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The [Festival](festival.html) Of Lights

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# Introduction

[Chanukah](chanukah.html), also [known](daat.html) as the [Festival](festival.html) of Lights, begins on [Kislev](feasts.html) [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html), and ends, [eight](eight.html) days later, in Tevet, the tenth month, on either the [first](one.html) or second day.[[1]](#footnote-1) This [festival](festival.html) is characterized by the lighting an increasing [number](nchart.html) of candles on each day. A total of [thirty-six](thirtysix.html) candles are lit during this [eight](eight.html)-day [festival](festival.html).

On the [eight](eight.html) nights of [Chanukah](chanukah.html), [Jews](gen-jew.html) light the [eight](eight.html) branched candlestick [known](daat.html) as the Chanukiah. The Chanukiah is placed on the right side of the front door opposite the [mezuzah](mezuzah.html).

Our Sages also [teach](teacher.html) that [Chanukah](chanukah.html) is a second chance[[2]](#footnote-2) to celebrate the [Feast of Tabernacles](succoth.html) ([Succoth](succoth.html)).

***2 Maccabees 10:6-7*** *And they kept* [*eight*](eight.html) *days with gladness, as in the feast of the* [*tabernacles*](succoth.html)*, remembering that not long afore they held the* [*feast of tabernacles*](succoth.html)*, when they wandered in the mountains and dens like beasts. Therefore, they bare branches, and fair boughs, and palms also, and sang* [*psalms*](psalms1.html) *unto him that had given them good success in cleansing his place.*

From a [spiritual](physical.html) perspective [Chanukah](chanukah.html) is [eight](eight.html) days, even as [Succoth](succoth.html) is [eight](eight.html) days, and we light [eight](eight.html) candles because it has a [connection](connection.html) with the *Ohr HaGanuz*, hidden light, which will be revealed in its full glory in the days of [Mashiach](mashiach.html).

Because [Chanukah](chanukah.html) is a second chance to celebrate the [Festival](festival.html) of [Succoth](succoth.html), we would expect to see that those who celebrate a “[Festival](festival.html) of Lights” might celebrate it in the [seventh](seven.html) month when the [Feast of Tabernacles](succoth.html) took place, or in the [ninth](nine.html) or tenth month when [Chanukah](chanukah.html) is celebrated. [Succoth](succoth.html) is also intimately associated with *light*.

During [Succoth](succoth.html),[[3]](#footnote-3) in the days of the [Temple](temple.html), *the light of the* [*world*](worlds.html) ([four](four.html) large candlesticks) were set up in the courtyard of the women.

[***Succah***](succoth.html) ***51a*** *MISHNAH. HE WHO HAS NOT SEEN THE REJOICING AT THE PLACE OF THE WATER-DRAWING HAS NEVER SEEN REJOICING IN HIS LIFE. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE* [*FIRST*](one.html)[*FESTIVAL*](festival.html) *DAY OF* [*TABERNACLES*](succoth.html) *THEY[[4]](#footnote-4) DESCENDED[[5]](#footnote-5) TO THE COURT OF THE WOMEN WHERE THEY HAD MADE A GREAT ENACTMENT. THERE WERE THERE GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS WITH* [*FOUR*](four.html) *GOLDEN BOWLS ON THE TOP OF EACH OF THEM AND* [*FOUR*](four.html) *LADDERS[[6]](#footnote-6) TO EACH, AND* [*FOUR*](four.html) *YOUTHS DRAWN FROM THE PRIESTLY STOCK IN WHOSE* [*HANDS*](fourteen.html) *WERE HELD JARS OF OIL CONTAINING* [*ONE*](one.html) *HUNDRED AND* [*TWENTY*](twenty.html) *LOG WHICH THEY POURED INTO THE BOWLS.*

*FROM THE WORN-OUT DRAWERS AND GIRDLES OF THE* [*PRIESTS*](priests.html) *THEY MADE WICKS AND WITH THEM THEY KINDLED THE LAMPS; AND[[7]](#footnote-7) THERE WAS NOT A COURTYARD IN* [*JERUSALEM*](city.html) *THAT WAS NOT ILLUMINED BY THE LIGHT OF THE PLACE OF THE WATER-DRAWING.*

The Hasmoneans (the Maccabees) celebrated [Chanukah](chanukah.html) in the 165 B.C.E.[[8]](#footnote-8) [time](time.html) period.[[9]](#footnote-9) However, they celebrated it at that [time](time.html) because that was the designated [time](time.html) for [Chanukah](chanukah.html) [events](feasts.html) to occur. [Chanukah](chanukah.html) [type](types.html) [events](feasts.html) always occur during this [time](time.html) frame, **every year**! [Chanukah](chanukah.html) was ordained by [HaShem](hashem.html) from the beginning, as we can see in the [Gemara](orallaw.html):

[***Avodah Zarah***](idolatry.html) ***8a***[*GEMARA*](orallaw.html)*. Said R. Hanan b. Raba: KALANDA[[10]](#footnote-10) is kept on the* [*eight*](eight.html) *days following the [winter] equinox. SATURNALIA[[11]](#footnote-11) on the* [*eight*](eight.html) *days preceding the equinox. As a mnemonic take the verse, Thou hast beset me behind and before.[[12]](#footnote-12)*

The [Talmud](orallaw.html) shares that among them were the holidays that preceded and followed the winter solstice. The [first](one.html) was an [eight](eight.html)-day [holiday](festival.html) called Kalanda (Kalantes), and the second was an [eight](eight.html)-day celebration that followed it called Saturnalia. The [two](two.html) holidays were a total of 16 days and were observed from Dec. 13- Dec. 29.

*Our Rabbis* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: When primitive* [*Adam*](adam.html) *saw the day getting gradually shorter, he said, ‘Woe is me, perhaps because I have sinned, the* [*world*](worlds.html) *around me is being darkened and returning to its state of chaos and confusion; this then is the kind of death to which I have been sentenced from* [*Heaven*](heaven.html)*!’ So he began keeping an* [*eight*](eight.html) *days’ fast. But as he observed the winter equinox and noted the day getting increasingly longer, he said, ‘This is the* [*world*](worlds.html)*'s course’, and he set forth to keep an* [*eight*](eight.html) *day’ festivity. In the following year he* [*appointed*](settimes.html) *both[[13]](#footnote-13) as* [*festivals*](festivals.html)*. Now, he fixed them for the sake of* [*Heaven*](heaven.html)*, but the [heathens]* [*appointed*](settimes.html) *them for the sake of* [*idolatry*](idolatry.html)*.*

He was so ecstatic and relieved that *in the ensuing year(s) he established these* [*eight*](eight.html) *days* *before and* [*eight*](eight.html) *days after*, and dedicated them to [heaven](heaven.html), but the pagans came later and made it into astral worship.

