

Fill Your Own Cup – Year Two
What was the Miracle of Channukah?

<p>1) Birkat Hamazon, Birkat Hamazon, Blessing on the Land 2-3 On Chanukah and Purim add: We thank thee also for the miracles, for the redemption, for the mighty deeds and saving acts, wrought by thee, as well as for the wars which thou didst wage for our fathers in days of old, at this season. On Chanukah: In the days of the Hasmoneans, Mattathias son of Johanan, the High Priest, and his sons, when the iniquitous power of Greece rose up against thy people Israel to make them forgetful of Your Law, and to force them to transgress the statutes of Your will, then did you in Your abundant mercy rise up for them in the time of their trouble; You pleaded their cause, You judged their suit, You avenged their wrong; You delivered the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the impure into the hands of the pure, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, and the arrogant into the hands of them that occupied themselves with thy Law: for Yourself did You make a great and holy name in thy world, and for Your people Israel You worked a great deliverance and redemption as at this day. And thereupon Your children came into the oracle of Your house, cleansed Your temple, purified Your sanctuary, kindled lights in thy holy courts, and appointed these eight days of Chanukah in order to give thanks and praises unto Your great name. For all these things Your name, O our King, shall be continually blessed and exalted for ever and ever.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ברכת המזון, ברכת המזון, ברכת הארץ ב'-ג' לחנוכה ולפורים על הנסים ועל הפרקו ועל הגבורות ועל התשועות ועל המלחמות שעשית לאבותינו בנמים ההם בזמן הזה. — לחנוכה — בימי מתתיהו בן יוחנן כהן גדול חשמונאי ובניו קשעמדה מלכות יון הרשעה על עמך ישראל להשפיקם מתורתך ולהעבירם מחקי רצונך ואתה ברחמיך הרבים עמדת להם בעת צרתם רבת את ריבם דנת את דינם נקמת את נקמתם מסרת גבורים ביד חלשים ורבים ביד מעטים וטמאים ביד טהורים ורשעים ביד צדיקים וזדים ביד עוסקי תורתך ולך עשית שם גדול וקדוש בעולמך ולעמך ישראל עשית תשועה גדולה ופרקו כהיום הזה ואחר כך באו בניך לדביר ביתך ופנו את היכלך וטהרו את מקדשך והדליקו נרות בחצרות קדשך וקבעו שמונת ימי חנכה אלו להודות ולהלל לשמך הגדול.</p>
<p>2) I Maccabees 4:36-59 [New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)] ³⁶ Then Judas and his brothers said, "See, our enemies are crushed; let us go up to cleanse the sanctuary and dedicate it." ³⁷ So all the army assembled and went up to Mount Zion. ³⁸ There they saw the sanctuary desolate, the altar profaned, and the gates burned. In the courts they saw bushes sprung up as in a thicket, or as on one of the mountains. They saw also the chambers of the priests in ruins. ³⁹ Then they tore their clothes and mourned with great lamentation; they sprinkled themselves with ashes ⁴⁰ and fell face down on the ground. And when the signal was given with the trumpets, they cried out to Heaven. ⁴¹ Then Judas detailed men to fight against those in the citadel until he had cleansed the sanctuary. ⁴² He chose blameless priests devoted to the law, ⁴³ and they cleansed the sanctuary and removed the defiled stones to an unclean place. ⁴⁴ They deliberated what to do about the altar of burnt offering, which had been profaned. ⁴⁵ And they thought it best to tear it down, so that it would not be a lasting shame to them that the Gentiles had defiled it. So they tore down the altar, ⁴⁶ and stored the stones in a convenient place on the temple hill until a prophet should come to tell what to do with them. ⁴⁷ Then they took unhewn^[d] stones, as the law directs, and built a new altar like the former one. ⁴⁸ They also rebuilt the sanctuary and the interior of the temple, and consecrated the courts. ⁴⁹ They made new holy vessels, and brought the lampstand, the altar of incense, and the table into the temple. ⁵⁰ Then they offered incense on the altar and lit the lamps on the lampstand, and these gave light in the temple. ⁵¹ They placed the bread on the table and hung up the curtains. Thus they finished all the work they had undertaken. ⁵² Early in the morning on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, which is the month of Chislev, in the one hundred forty-eighth year,^[e] ⁵³ they rose and offered sacrifice, as the law directs, on the new altar of burnt offering that they had built. ⁵⁴ At the very season and on the very day that the Gentiles had profaned it, it was dedicated with songs and harps and lutes and cymbals. ⁵⁵ All the people fell on their faces and worshiped and blessed Heaven, who had prospered them. ⁵⁶ So they celebrated the dedication of the altar for eight days, and joyfully offered burnt offerings; they offered a sacrifice of well-being and a thanksgiving offering. ⁵⁷ They decorated the front of the temple with golden crowns and small shields; they restored the gates and the</p>	

chambers for the priests, and fitted them with doors. ⁵⁸ There was very great joy among the people, and the disgrace brought by the Gentiles was removed.

