

Match lighting other matches



MAGNIFY THE LIGHT

Jewish Prayers,
Poems, and
Reflections for
Hanukkah

About

MAGNIFY THE LIGHT

Hanukkah calls us to notice the light — even when the world feels dim.

In a time of worldwide darkness — both literal and metaphorical — we gather to recognize, amplify, and tend to the many lights that still shine. History teaches that the way forward in dark times is to follow the lights of hope, connection, compassion, and justice, even when it feels difficult. A single spark can grow into a flame, and a flame into a fire. But first, we begin with a spark.

For eight nights, as you kindle your *hanukkah* and set aside a pause in your day, we invite you to open the booklet — a collection of readings from Ritualwell writers, prompts, and creative invitations designed to awaken your awareness of light in its many forms.

About **MAGNIFY THE LIGHT**

Each night, you can:

- **Pause** in ritual to light the candles and name a light of justice in our world.
- **Reflect** on a short reading that invites us to see the lights among us.
- **Engage** with a creative prompt that invites your expression.
- **Renew** your personal spirit and our shared communal vision.

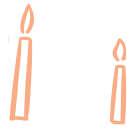
Let's kindle together — and let the light we do see grow warm and wide.

Yael Respes Farr, a Jew of color, lighting her Chanukkiya. Photo by Tim Shott, Florida Today





A waning moon in a starlit sky



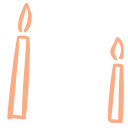
A BLESSING FOR KISLEV

by Blaze Ardman

When the cunning wind of *Kislev*
sneaks under your door,
wrap yourself in trust. Watch
the early waning moon descend.
Retreat into the blackness.
There is nothing else you can do.
Nothing else you can do.

Now, in the womb
of the cosmos, restless, waiting,
deep into the ninth month,
you dream of the birth of
Light.

It is a long, dark night.
When Light arrives,
Oh, how she brightens a room.
Oh, how thankful you are.



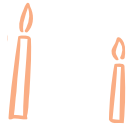
A BLESSING FOR KISLEV

by Blaze Ardman

Candles are lit.
Songs are sung. Stories are
spun. *Latkes* sizzle in oil.
Children scramble for gelt,
gamble it away with
dreidels made of cruel, shiny plastic
or sometimes wood – a gift from
the maple tree, meticulously carved, sanded
and weighted into a work of
functional art.

Light lingers, lengthens.
She opens her arms,
stretches subtly
beyond the next new moon
two days into the month of *Tevet*.
Hers is the only festival
empowered to span two moons.

For eight days Light cries
out to you, assures you
it is safe now
to bring your whole self out,
out from the shadows.



A BLESSING FOR KISLEV

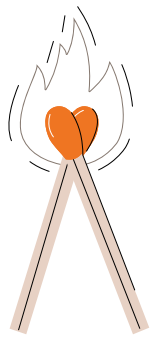
by Blaze Ardman

You whirl and shimmer,
alive in the blue and gold glow
of the flames, a swirl of neon.
The ancestors breathe within you.
You melt onto the earth
sleek as dripping wax
in a pattern
elegant, surprising, mesmerizing.

Countenance shines
upon your face, upon all the faces.
Again, you can see.
Again, you are seen.

An open hand reaching into the night sky





We dedicate this first night of Hanukkah to gratitude—the lights of people we love, the sparks of inspiration that guide us, and the blessings that sustain us.

Write about a person, connection, or part of your life that fills you with light.



A candle lit next to a gavel of justice



LIGHT CANDLES NOW by Trisha Arlin

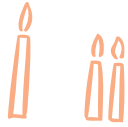
Light candles now,
In your home
For the homeless.