Thus we see that the [festival](festival.html) of [Chanukah](chanukah.html) was instituted by [Adam](adam.html) very close to the beginning of [time](time.html). This early celebration of the [Festival](festival.html) of Lights was called “[Adam](adam.html)’s [festival](festival.html)”. [Two](two.html) deviant [festivals](festivals.html) sprang up from [Adam](adam.html)’s [festival](festival.html): *Kalanda* is the [eight](eight.html) days after the winter solstice, and *Saturnalia* is [eight](eight.html) days beforehand.

As we go forward in [time](time.html), from the days of [Adam](adam.html), we find several allusions to [Chanukah](chanukah.html) in the Torah.[[14]](#footnote-14)

1. In the original [Hebrew](hebrew.html), the [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html) word in the Torah is *Ohr* - אור, light. We begin lighting the [Chanukah](chanukah.html) lights on the [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html) day of the [ninth](nine.html) month called [Kislev](feasts.html). We continue lighting for [eight](eight.html) days till the beginning of Tevet, the tenth month. The last day of the feast[[15]](#footnote-15) is the greatest day of the feast. Therefore, it is the **tenth** month which is *the most important*.
2. When the Bne Israel[[16]](#footnote-16) traveled in the desert, on their way [from Egypt](thebirth.html) to the [land of Israel](city.html), the [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html) place that they camped was [*Chashmonah*](stages.html). This alludes to the priestly family of Chashmonaim (Hasmoneans) who led the Maccabee armies in the battle against the Greeks, and rested on the [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html) day of [Kislev](feasts.html).
3. The 23rd chapter of Vayikra (Leviticus) describes [HaShem](hashem.html)’s holidays in order, starting with [Shabbat](sabbath.html). Immediately afterwards, in the beginning of chapter 24, we find the [commandment](cmds613.html) to light the Menorah in the [Temple](temple.html). This is a hint to a [holiday](festival.html) connected to the lighting of the Menorah.[[17]](#footnote-17)
4. The 7th chapter of Bamidbar ([Numbers](nchart.html)) describes the offerings that the tribal leaders brought when the [Tabernacle](mikdash.html) was dedicated. Chapter 8 begins: [*HaShem*](hashem.html)[*spoke*](mashal.html) *to Moshe, saying: “*[*Speak*](mashal.html) *to Aaron and say to him: ‘When you light the lamps, the* [*seven*](seven.html) *lamps shall cast their light toward the* [*face*](body.html) *of the menorah*.’” We thus see a [connection](connection.html) between the dedication of the [Temple](temple.html) and the lighting of the Menorah. After the Maccabean war ended, the [Jews](gen-jew.html) cleaned, repaired and rededicated the [Temple](temple.html), and lit the Menorah once again.
5. In the Nazarean Codicil[[18]](#footnote-18) we find the last allusion to [Chanukah](chanukah.html) written in the tenth chapter John, verse 22: *And it was at* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *the feast of the dedication* ([Chanukah](chanukah.html))*, and it was winter. 23 And* [*Jesus*](yeshua.html) *walked in the* [*temple*](temple.html) *in Solomon’s porch. 24 Then came the* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html) *round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly*. Here we see the word ‘[Chanukah](chanukah.html)’ translated as ‘Dedication’, and we see [Yeshua](yeshua.html) celebrating it.

Thus we have additional hints, in the Torah, that [Chanukah](chanukah.html) was in the mind of [HaShem](hashem.html) when He created the [world](worlds.html).

As we go forward in [time](time.html) we find an allusion to [Chanukah](chanukah.html) in the Tanach.

The Prophet Chaggai alluded to [Chanukah](chanukah.html) in his prophecy:

***Chaggai (Haggai) 2:18*** *Consider now from this day and upward, from the* [*four*](four.html) *and twentieth day of the* [*ninth*](nine.html) *month, even from the day that the foundation of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*’s* [*temple*](temple.html) *was laid, consider it. 19 Is the* [*seed*](flower.html) *yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the* [*fig*](bethphag.html) *tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.*

From this prophecy we see that the [first](one.html) full day of the laying of the foundation for the second [Temple](temple.html) was on [Kislev](feasts.html) [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html),[[19]](#footnote-19) the [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html) day of the [ninth](nine.html) month. Thus the [Temple](temple.html) and its light are associated with [Chanukah](chanukah.html), The [Festival](festival.html) of Light.

This date for the laying of the foundation of the second [Temple](temple.html) is so significant that the Syrian-Greeks will specifically choose this day to defile the [Temple](temple.html), in 162 B.C.E. The [Temple](temple.html), built for the glory of [HaShem](hashem.html), was defiled by idolaters, transforming it into a place that would combine [Jewish](gen-jew.html) faith with a universal, Hellenistic vision. For this reason they placed their [idol](idolatry.html) in the [Temple](temple.html), choosing specifically the [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html) of [Kislev](feasts.html) as the day for this desecration, so as to correspond with the original day of the laying of the foundation of the Second [Temple](temple.html). This was a deliberate attempt to offend the religious public, which they defined as a group of zealots.

[Three](three.html) years after the desecration of the [Temple](temple.html) by the Syrian-Greeks, Yehuda Maccabee and his brothers planned the rededication of the altar and of the [Temple](temple.html) as a whole for the anniversary of its defilement, the day of the oil, and they celebrated the [festival](festival.html) of [Succoth](succoth.html) in the [ninth](nine.html) month, “with myrtle branches and citron branches and palm branches, for [eight](eight.html) days, with joy and festivity”.[[20]](#footnote-20) They thereby instituted for all [generations](toldot.html) the parallel between the dedication of the [Temple](temple.html) in the days of King Solomon, on [Succoth](succoth.html),[[21]](#footnote-21) The laying of the foundation for the second [Temple](temple.html), and its rededication in [Kislev](feasts.html) in the days of the Hasmoneans, with a further parallel between the [ingathering](gather.html) of the grain and the wine and the [ingathering](gather.html) of the olives, as celebrations of equal weight.

Before we get too far ahead of ourselves, lets continue looking at another allusion to [Chanukah](chanukah.html), before the days of the Hasmoneans, as detailed by our Sages, in the [Mishna](orallaw.html).

We see that the [Oral Torah](orallaw.html) given to Moshe on Mount [Sinai](stages.html) also has an allusion to [Chanukah](chanukah.html).