⁵⁹ Then Judas and his brothers and all the assembly of Israel determined that every year at that season the days of dedication of the altar should be observed with joy and gladness for eight days, beginning with the twenty-fifth day of the month of Chislev.

3) Babylonian Talmud Tractate Shabbat 21b

The Gemara asks: What is Hanukkah, and why are lights kindled on Hanukkah? The Gemara answers: The Sages taught in Megillat Ta'anit: On the twenty-fifth of Kislev, the days of Hanukkah are eight. One may not eulogize on them and one may not fast on them. What is the reason? When the Greeks entered the Sanctuary they defiled all the oils that were in the Sanctuary by touching them. And when the Hasmonean monarchy overcame them and emerged victorious over them, they searched and found only one cruse of oil that was placed with the seal of the High Priest, undisturbed by the Greeks. And there was sufficient oil there to light the candelabrum for only one day. A miracle occurred and they lit the candelabrum from it eight days. The next year the Sages instituted those days and made them holidays with recitation of Hallel and special thanksgiving in prayer and blessings.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת שבת כא:

מאי חנוכה דתנו רבנן בכ"ה בכסליו יומי דחנוכה תמניא אינון דלא למספד בהון ודלא להתענות בהון שכשנכנסו יוניים להיכל טמאו כל השמנים שבהיכל וכשגברה מלכות בית חשמונאי ונצחום בדקו ולא מצאו אלא פך אחד של שמן שהיה מונח בחותמו של כהן גדול ולא היה בו אלא להדליק יום אחד נעשה בו נס והדליקו ממנו שמונה ימים לשנה אחרת קבעום ועשאוים ימים טובים בהלל והודאה

4) Babylonian Talmud Tractate Avodah Zara 8a

The Sages taught: When Adam the first person saw that the day was progressively diminishing, as the days become shorter from the autumnal equinox until the winter solstice, he did not yet know that this is a normal phenomenon, and therefore he said: Woe is me; perhaps because I sinned the world is becoming dark around me and will ultimately return to the primordial state of chaos and disorder. And this is the death that was sentenced upon me from Heaven, as it is written: "And to dust shall you return" (Genesis 3:19). He arose and spent eight days in fasting and in prayer. Once he saw that the season of Tevet, i.e., the winter solstice, had arrived, and saw that the day was progressively lengthening after the solstice, he said: Clearly, the days become shorter and then longer, and this is the order of the world. He went and observed a festival for eight days. Upon the next year, he observed both these eight days on which he had fasted on the previous year, and these eight days of his celebration, as days of festivities.

תלמוד בבלי עבודה זרה ח.

ת"ר לפי שראה אדם הראשון יום שמתמעט והולך אמר אוי לי שמא בשביל שסררתי עולם חשוך בעדי וחוזר לתוהו ובוהו וזו היא מיתה שנקנסה עלי מן השמים עמד וישב ח' ימים בתענית [ובתפלה] כיון שראה תקופת טבת וראה יום שמאריך והולך אמר מנהגו של עולם הוא הלך ועשה שמונה ימים טובים לשנה האחרת עשאוים לאלו ולאלו ימים טובים

5) Rabbi Kook, Ain Aya, Shabbat Vol. 1, p.65

Everyone must know
 That deep within burns a candle.
 No one's candle is like someone else's;
 No one lacks a personal candle.
 We all must know
 That it is our task to reveal our light to the world,
 To ignite it until it is a great flame
 And to illuminate the universe.

עין איה שבת א

צריך שכל איש ידע ויבין שבתוך תוכו דולק נר ואין נרו שלו כנר חברו. ואין איש שאין לו נר. וצריך שכל איש ידע ויבין שעליו לעמול ולגלות את אור הנר ברבים, ולהדליקו לאבוקה גדולה ולהאיר את העולם כולו.