

# A SPECIAL PRAYER FOR CHANUKKAH- AL HA-NISSIM

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A special feature of our prayers during Chanukkah is the addition of "Al Ha-Nissim" to the Amidah. You can find it on page 29 in the prayerbook, and you don't want to miss it or you'll have to wait another whole year! Al Ha-Nissim- Nissim is the plural of "Nes," which you know from dreidel fame- nes gadol haya sham- a great miracle happened there.

Although Chanukkah is the only Jewish holiday that celebrates a military victory, the rabbis shift the emphasis from the miracle of the triumph of the Maccabees to the spiritual victory of the survival of the Jewish people.

And our survival is surely a miracle! Out-resourced and out-numbered, the few triumphed against the many, light overcame darkness, faith and hope defeated fear. This pivot in focus is reflected in the words of the Haftarah for Shabbat Chanukkah- "Not by might, and not by power, but by My spirit, says God."

Where did the Maccabees find the courage, not only to fight, but to rededicate the Temple and light the menorah, not knowing where they would find enough oil to last until they could be resupplied? Sometimes the miracle is our strength to move forward even when we feel overwhelmed- discouraged and afraid.

We read in the book of Proverbs (20:27) that the human soul is a candle of God. Each of us has that light within us, and Chanukkah reminds us that, just as one candle is not diminished in lighting another, so the flame within us only grows when we share our light with each other. This year, when we can't be together in person, we need to get creative about how we share the divine spark within us to bring light to our family and our community.

Al Ha-Nissim- for all the miracles that have enabled us to gather together to celebrate Chanukkah, we thankfully rejoice.