***Bikkurim Chapter 1:6.*** *HE WHO BUYS* [*TWO*](two.html) *TREES [THAT HAD GROWN] IN PROPERTY BELONGING TO HIS FELLOW BRINGS BIKKURIM BUT IS NOT TO MAKE THE RECITAL. R. MEIR SAYS: HE ALSO MAKES THE RECITAL. IF THE WELL DRIED UP, OR THE TREE WAS CUT DOWN, HE BRINGS BUT DOES NOT RECITE. R. JUDAH SAYS: HE BRINGS AND RECITES. FROM* [*PENTECOST*](shavuot.html) *TILL SUKKOTH[[22]](#footnote-22)* [*ONE*](one.html) *MAY BRING [BIKKURIM] AND MAKE THE RECITAL; FROM SUKKOTH TILL HANUKAH,[[23]](#footnote-23)* [*ONE*](one.html) *MAY BRING, BUT DOES NOT MAKE THE RECITAL. R. JUDAH B. BATHYRA SAYS:* [*ONE*](one.html) *MAY BRING AND ALSO MAKE THE RECITAL.*

Apparently, while the [holiday](festival.html) of [Chanukah](chanukah.html) is a later development, this [time](time.html) of the year is agriculturally significant because the agricultural aspect of [first](one.html) fruits (bikkurim) serves to [purify](purity.html) the cosmic [festival](festival.html), instituted by [Adam](adam.html), which had become a pagan celebration. The natural agricultural [cycle](cycles.html) of the [Land of Israel](city.html) is such that the end of the olive season (and thus the end of the [first](one.html) fruits season) falls in the last week of [Kislev](feasts.html). This creates a situation in which the celebration of the [first](one.html) fruits with olive oil coincides with the natural, universally recognized need to create light at this [time](time.html) of darkness. Thus the light of pure olive oil, from the produce of the land brought as [first](one.html) fruits to the [Temple](temple.html), replaces the impure, pagan “light and [fire](fire.html),” thereby illuminating the [world](worlds.html) with [purity](purity.html) emanating from the holiness of the land and of the [Temple](temple.html).

A [connection](connection.html) between [Chanukah](chanukah.html) and [Succoth](succoth.html) is also found among the prophesies of Haggai. He was [one](one.html) of the last prophets and [one](one.html) of the *Anshe Knesset HaGedolah*, The Men of the Great Assembly. He lived during the reign of King Darius of Persia, who according to the [Midrash](orallaw.html) was the son of Achashverosh and [Esther](esther.html), and he sanctioned and encouraged the construction of the second [Beit HaMikdash](mikdash.html) which had begun in the days of Cyrus[[24]](#footnote-24) but was subsequently discontinued for [eighteen](eighteen.html) years.

Haggai, the Prophet, conveyed the following:

***Haggai 2:1,6*** *In the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *month [Tishre] on the* [*twenty*](twenty.html)[*first*](one.html) *of the month, the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *day of* [*Succoth*](succoth.html)*, which is called* [*Hoshana Rabba*](hoshana.html)*h, the word of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *came through Haggai the prophet saying ... for thus said* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, ‘there will be* [*one*](one.html) *more; it is a small* [*one*](one.html)*, I will shake the* [*heavens*](heaven.html) *and the earth and the sea and the dry land*’.

The message of this prophecy was that in addition to the current subjugation under Persia, [one](one.html) more [nation](nations.html) would subdue the [Jews](gen-jew.html), the Greeks; but their domination would last only a short [time](time.html).[[25]](#footnote-25) [HaShem](hashem.html) was thus saying, “During the Greek rule, I will cause a major upheaval in the land”, a reference to the Hasmonean’s revolt against the Greeks and the miracle of [Chanukah](chanukah.html).

A

[festival](festival.html) of lights is something that many cultures have in common with the [Jews](gen-jew.html). Hindus have *Diwali*, the Buddhists have *Loy Krathong* (with water-borne and air-borne lanterns), the Chinese have their [annual](annual.html) Lantern [Festival](festival.html), and I'm sure there are many more. Lighting displays have also been an important aspect for Christmas observers around the [world](worlds.html).

Lets look at some of these observances and see how they compare to [Chanukah](chanukah.html), which has its source in [Adam](adam.html)’s [festival](festival.html) observance.

# Background

While I was studying at the University, I met a young woman who told me that she, and other Hindus in India, celebrated the [festival](festival.html) of lights[[26]](#footnote-26) in the [*sixth*](six.html) and [*seventh*](seven.html) month of the Hindu [calendar](calendar.html), on the day of the [new](new.html) [moon](chodesh.html). This corresponds to the Gregorian months of October and November. This got me wondering about connections to [Chanukah](chanukah.html), which is also called The [Festival](festival.html) of Lights.

I have [known](daat.html) for some [time](time.html) that Christians also celebrate a [festival](festival.html) of lights on December 25. *Christmas* is sometimes called in the Latin [Church](church.html) the Feast of Lights, so many candles are used. What is fascinating is that this [festival](festival.html) takes place in the tenth month, yes, the tenth month, on the [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html) day. While everyone knows that December is the [twelfth](twelve.html) month of the Gregorian [calendar](calendar.html), not so many realize that *December* means the *tenth month* in Latin. Thus the [name](name.html) *December* testifies to the fact that this [time](time.html) period was [known](daat.html) in earlier times as the *tenth month*. The Biblical [calendar](calendar.html) does, indeed, call this [time](time.html) period *Tevet*, which is the tenth month of the Biblical [calendar](calendar.html). Clearly the ancient Roman [calendar](calendar.html) also acknowledged that this is the [time](time.html) for the tenth month.

On the [twelve](twelve.html) days of *Christmas*,[[27]](#footnote-27) Between Christmas and the Epiphany, Christians decorate the outside and inside of their houses with lights.

*Christmas* is also observed as an [eight](eight.html)-day [festival](festival.html) from December 25 through January 1. Note the [eight](eight.html) days: Dec. 25, Dec. 26, Dec. 27, Dec. 28, Dec. 29, Dec. 30, Dec. 31, Jan. 1. Many abstain from work during these days. Major manufacturers[[28]](#footnote-28) often give their employees these days as vacation.

Further, some Christians celebrate the Feast of the [Circumcision](circumcz.html) of Our Lord, which is a Christian celebration of the [Brit mila](circumcz.html) (ritual [circumcision](circumcz.html)) of [Yeshua](yeshua.html), [eight](eight.html) days after his [birth](birth.html), the occasion on which the child was formally given his [name](name.html), [Yeshua](yeshua.html), a [name](name.html) derived from [Hebrew](hebrew.html) meaning [*salvation*](salvation.html). The feast day appears on January 1 in the liturgical [calendar](calendar.html) of the [Eastern](east.html) Orthodox [Church](church.html). It also appears in the pre-1960 General Roman [Calendar](calendar.html), and is celebrated by some churches of the Anglican Communion and virtually all Lutheran churches.

*Christmas* is celebrated by attaching lights to their Christmas trees and to their homes.

