



The lights of the Hanukkah menorah that we kindle in our homes are a reminder both of the Menorah in the Temple in Jerusalem and the light that shines brightly within each one of us. For as it says in Proverbs 20:27: *"The candle of God is the soul of man."*

A little light will dispel much darkness.

*Eilenburg, Tzeda laDerekh, 1623*

*"Blessed are You Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe,  
who has kept us alive,  
who has sustained us  
and brought us to this time."*

Sheheheyanu Blessing, said on first night of Hanukkah

Reb Yisroel kindled the wick and there in a barracks at Bergen Belsen, the light began to burn. Afterwards, one of the Jews came up to Reb Yisroel with a question.

"Rebbe," the man continued, "when hundreds of dead Jewish bodies are lying just a few feet away from this menorah and thousands more are being massacred every day, should we recite that third blessing and thank God for keeping us alive at a time like this?"



"I had the same question," the Bluzhover Rebbe replied. "That's why I stopped before reciting the final blessing. I wanted to ask the advice of my fellow Rabbis to see if it was, indeed, permissible to recite such a blessing during these terrible times. But when I turned and saw the faces of all the Jews eagerly crowding around me-when I saw their eyes alive with fire and love for this mitzvah - I knew that not only was it permissible, it was obligatory!"

"After being privileged to see with my own eyes," the Rebbe continued, "that the faith and the fervor of the Jewish People still lives - despite all that we have endured - how can I not thank God for keeping me alive to see this time."

Excerpt from *The Candle of God is the Soul of Man*, Libi Astair @2001 ([libia@netvision.net.il](mailto:libia@netvision.net.il))

*R. Alexandria on concluding his prayer added the following:*

May it be Thy will, O Lord our God,  
to station us in an illumined corner  
and do not station us in a darkened corner,  
and let not our heart be sick nor our eyes darkened.

*Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot17a*

*A Psalm for Hanukah*

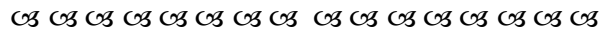
**Psalm 30**

1. *A mizmor/psalm; a song of of dedication of the House/Temple of David*
2. Adonai, my God,  
    I extol You,  
        for you have lifted me up  
            and not allowed my enemies to rejoice over me!
3. Adonai, my God,  
    I cried out to You  
        and You healed me
4. Adonai,  
    You lifted my *nefesh*/my being from She'ol  
        You revived me from descent into the Pit.
5. Sing out to Adonai,  
    all who are devoted, full of *hesed*/lovingkindness-  
        praise/give thanks to God's holy name.
6. For God is angry but a moment;  
    Life is God's favor  
    Weeping may linger for a night,  
        but at dawn, joyful singing rises up!
7. In my tranquil moments, I said,  
    "I will never be shaken".
8. for You, Adonai, as You please,  
    You made me firm as a mighty mountain.  
    and when You hid your presence,  
        I was terrified.
9. To you, Adonai, I call  
    and to Adonai, I appeal:
10. What gain is there in my blood?  
    what value in my descent to the grave?  
    Will dust thank/praise You?  
    Can it recite Your truth,  
        declare Your faithfulness?
11. Sh'ma/Hear Adonai,  
    have mercy on me!  
    Adonai -- be my help!
12. You turn my lament into dancing;  
    You undo my sackcloth and gird me with joy!
13. So that my whole being sings praises to You,  
    so I am not silent  
        Adonai, my God,  
            I will thank/praise You forever.

*Translated © Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, CSW, 1997*

When Adam saw the days getting gradually shorter, he said: "Woe is me, perhaps because I have sinned, the world around me is being darkened and returned to its state of chaos and confusion! This, then, is the kind of death to which I have been sentenced from Heaven!" So he began keeping an eight-day fast. But as he observed the winter equinox and noted the days getting increasingly longer he said: "This is the world's course," and he set forth to keep an eight-day festivity.

*Babylonian Talmud, Avodah Zarah 8a*



Way back, Jewish scholars debated whether to commemorate the miracle by lighting eight candles and then progressively light fewer and fewer candles (which would, after all, reflect the diminishment of that ancient cruse of oil) or to light one candle and then add lights progressively during the ensuing week. The approach that won out, of course, is the latter approach, to go from 1 to 8. Why?

*Rather than curse the darkness, we seek to fan the sparks of light---to find blessing where we can, locate community where it may exist, to treasure moments of joy where we may.* A person can't be asked to suddenly "jump" to 8 lights of joy, but we can help each other build from 1 to 8.

Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, CSW,  
"Notes on Hanukkah," Kislev-Tevet 5758/1998 (NCJH)

Sixty: A Song for Hanukah

Your hand holds the miracles,  
Outstretched, Fingers curved,  
You bring it before your eyes,  
Gleaming, infinite, wonders.

Before You, all eyes are lowered,  
Hands shielding the radiance of Your might;  
Still You hold out the miracles, separating the strands  
To stream through Your fingers

Almighty and Marvelous One.  
You offer us the glance at wonder,  
These shining threads that plait us up  
In Your plan for the world.

Almighty and Marvelous One.  
You call us to take up the light,  
To push aside our spirits' darkness  
For Your Name's sake.

At this season, the miracles appeared.  
At this season, we must work for miracles.

You open Your hand  
Not to pour the light upon our heads,  
But to offer it as a beacon  
That we might grasp it and move forward.

You open Your hand in this dark season  
As we warm each other and praise Your Name.

*Debbie Perlman, Flames to Heaven: New Psalms for Healing and Praise, page 75*

The National Center for Jewish Healing, a program of the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, provides consultation, publications, conferences and information and referral to Jewish communal organizations seeking to address the spiritual needs of Jews during times of illness and loss. It currently assists in the development of Jewish healing programs in more than 30 cities in the U.S. and Canada.

Visit [www.ncjh.org](http://www.ncjh.org) and [www.jcprograms.org](http://www.jcprograms.org) for more information and access to other resources to help sustain the spirit in challenging times.

The Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services is one of the nation's leading voluntary mental health and social service agencies. JBFCS provides a comprehensive network of mental health and social services to promote well-being, resilience and self-sufficiency for individuals and families in need in the New York metropolitan area. As leaders in the field of human services, we proudly serve people of all faiths, races and cultures.

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