For the displaced
With no place
They can afford;

For the first peoples
Whose lands and cultures
Were stolen or degraded;

For the animals
Invading your backyards.
How dare they walk where they once lived;

For those on islands
Swamped by the rising water,
Ocean where there once was land;



LIGHT CANDLES NOW

by Trisha Arlin

For those who survived a shooting,
There is no more safety,
It is lost forever;

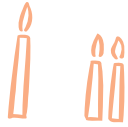
For the addicted whose illness
Destroys their true selves
While the greedy make money;

For the warred upon and bombed out,
Starving and hopeless,
Not even a tent to sleep in;

For the houses and habitats
Burnt up in climate change's fires,
And everything gone;

For the immigrants,
Losing the old lands to violence and poverty
And so violently unwelcome in the new.

Where
Will they
Light their candles now?



LIGHT CANDLES NOW

by Trisha Arlin

This is our covenant:
Take care of the earth
And it will take care of you.

So It Is Upon Us to—

Build housing;
Make reparations;
Preserve wilderness;

End fossil fuels;
Restrict guns;
Treat addiction;

Cease fire;
Live sustainably;
Welcome immigrants.

Create new homes
And save the old ones.
Light candles, Now.

Amen

A person lighting candles in a hanukkah







LET THERE BE LIGHT

by Suzie Sabransky

In times of darkness,

let there be light.

In times of heartbreak,

let there be light.

In times of uncertainty,

let there be light.

In times of hatred,

let there be light.

In times of fear,

let there be light.

In times of broken peace,

let there be light.

In times of prejudice,

let there be light.

In times of negativity,

let there be light.

And so it goes,

The list is long.



LET THERE BE LIGHT

by Suzie Sabransky

Longer than the eight nights of Hanukkah.

Longer than we have the strength to willingly recall.

Still, each night of Hanukkah, we shed light.

And each night we increase that light.

By the eighth night, entire rooms are ablaze in a wondrous glow,

A glow which grows, as home by home the candles are lit.

If we are courageous...

If we push beyond the tiredness...

If we join together as a community...

As a nation...

As a people...

As a world...

The lights of the *hanukkiah* can push back the blackness,

Force the soulless night, back into nothingness.

And then, on the eighth night of Hanukkah

All the world can become a haven,

a Mecca from which only good can spread.

It is then that the true meaning of the Festival of Lights will shine.

And all of creation will be bathed in light.



Write about a time when community uplifted or supported you during a moment of darkness.



A bunch of paper candles in a background of a star of David made of craft wood



FORTY-FOUR PERFECT CANDLES

by Jacqueline Jules

This small blue box,
four inches tall,
holds forty-four candles.

Exactly enough for eight nights
provided one or more
are not broken, misshapen,
or missing a wick.

I've never trusted one box
to last me all eight nights.

I buy two boxes to be sure,
just like at the grocery,
where I get two cartons of eggs,
so I'll still have enough
if a few break in the car.



FORTY-FOUR PERFECT CANDLES

by Jacqueline Jules

I've always lived my life
as Joseph advised Pharaoh,
storing grain away
for seven years of famine.

I won't believe in miracles.

Until the year I pull candles
from a single box
for eight consecutive nights,
and never find one broken,
misshapen, or missing a wick.

A blue and silver gift note with the text of eight great nights on it





Tell the story of your resilience as if it were a fable or legend. Cast yourself as the hero and let the narrative unfold.



A NEW LIGHT: HANUKKAH PRAYER

by Devon Spier

A new light.

Not the one before the ark; the one that burns eternal.

Or even the one that still hovers over creation, in these days of darkness that nearly devour our own souls.

A new light that enjoins us to remembrance and to the mysterious holy presence among us.

That allows us to behold the limitless vitality of each moment.

And every human being as a dancing flame.

For giving light is the force that frees all of us and with each flicker, redeems the world.

Rays of sunshine in between clouds over mountains





Write about a moment when you felt connected to the Light of a Divine Presence—a force greater than yourself, however you understand it.



CANDLES I REMEMBER

by Beth Kanell

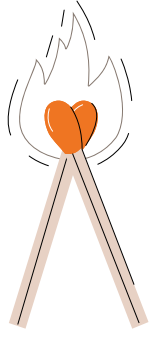
What death cannot take: the memory of our honeymoon, spent in our own version of San Francisco – home to a dozen bookstores we'd dreamed together of visiting. Glory!