*Ganden Ngamcho* is celebrated, by Buddhists, on the [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html) day of the tenth month of the Tibetan [calendar](calendar.html). On this night of the day, countless butter lamps are lit on the roofs of every monastery and lay person’s house. Its distinctive mark is the lighting of lamps and bonfires. This Tibetan Buddhist [festival](festival.html) commemorates the [birth](thebirth.html) and death of Tsongkhapa (1357-1419), a saintly scholar, [teacher](teacher.html), and reformer of the monasteries, who enforced strict monastic rules.

The Tibetan [calendar](calendar.html) is lunar based and the tenth month corresponds to the Biblical [calendar](calendar.html) for [Kislev](feasts.html) (the [ninth](nine.html) month). This means that Ganden Ngamcho falls on the [first](one.html) night of [Chanukah](chanukah.html)!

When I realized that these [four](four.html) major religions, Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism,[[29]](#footnote-29) all had a major [festival](festival.html) called the [*festival*](festival.html) *of lights*, I [knew](daat.html) that there had to be a common origin that was based in the Torah.

# [Salvation](salvation.html)

Each of [four](four.html) great religions celebrate their [*festivals*](festivals.html) *of lights* to commemorate a great [salvation](salvation.html) for the people. In our introduction we demonstrated that [Adam](adam.html) instituted the Feast of Lights ([Chanukah](chanukah.html)) specifically to commemorate his own [salvation](salvation.html) from a [world](worlds.html) that was descending into darkness.

[***Avodah Zarah***](idolatry.html) ***8a*** *When primitive* [*Adam*](adam.html) *saw the day getting gradually shorter, he said, ‘Woe is me, perhaps because I have sinned, the* [*world*](worlds.html) *around me is being darkened and returning to its state of chaos and confusion; this then is the kind of death to which I have been sentenced from* [*Heaven*](heaven.html)*!’*

Since the origins of this [festival](festival.html) were rooted in a great [salvation](salvation.html), we would expect this theme to be picked up in the celebrations for the other great religions.

I would like to look at each of the great religions and how they recreate [Adam](adam.html)’s [salvation](salvation.html).

## [Chanukah](chanukah.html)

[*Chanukah*](chanukah.html)*,* celebrated by [Jews](gen-jew.html) all over the [world](worlds.html), celebrates the [salvation](salvation.html) of the [Jews](gen-jew.html) from the tyranny and slaughter of the Syrian-Greeks, in the days of the Maccabees. The Syrian Greeks were trying to remove Torah from the [world](worlds.html). The Syrian-Greeks were trying to remove the Light of The [World](worlds.html)!

Now [Chanukah](chanukah.html) is a ‘second chance’ to celebrate [Succoth](succoth.html) (The [Feast of Tabernacles](succoth.html)). The Maccabees were too busy fighting the Syrian-Greeks to celebrate [Succoth](succoth.html), therefore when they completed their battle, they celebrated [Succoth](succoth.html) a bit late. Just as [Succoth](succoth.html) lasts [eight](eight.html) days, so also does [Chanukah](chanukah.html) last [eight](eight.html) days. What makes this so fascinating is that Christmas, as we shall soon see, is a faux date to celebrates the [birth](thebirth.html) of the [Messiah](mashiach.html).

## Christmas

*Christmas* is an official Christian [holiday](festival.html), celebrated in every Christian land, that celebrates the [birth](thebirth.html) of [Yeshua](yeshua.html) ([Jesus](yeshua.html)) who was sent to [save](salvation.html) mankind from their [sins](sin.html).

**Liturgically, Catholics celebrate an octave of Christmas, which is 8 days.** (Just FYI- we *also* celebrate an octave of Easter starting on Easter Sunday). The octave of Christmas ends on January 1, which is a holy day of obligation (the Solemnity of Mary)

This is very interesting because the Tanakh[[30]](#footnote-30) and the Nazarean Codicil[[31]](#footnote-31) show clearly that [Yeshua](yeshua.html) was born during the [Feast of Tabernacles](succoth.html) ([Succoth](succoth.html)), in the [seventh](seven.html) month ([Tishri](feasts.html)), as we have shown in the [study](study.html) titled: [BIRTH](birth.html).

Now the Nazarean Codicil shows clearly that Christians regard [Yeshua](yeshua.html) as *The Light of The* [*World*](worlds.html).

***Yochanan (John) 8:12*** *Then spake* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *again unto them, saying, I am the light of the* [*world*](worlds.html)*: he that followeth me shall not* [*walk*](walking.html) *in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

The [connection](connection.html) to [Succoth](succoth.html) becomes firm when we realize that [Yeshua](yeshua.html) [spoke](mashal.html) these words in [Jerusalem](city.html) while observing the Light of the [World](worlds.html) in the [Temple](temple.html), as we saw in the [Mishna](orallaw.html) earlier.

Now we learned earlier that [Chanukah](chanukah.html) was a ‘second chance’ to celebrate [Succoth](succoth.html). Thus we understand that there is a clear [connection](connection.html) between Christmas and [Chanukah](chanukah.html).

## Diwali

*Diwali* is an official [holiday](festival.html) in India, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, Mauritius, Malaysia, Nepal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Fiji. Hindus, Jains, and Sikhs celebrate Diwali**.**

This [festival](festival.html) holds an message of [salvation](salvation.html) since the [festival](festival.html) is reckoned with Lord Rama's victory as the King of Ayodhya after his return to the kingdom from 14 years of [exile](galuyot.html) along with his wife Sita and brother Laxman after killing the [demon](demons.html), King Ravana.

The [name](name.html) Diwali is itself a contraction of the word Dīpāvali, which translates into *row of lamps*. Diwali involves the lighting of small clay lamps filled with oil to signify the triumph of good over evil, victory over darkness, [knowledge](knowledge.html) over ignorance.

While Diwali is popularly [known](daat.html) as the “[festival](festival.html) of lights”, the most significant [spiritual](physical.html) meaning is “the awareness of the inner light”.

Central to Hindu philosophy is the assertion that there is something beyond the [physical](physical.html) [body](body.html) and mind which is pure, infinite, and eternal, called the Atman. Just as we celebrate the [birth](thebirth.html) of our [physical](physical.html) being, Diwali is the celebration of this inner light, in particular the knowing of which outshines all darkness (removes all obstacles and dispels all ignorance), awakening the individual to [one](one.html)'s true nature, not as the [body](body.html), but as the unchanging, infinite, immanent and transcendent reality.

The [festival](festival.html) begins on Dhan Teras, the 13th day of the dark half of Asvina,[[32]](#footnote-32) and ends on Yama Dvitiya, the 2nd day of the light half of Karttika.[[33]](#footnote-33)

Diwali, the [festival](festival.html) of lights, is on the [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html). That is the day when crackers burst and rockets soar.

