us? By giving charity. When we engage in acts of kindness we become aware of the greatness of kindness, and we are then able to gain an appreciation for helping others and seeing how our acts—large or small—benefit others. That feeling of satisfaction, from bringing a smile to the face of the recipient and knowing that we helped make someone's life a little bit better, goes a long way to bring us to feel grateful for all that we have. It is guaranteed to bring a smile even to our own faces!



"The days of Chanukah are days of thanks" – Rebbe Nachman

We at **Breslov Research** have been struggling with these ideas for many years. And with each revelation of a volume of Rebbe Nachman and/or Reb Noson, we have merited to see smiles and contentment upon the faces of our many friends and supporters. On Chanukah, these "days of thanks and appreciation for what Hashem has done for all of us," we look forward to publishing, in the course of this year, the new format of the English translation of Reb Noson's *Likutey Tefilot*, *The Fiftieth Gate*. These prayers, which Reb Noson originally wrote for himself, are a source of illumination for every person, from

the simple to the highly educated. Anyone can find themselves in Reb Noson's words, making a respectable presentation all the more important.

Thanks to your generosity, the project is moving along nicely and steadily. We've already sold the eternal merit for most of the prayers, and there are now a little over 100 options left!

For a realistic monthly sum, you, too, can take part in this holy endeavor. And since the days of Chanukah are devoted to praise and thanks, what better way to celebrate than engaging in prayers and thanks to Hashem? You can fulfill these mitzvot of Chanukah—prayer, praise and charity – by supporting the Likutey Tefilot project.

[Clikc here to participate](#) This way, when you light the candles, you'll know that you've helped to bring light and happiness to the many readers of Reb Noson's prayers. Join the merit of giving charity for a project that will shine the Tzaddik's light in the world!

Wishing you a great life,

Chaim Kramer