Sourdough bread in the morning; afternoons among shelves, evenings sampling ocean fishes. Crowding together over our finds, meeting West Coast authors, gaping at signatures (and buying!).

Equally memorable: the little *menorah* we packed, with candles. Lighting them each night in the hotel room, holding onto tradition so much older than our love, than our new marriage. Light.

This year, beyond the solitude of the pandemic, and the deeper solitude of your body's departure, the silence of your voice, I have the bittersweet joy of knowing our marriage changed us into

what each of us needed most: In this alchemy of the soul, I light my salute to memory. The candles glow, tender, bright, something like your presence in my heart.



MAGNIFY THE LIGHT OF MEMORY

We dedicate the sixth night of Hanukkah to memory. Tonight, we hold close the loved ones who are no longer with us in body but continue to illuminate our lives.

Write a love letter to someone you're missing or someone who shaped you for the better. Tell them about the light they brought you, imagining your words reaching them.

A large, rounded rectangular area with a light orange background, intended for writing a love letter. It contains 20 horizontal lines for text entry.



ROSH HODESH TEVET

by Rabbi Janet Madden

In the days of lighting candles from left to right
(or right to left)
of gelt and dreidels,
singalongs and *latke* parties,
of remembering and publicizing the miracle of survival,
let us also remember the pious and beautiful young widow
who walked demurely and fearlessly
into the tent of the enemy.

Her arms as strong as her faith,
she served him salty cheese pancakes and strong wine,
then walked home, her people saved, his head in her bag.

At the head of the month of *Tevet*,
when the new moon nudges into view,
we offer our blessing for renewal
on her night of triumph:
may we celebrate this heroine of Judea
by observing on this night *Hag HaBanot*,
the Festival of Daughters.

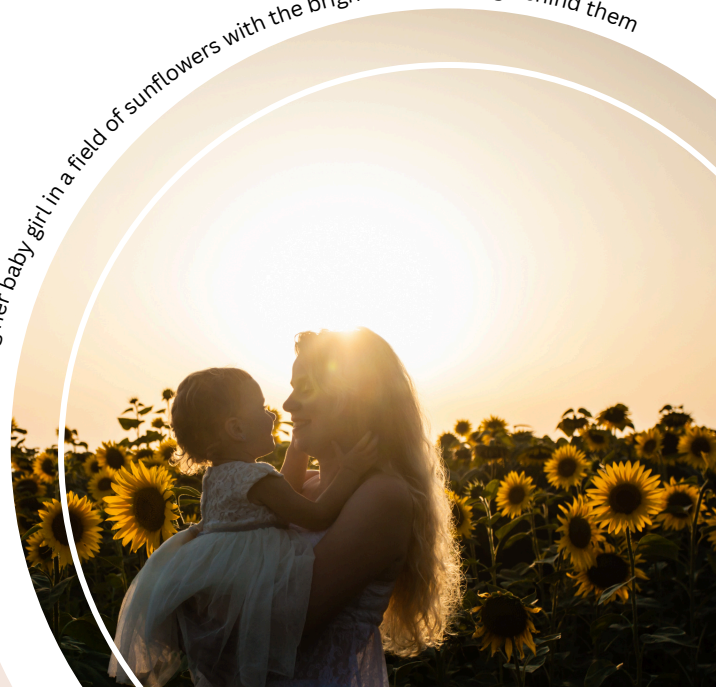


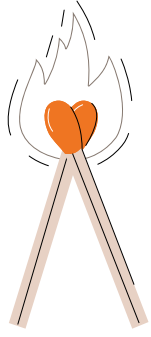
ROSH HODESH TEVET

by Rabbi Janet Madden

In the merit of Judith
let us rejoice in strong Jewish women:
keepers and transmitters of memories,
recipes, heirlooms and heritage
sustainers and saviors of the Jewish people,
bringers of light in the darkest times.

A mother holding her baby girl in a field of sunflowers with the bright sun shining behind them





MAGNIFY THE LIGHT OF INSPIRATION

We dedicate the seventh night of Hanukkah to the people who inspire us. Make a list of your heroes and heroines—biblical, literary, historical, or personal.