## Ganden Ngam cho

## Tsongkhapa Butter Lamp [Festival](festival.html)

The [name](name.html), *Ganden Ngam* *cho,* means “[festival](festival.html) of light”, is celebrated in memory of Tsong Khapa,[[34]](#footnote-34) founder of Gelukpa sect who attained complete [salvation](salvation.html) and internal immortality. This [festival](festival.html) of light celebrates the [birth](thebirth.html), death, and entry to nirvana[[35]](#footnote-35) of Tsongkhapa.[[36]](#footnote-36)

During the [festival](festival.html), thousands of butter lamps (dishes of liquid clarified butter called *ghee,* with wicks floating in them) are lit on the roofs and window sills of homes and on [temple](temple.html) altars. At this [time](time.html) people seek [spiritual](physical.html) [merit](merit.html) by visiting the temples.

Originally *Ganden Ngamcho* was celebrated to honor the Buddha, pleasing the deities, driving out [demons](demons.html), and having fun.

As we mentioned earlier, *Ganden Ngam* *cho*, always falls on the [first](one.html) night of [Chanukah](chanukah.html). On the Tibetan [calendar](calendar.html) it occurs on the [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html) day of the tenth month, which is consistent with the allusion to [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*five*](five.html) and the *tenth* month.

*Ganden* is the Tibetan [name](name.html) for the paradise of the Buddha of the [future](future.html). This [name](name.html) therefore suggests the salutary wish that Ganden monastery would become a route to the [world](worlds.html)’s [salvation](salvation.html).

## Roman Saturnalia

Kalanda[[37]](#footnote-37) is the [eight](eight.html) days after the winter solstice, and Saturnalia is [eight](eight.html) days beforehand.

In Rome the feast of lights was named Saturnalia,[[38]](#footnote-38) as we saw previously from the [Talmud](orallaw.html). According to tradition the Saturnalia had been established in honor of Saturn when, all of a sudden, after a lengthy and prosperous reign, “Saturn suddenly disappeared.”

The observation of the Roman Saturnalia [festival](festival.html) was originally observed for [eight](eight.html) days, from the 25th of December until the [first](one.html) of the [New](teruah.html) Year.

Macrobius wrote[[39]](#footnote-39) that in celebrating the Saturnalia the Romans used to honor the altars of Saturn with lighted candles . . . sending round wax tapers during the Saturnalia.”

## Yule

Yule or Yuletide ("Yule-[time](time.html)") is a winter [festival](festival.html) that was initially celebrated by the historical Germanic people as a pagan religious [festival](festival.html), though it was later absorbed into, and equated with, the Christian [festival](festival.html) of Christmas. The [festival](festival.html) was originally celebrated from late December to early January on a date determined by the lunar Germanic [calendar](calendar.html). The [festival](festival.html) was placed on December 25 when the Christian [calendar](calendar.html) was adopted.

## Tet Nguyen Tieu

Tet Nguyen Tieu is The Lunar [New](teruah.html) Year [Festival](festival.html), which is also [known](daat.html) as The Lantern [Festival](festival.html), is a traditional [festival](festival.html) in China and it is the **Lunar** [**New**](teruah.html) **Year** in Vietnam. The Zhou [calendar](calendar.html) set the beginning of the year as the day of the [new](new.html) [moon](chodesh.html) before the winter solstice ([first](one.html) day of the [first](one.html) month).

Lanterns are decorated and exhibited in a gorgeous way. Along the streets, lanterns are also hung up in rows.

Originally from China, there are several stories explaining how Tet Nguyen Tieu got its start. In [one](one.html) tale, a swan flew down from [heaven](heaven.html), soaring above the Earth, and was killed by a hunter. The Jade Emperor, king of [heaven](heaven.html), was so infuriated by the killing of his swan that he ordered an army down to earth to burn everything to the ground as punishment. But not all of the emperor’s soldiers agreed; some managed to sneak down to earth and warn the people, telling them to hang red lanterns outside their homes on this day so that, from [heaven](heaven.html), the earth would appear to be burning. Evidently, the tradition stuck.



## Galdan Namchot

Galdan Namchot is a [festival](festival.html) celebrated in Tibet, Mongolia and many regions of Himalaya and particularly in Ladakh, India. It is to commemorate the [birth](thebirth.html) as well as parinirvana (death) and the Buddhahood of Je Tsongkhapa (1357–1419 AD), a famous Scholar/[teacher](teacher.html) of Tibetan Buddhism whose activities led to the formation of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism. Galdan Namchot also marks the beginning of the [new](teruah.html) year celebrations in Ladakh.

On the [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html) day of the tenth month of the Tibetan lunar [calendar](calendar.html), *Galdan Namchot* is celebrated to commemorate birthday and Buddhahood of Je Tsongkhapa. Galdan Namchot also marks the beginning of the [new](teruah.html) year (which falls after [five](five.html) days of the Galdan Namchot [festival](festival.html) and continues till the *Dosmoche* [*festival*](festival.html) in February)

As a part of the *Galdan Namchot* [festival](festival.html), monasteries, public and residential buildings are lit up. Butter lamps are also lit up which symbolizes the annihilation of darkness.

\* \* \*

Lampadephoria

*Feast of Isis*

Winter Solstice holidays: December 21

Blue Christmas ([holiday](festival.html))

Brumalia (Ancient Rome)

Dongzhi [Festival](festival.html) (Asia)

Korochun (Slavic)

Sanghamitta Day (Theravada Buddhism)

Shalako (Zuni)

Yaldā (Iran)

Ziemassvētki (Latvia)

# Gambling

There is a tradition of gambling on *Diwali*. Hindu beliefs hold that the Goddess Parvati played dice against her husband Lord Shiva, declaring “whosoever gambled on Diwali night would prosper throughout the following year”.

There is a tradition of gambling on [*Chanukah*](chanukah.html). We use the dreidel (a [four](four.html) sided top) with its [four](four.html) [Hebrew](hebrew.html) [letters](letters.html) to determine the outcome. This was [one](one.html) of the device that Our Sages used to [study](study.html) the Torah at a [time](time.html) when it was forbidden. They would [study](study.html) Torah till the soldiers came, then they would hide their books and play dreidel. Thus they were able to use gambling as a method of studying Torah.

# The [New](new.html) [Moon](chodesh.html)

[*Chanukah*](chanukah.html) is the only [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [festival](festival.html) that occurs during [two](two.html) separate months, from the [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html) of [Kislev](feasts.html)[[40]](#footnote-40) till the [first](one.html) or second of Tevet.[[41]](#footnote-41)

The [twelve](twelve.html) days, and the [eight](eight.html) days, of *Christmas* both span the months of December and January.

*Diwali* spans the lunar months of Asvina and Karttika, with the main celebration taking place on the [new](new.html) [moon](chodesh.html).

