TRADITIONAL HANUKAH BLESSINGS

Addressing God with masculine pronouns

It is customary to recite these blessings before lighting the candles:

ברוך אתה לאלוה מלך העולם عشرת קדושה

Barukh atah Adonai Eloheynu melekh ha’olam asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel hanukah.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who makes us holy through your commandments and commands us to light the Hanukah candles.

ברוך אתה לאלוהים מלך העולם שעשה ניסים

Barukh atah Adonai Eloheynu melekh ha’olam she’esah nisim la’avoteynu bayamim hahem hazeh.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who performed miracles for our forefathers in their day at this season.

First night only:

ברוך אתה לאלוהים מלך העולם שעשה ניסים

Barukh atah Adonai Eloheynu melekh ha’olam shehehey’anu vekeiyemanu veheigiy’anu lazman hazeh.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who keeps us alive, sustains us, and brings us to this moment.
KOLOT’S HANUKAH BLESSINGS

Because Hebrew is a gendered language, God must be addressed and referred to using masculine or feminine pronouns.

Traditionally, all texts in Hebrew (the language of Jewish prayer) use masculine language, whether talking about the God of Israel as creator, liberator, or nursing mother.

On the back, we offer you the traditional blessings, which address God with masculine pronouns and corresponding verbs.

Here we offer you the same blessings, replacing Meleh Ha’olam (King of the Universe) with Mekor HaHayim (Source of Life).

We address God as you (feminine) and change the verbs accordingly.

We invite you to recite the Hanukah blessings on at least one night this year using the feminine pronouns for God. Does your sense of the Divine shift?

It is customary to recite these blessings before lighting the candles:

ברוך אתה יתברך מקורות החיים אשר קדשנו במצוותיך וקמרנו להדליק נר של חנוכה.

Praised are You God, Source of Life, who makes us holy through your commandments and commands us to light the Hanukah candles.

ברוך אתה יתברך מקורות החיים אשר הושפת נסים

Praised are You God, Source of Life, who performed miracles for our ancestors in their day at this season.

לאבותינו ולאמותינו ובמיים חיים ברך אתה.

We address God as you (feminine) and change the verbs accordingly.

First night only:

ברוך אתה יתברך מקורות החיים אשר נקימנו בקימוננו

Praised are You God, Source of Life, who keeps us alive, sustains us, and brings us to this moment.
The prayer Hanerot Halalu, found in the Talmud Soferim 20:6, is recited as the Hanukiya candles are being lit.

These lights we kindle for the miracles and the wonders and the salvations and the victories that You performed for our ancestors in their day at this season, through Your holy priests, and in every generation of Your people, through all who kindled lights of inspiration, hope, and peace.

All eight days of Hanukah, these candles are holy. We are not permitted to use their light, but only to look at them and to appreciate and to praise Your great name for Your miracles, Your wonders, and Your salvations.
miracles and wonders... of salvations and of victories:

This section refers to the many aspects of Jewish history and legend that we acknowledge at Hanukah. Some recent versions of this prayer express thanks for nehamot (comfort) in lieu of milhamot (wars or victories) because of its more peaceful message. If we choose to acknowledge our military victories, let us consciously commemorate those of both the Macabbees and the less well-known heroine, Judith.

performed for our ancestors:

In Hebrew, the word imoteynu (mothers) is added alongside the word avoteynu (fathers), thereby including all of our ancestors.

and in every generation... and peace:

Traditionally, this prayer highlights only two types of role models: military victors, such as the Macabbees and Judith, and high priests, who were involved in the miracle of the oil in the Temple. Kolot’s version of the prayer adds, “all who kindled lights of inspiration, hope, and peace” in order to expand the range of role models and miracle-makers from our past.

As we light candles to celebrate the sacredness of light and the mystery of darkness, we experience a moment of infinite possibility that has been shared by Jewish women and men of every generation.