Choose one who calls to you tonight. Write about the light they spread in the world—in a story, poem, sketch, or song.

A large, light orange rectangular area with rounded corners, containing horizontal lines for writing.



THE EIGHTH CANDLE

by Darcy Garbenstein

The shamash sheds light
on my tabletop
covered with chocolate gelt
crispy *latkes*
jelly-filled *sufganiyot*

It also sheds light
on the suffering
we have endured
for ages upon ages
at the hands of others

I gaze into the first flame
and am taken back to Persia,
to England, to Prague
when our people's books
were turned to soot

In the second flame,
I'm transported to Milan,
Antioch, Daphne, Ravenna
and I see synagogues
flattened by fire and hate



THE EIGHTH CANDLE

by Darcy Garbenstein

For the third flame
I time travel to Toledo,
Seville, Cracow, Lisbon
where Jews' lives were at stake
figuratively and literally

I'm in France for the fourth flame
in Paris, Toulouse, Perpignan
in Rome too where the pious
watched the words of the *Talmud*
rise to the heavens as smoke from a pyre

Images of Kristallnacht
are forever burned into my memory
with the fifth flame
the broken glass crackling beneath my feet
shimmering in the synagogues' blaze



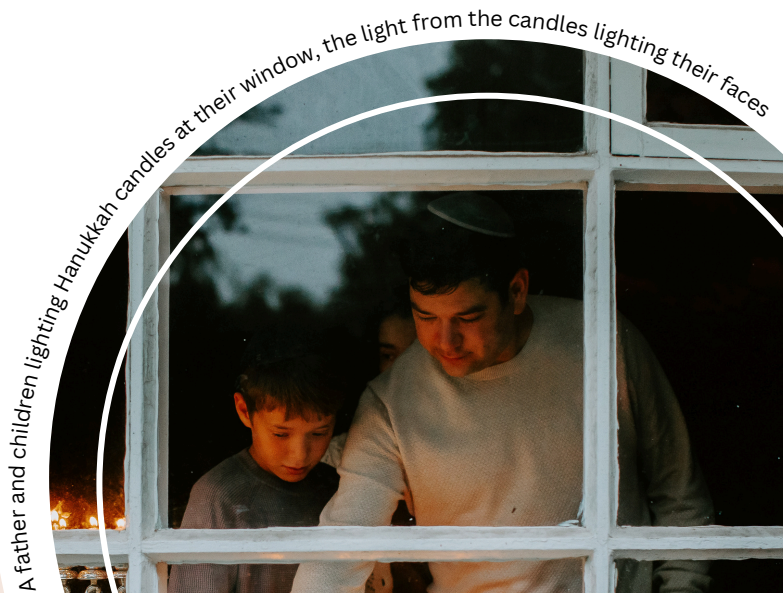
THE EIGHTH CANDLE

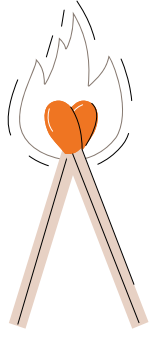
by Darcy Garbenstein

On the sixth night, the red flame
reminds me of the blood shed
at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life
Shabbat prayers silenced
then whispered as *kaddish*

The seventh candle is symbolic
as I recall the October 7 massacre
the Nova Festival turned from celebration to slaughter
peace-loving *kibbutzniks* killed en masse
lives snuffed out too soon

It's the eighth night of Hanukkah
and, despite it all,
I see reflected in the light
the faces of my family.
I see hope.





MAGNIFY THE LIGHT OF HOPE

We dedicate the eighth night of Hanukkah to hope. Sit with the glow of all eight candles, letting their radiance reflect the journey of the past nights.

You may want to reread what you've written so far. Then write about the hope that's emerging for you. You might even write the letters **H O P E** as an acrostic and see what new sparks arise.

A large, light orange rectangular area with rounded corners, containing horizontal lines for writing.

A little girl looking at the candles, their light glowing on her face



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