# [Household](househld.html) Celebrations

[*Chanukah*](chanukah.html) is a [festival](festival.html) which is normally celebrated only at home. In the Ashkenazi tradition, every member of the family lights his own Chanukiah. In the Sephardi tradition, only the [head](body.html) of the [household](househld.html) lights a Chanukiah. The Chanukiah is placed, outside the house, on the left side, as you enter the home, opposite the [mezuzah](mezuzah.html).

*Christmas* is a family [festival](festival.html) celebrated around a Christmas tree in the home. Family members exchange presents and enjoy a [festival](festival.html) meal together. The lights on the Christmas tree are lit and the lights on their homes are also lit. Many neighborhoods compete to see who can have the most spectacular display of lights on their homes and in their yards. In fact, other than the gift giving, the lights on the tree and house are the primary manifestations of this Christian [festival](festival.html) of lights.

*Diwali* is essentially a [festival](festival.html) for householders. The preparations, rituals, and the entire celebration focuses on the home and family, spanning out to cover the [community](community.html) as a natural extension.

*Ganden Ngam* *cho* is also primarily celebrated at home, though they also light lamps in their temples.

Now that we understand the various religious celebrations that are associated with the [festival](festival.html) of lights, let’s look deeper at the real reasons why folks celebrate these [festivals](festivals.html).

# [Adam](adam.html)’s [Festival](festival.html)[[42]](#footnote-42)

[Adam](adam.html) was like an astronaut who had just landed on a different planet. It was his planet, our planet, but everything was completely [new](new.html), including [Adam](adam.html), himself. He journeyed through his [world](worlds.html) like a stranger in a foreign land, in which everything was unfamiliar and unknown.

[Adam](adam.html) was created in the autumn, on [Rosh Hashana](teruah.html)h. He did not [know](daat.html) about seasons or the shortening and lengthening of days, or the slow pace of different natural [cycles](cycles.html). After he was filled with anxiety when he [first](one.html) saw the setting [sun](hachama.html) and rejoiced over the [first](one.html) sunrise, he noticed, the [Talmud](orallaw.html) tells us,[[43]](#footnote-43) that the days were becoming shorter. The [world](worlds.html) is darkening, he thought, in a huge, multi-cyclical sunset. Soon, darkness will cover the planet. The reason for this was clear to him: This was a punishment for his [sin](sin.html), it was because he spurned God’s directive and [ate](eating.html) the fruit of the Tree of [Knowledge](thetree.html). God decided to return the [world](worlds.html) to its original chaotic state because He was disappointed in him. Actually, what else could he have thought?

[Adam](adam.html) decided to atone for his [sin](sin.html). He took upon himself to fast and [pray](prayer.html) to God until He would nullify His decree. He did this day after day after day. For a full [eight](eight.html) days he fasted and [prayed](prayer.html) until, suddenly something changed: [One](one.html) day, the [sun](hachama.html) set a bit later than the previous day. The days began to lengthen once again. [Adam](adam.html)’s joy [knew](daat.html) no bounds. He immediately declared [eight](eight.html) days of feasting and joy, parallel to the [eight](eight.html) days that he had fasted. From the next year and on (in the meantime he saw the days lengthening and shortening again and understood that this was a natural [cycle](cycles.html)), [Adam](adam.html) set these sixteen days, the [eight](eight.html) days that he had erroneously fasted and the [eight](eight.html) days that he celebrated – as [one](one.html) long [holiday](festival.html).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [**Adam**](adam.html) | |
| **Fasting** | **Feasting** |
| [**Kislev**](feasts.html) **25 –** [**Tebet**](feasts.html) **2**  **(8 days)** | [**Tebet**](feasts.html) **3 –** [**Tebet**](tevet10.html) **10**  **(8 days)** |
| Shammai  (subtract a candle each day.) | Hillel  (Add a candle each day.) |
| [Chanukah](chanukah.html) | ? |
| Kalantes  December 13-20 | Saturnalia  December 21-29 |
| 16 Days | |

(Please be aware that [Kislev](feasts.html) can have either 29 or 30 days depending on the year. This means that sometimes [Adam](adam.html)’s fast ends on [Tebet](feasts.html) 2 and sometimes on [Tebet](feasts.html) 3. Conversely, [Adam](adam.html)’s feast sometimes begins on [Tebet](feasts.html) 4 and continues till [Tebet](feasts.html) 11.)

Now begins the really interesting part: The [Talmud](orallaw.html) tells us that most of [Adam](adam.html)’s descendants continued with his tradition of celebrating a sixteen-day [holiday](festival.html) in the middle of the winter, to mark what we today call the “winter solstice). The original circumstances surrounding the [holiday](festival.html) were forgotten and later, its legacy was incorporated into various idolatrous beliefs of the various [nations](nations.html) that preserved it. The sages recount a [number](nchart.html) of these holidays, which were celebrated by the neighboring [nations](nations.html) in their respective eras. This [midrash](orallaw.html) is anchored in historic and anthropologic fact: The winter solstice is indeed celebrated in various ways throughout the [world](worlds.html). (The most famous version is none other than Xmas. The 25th of December was the day of the winter solstice in the Roman Empire, when it was called by its idolatrous [name](name.html), Saturnalia. Liturgically, Catholics celebrate an octave of Christmas, which is 8 days. The octave of Christmas ends on January 1, the Solemnity of Mary)

After hearing this story, it is difficult not to immediately think of [Chanukah](chanukah.html). [Chanukah](chanukah.html) lasts for [eight](eight.html) days, parallel to the days of fasting or the days of joy that [Adam](adam.html) marked. Despite the fact that the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) [calendar](calendar.html) is determined by the lunar [cycle](cycles.html) and not by the solar [cycle](cycles.html), the leap years ensure that [Chanukah](chanukah.html) will always fall out in the winter, near the winter solstice. (In [Jewish](gen-jew.html) tradition, the day after the winter solstice is called tekufat Tevet, the [time](time.html) period of the month of Tevet because it always falls out adjacent to the [first](one.html) of the month of Tevet, in the middle of [Chanukah](chanukah.html)). Above and beyond the specific historic association of the war of the Maccabees against the Greek kingdom and the Hellenists, [Chanukah](chanukah.html) is about the war of light against darkness and transforming darkness to light, both because of the miracle of the flask of pure olive oil that lit the menorah in the [Temple](temple.html) for [eight](eight.html) days and because of the fact that the Greek kingdom was experienced as “darkening the [eyes](body.html) of Israel”[[44]](#footnote-44) and hiding the unique Divine light of the Torah.

Could it be that [Chanukah](chanukah.html) is also a descendant of [Adam](adam.html)’s primordial [holiday](festival.html), similar to the winter celebrations of pagan [nations](nations.html)? Historically, this is not true. The sages instituted [Chanukah](chanukah.html) in response to the historic war with the Greeks. Moreover, it does not fit in with the spirit of Judaism, which is based on ‘reset’ of the [calendar](calendar.html) and its holidays, beginning with the [exodus](exodus.html) [from Egypt](thebirth.html) and the giving of the Torah.

How then, can we understand the blatant similarity between [Chanukah](chanukah.html) and [Adam](adam.html)’s [holiday](festival.html)? We can reach the following conclusion: When they established the [holiday](festival.html) of [Chanukah](chanukah.html), the sages related not only to the miracles of the triumph over the Greeks and the flask of oil, but also to the fact that by Divine Providence they took place adjacent to the winter solstice. Furthermore, there is a deep affinity between these miracles and the winter solstice, with both symbolizing the triumph of light over darkness. When the sages outlined [Chanukah](chanukah.html), they intended for it to be a [type](types.html) of replacement or rectification of the pagan winter holidays, also symbolized by Greece.

Which of the sixteen days of [Adam](adam.html)’s [holiday](festival.html) does [Chanukah](chanukah.html) seek to reconstruct? Because we have adopted the ruling that every day, we add another candle – more light – to the [Chanukah](chanukah.html) menorah, it would seem to parallel the [first](one.html) days. Those were the days that expressed the intensification of darkness, which we mitigate by increasing the light. What, then, about the next [eight](eight.html) days, in which the light intensifies? [Chanukah](chanukah.html) is only [eight](eight.html) days, not sixteen – and there is no other [holiday](festival.html) that joins it to mark the [eight](eight.html) days of intensification of the light, which, after all, were the main part of [Adam](adam.html)’s celebration.

We do not have a second [holiday](festival.html), but if we count [eight](eight.html) days from the day after [Chanukah](chanukah.html), we reach another significant day on the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [calendar](calendar.html): The fast of the [Tenth of Tevet](tevet10.html). Could there be a [connection](connection.html) between the [two](two.html)? Is it possible that on a deeper level that has never been investigated, the [Tenth of Tevet](tevet10.html) completes the rectification of [Chanukah](chanukah.html) for [Adam](adam.html)’s [holiday](festival.html)? To answer these questions, we must understand the place of the [Tenth of Tevet](tevet10.html) as part of the days that commemorate the destruction of the [First](one.html) [Temple](temple.html).

[Editor’s note: On Asarah B'Tevet, the 10th day of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) month of Tevet, in the year 3336 from [Creation](bara.html) (425 BCE), the armies of the [Babylonian](bavel.html) emperor Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to [Jerusalem](city.html). [Thirty](thirty.html) months later—on 9 [Tammuz](feasts.html) 3338—the [city](city.html) walls were breached, and on 9 [Av](feasts.html) of that year the Holy [Temple](temple.html) was destroyed. The [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people were [exiled](galuyot.html) to Babylonia for 70 years.]

\* \* \*

When [Adam](adam.html) saw that the days were getting shorter and the nights longer, he thought that it was the end of the [world](worlds.html) and he fasted for [eight](eight.html) days, until he saw that the days were once again getting longer, whereupon he celebrated for [eight](eight.html) days. The following year, he made a [holiday](festival.html) of 16 days, which has been preserved in various forms in a [number](nchart.html) of cultures as the “winter solstice”. [Chanukah](chanukah.html) also falls out during this [time](time.html), and it seems that it comes to rectify the [first](one.html) [eight](eight.html), shortening, days that [Adam](adam.html) counted. [Chanukah](chanukah.html) daily adds light, in the [face](body.html) of the feeling of intensifying darkness.

The [eight](eight.html) days after [Chanukah](chanukah.html) end on the [tenth of Tevet](tevet10.html), the [first](one.html) of the fasts for the destruction of the [Temple](temple.html). The siege on [Jerusalem](city.html) began on the [Tenth of Tevet](tevet10.html). The universal influence of the [Temple](temple.html), depicted in King Solomon’s [prayer](prayer.html) and the vision of the [future](future.html) of the prophets, ceased on that day – and the universal vision of Judaism was suspended. (On the 17th of Tamuz, the internal, national influence of the [Temple](temple.html) ceased. On the 9th of [Av](feasts.html), the [physical](physical.html) [Temple](temple.html) was destroyed and on the Fast of [Gedaliah](gedaliah.html) the remaining vitality of the [Temple](temple.html) terminated). The [Tenth of Tevet](tevet10.html) is also associated with the translation of the Torah into Greek and the [birth](thebirth.html) of Yesh”u – [two](two.html) failed attempts to make Judaism universal.

***Zechariah 8:19*** *Thus saith* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *of hosts: The fast of the* [*fourth*](four.html) *month, and the fast of the* [*fifth*](five.html)*, and the fast of the* [*seventh*](seven.html)*, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful seasons; therefore love ye truth and peace.*

In the [future](future.html), the fast days for the destruction of the [Temple](temple.html) will become days of joy and happiness and the [Tenth of Tevet](tevet10.html) will be the [holiday](festival.html) of the renewed, rectified influence of Judaism on the [world](worlds.html). The [eight](eight.html) days following [Chanukah](chanukah.html) will become a [holiday](festival.html), like the [holiday](festival.html) of [Adam](adam.html), the father of all humankind. The celebration will peak on the [Tenth of Tevet](tevet10.html).

Currently, [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [law](law.html) follows the legal decision of the House of Hillel and we add [one](one.html) additional candle every night of [Chanukah](chanukah.html). But it is written that in the [future](future.html), the [law](law.html) will be according to the House of shumai, which determined that [one](one.html) candle from the [eight](eight.html) should be subtracted each night. Here we see that the [law](law.html) can be according to both views: After [eight](eight.html) days of adding a candle a day, we will celebrate [eight](eight.html) days of subtracting a candle a day – which will symbolize the lessening of the negative components in the [nations](nations.html) of the [world](worlds.html), until its fertile meeting with Judaism. After separation from the dark components, we will reach rectification, the clarification of the cultures of the [world](worlds.html) and the dissemination of Torah to all the [nations](nations.html).

A different order is possible in the [future](future.html), as well. [First](one.html), we would light according to the ruling of Beit Shammai (subtracting the negative components of the [nations](nations.html) of the [world](worlds.html)). Afterwards, we would add holiness and a candle a day, according to the ruling of Beit Hillel. (This order would naturally flow with the shortening and then lengthening days).

If we light according to the [first](one.html) method: Adding a candle a day as per Beit Hillel and then subtracting a candle a day as per Beit Shammai, there is [one](one.html) day in the middle, on which we light [eight](eight.html) candles in either direction. According to this method there would be 15 days, in which we would light a total of 64 candles. Alternately, there could be 16 days, in which days 8 and 9 both have [eight](eight.html) candles. In this case, we would light a total of 72 candles.

According to the second method, we would begin with Beit Shammai, subtracting the negative components of the [nations](nations.html), followed by the ruling of Beit Hillel, adding [one](one.html) candle a day to represent added holiness. If the entire process would take 16 days, with days 8 and 9 both having [one](one.html) candle, we would light 72 candles in all. However, if day 8, with [one](one.html) candle, would apply to both the last day of Beit Shammai’s ruling and the [first](one.html) day of Beit Hillel’s, we again have 15 days and a total [number](nchart.html) of 71 candles. This is the [secret](sod.html) of the [Nation](nations.html) of Israel amidst the [nations](nations.html) of the [world](worlds.html). “And the wolf (the 70 [nations](nations.html) of the [world](worlds.html)) will live with the ([one](one.html)) sheep,” – the [Nation](nations.html) of Israel.

Translated, with additions, from Rabbi Ginsburgh’s book, “Hanerot Halalu”.

\* \* \*

After [Adam](adam.html) was [exiled](galuyot.html) from the [Garden of Eden](eden.html) he noticed as the months progressed that the length of daylight progressively grew shorter. He reached the conclusion that this was due to his [sin](sin.html) of [eating](eating.html) from the Tree of [Knowledge](thetree.html) of Good and Evil for which he was told that he would surely die. He figured that the lessening of the light was the way his punishment would be administered and concluded that the [world](worlds.html) would return to “chaos and void.” Therefore, he began to fast and ask for [forgiveness](forgive.html).

After an [eight](eight.html)-day fast and deep contrition he noticed the increase in darkness was slightly less each day. He thus celebrated for [eight](eight.html) days as each day the daylight became longer. The following year he celebrated for sixteen days – [eight](eight.html) for his initial period of fasting and [eight](eight.html) for his celebrating the return of the light. Since these [events](feasts.html) coincided with the yearly winter solstice, later [generations](toldot.html) and cultures took what [Adam](adam.html) had established with good intentions and turned these days into pagan holidays and [idol](idolatry.html) worship.

[***Avodah Zarah***](idolatry.html) ***8a***[*GEMARA*](orallaw.html)*: Rav Ḥanan bar Rava says: When are these* [*festivals*](festivals.html) *celebrated? Kalenda is celebrated during the* [*eight*](eight.html) *days after the winter solstice, and Saturnalia is celebrated during the* [*eight*](eight.html) *days before the winter solstice. And your mnemonic to remember which* [*festival*](festival.html) *is that the* [*one*](one.html) *that occurs after the solstice is mentioned* [*first*](one.html) *in the* [*mishna*](orallaw.html)*, and the* [*festival*](festival.html) *that takes place before the solstice is mentioned after, as in the verse: “You have hemmed me in behind and before, and laid Your* [*Hand*](fourteen.html) *upon me” (*[*Psalms*](psalms1.html) *139:5), where the word “before” appears after the term “behind.” 7With regard to the dates of these* [*festivals*](festivals.html)*, the Sages* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: When* [*Adam*](adam.html) *the* [*first*](one.html) *man 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*](daat.html) *that this is a normal phenomenon, and therefore he said: Woe is me; perhaps because I sinned the* [*world*](worlds.html) *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*](heaven.html)*, as it is written: “And to* [*dust*](rock.html) *shall you return” (Genesis 3:19). He arose and spent* [*eight*](eight.html) *days in fasting and in* [*prayer*](prayer.html)*. 8Once 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*](worlds.html)*. He went and observed a* [*festival*](festival.html) *for* [*eight*](eight.html) *days. Upon the next year, he observed both these* [*eight*](eight.html) *days on which he had fasted on the previous year, and these* [*eight*](eight.html) *days of his celebration, as days of festivities. He,* [*Adam*](adam.html)*, established these* [*festivals*](festivals.html) *for the sake of* [*Heaven*](heaven.html)*, but they, the* [*gentiles*](gen-jew.html) *of later* [*generations*](toldot.html)*, established them for the sake of* [*idol*](idolatry.html) *worship.*

[Chanukah](chanukah.html) also comes during the darkest [time](time.html) of the year and although it may seem that lighting lights at this season is “borrowed” from earlier cultures, the historic [time](time.html) frame belies this assertion as the [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html) day of [Kislev](feasts.html) is simply when the Maccabees entered the [Temple](temple.html) and rededicated it. If anything, the fact that the miracle of light transpired at the darkest [time](time.html) of the year gave the Sages hope that [Chanukah](chanukah.html) would in a sense rectify what [idol](idolatry.html) worship had done to [Adam](adam.html)’s original good intentions.

Rabbi [Yitzchak](isaac.html) Ginsburgh takes the above Talmudic tradition and explains its ramifications while expanding upon it in a truly visionary manner (Hanerot Halalu; The [Eighth](eight.html) Light). He points out that [eight](eight.html) days after the end of [Chanukah](chanukah.html) is the [tenth of Tevet](tevet10.html), the fast day for the beginning of the siege of [Jerusalem](city.html) at the [time](time.html) of the [First](one.html) [Temple](temple.html), as discussed above in “The Tents of Shem.” Rabbi Ginsburgh explains that the destruction of the [First](one.html) [Temple](temple.html) marked in a sense the temporary end of a universal vision for mankind as espoused by many of the prophets. King Solomon on the very day the [Temple](temple.html) was dedicated [prayed](prayer.html) a long series of [prayers](prayer.html) concerning Israel. He then turned his attention to the [nations](nations.html) of the [world](worlds.html):

***Melachim alef (I Kings 8:41-43)*** *And also to the stranger, who is not of Your people Israel, but will come from a far country for the sake of Your* [*Name*](name.html)*. For they shall hear of Your great* [*Name*](name.html)*, and of Your mighty* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*, and of Your outstretched arm, and he will come and* [*pray*](prayer.html) *toward this house. You shall hear in* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *Your* [*dwelling*](dwelling.html) *place, and do according to all that the stranger calls You for, that all peoples of the earth may* [*know*](daat.html) *Your* [*Name*](name.html)*, to* [*fear*](fear.html) *You, as do Your people Israel, and that they may* [*know*](daat.html) *that Your* [*Name*](name.html) *is called upon this house that I have built.*

Isaiah later proclaimed that God’s intent was that all peoples should come to the [Temple](temple.html): “I will bring them to My holy mount, and I will cause them to rejoice in My house of [prayer](prayer.html), their [burnt offering](korbanot)s and their sacrifices shall be acceptable upon My altar, for My house shall be called a House of [Prayer](prayer.html) for all peoples” (Isaiah 56: 7). The destruction of the [First](one.html) [Temple](temple.html) put on hold that vision which will ultimately be fulfilled in the Messianic era.

According to [Jewish](gen-jew.html) tradition another [event](feasts.html) occurred right before the [tenth of Tevet](tevet10.html) – the [birth](thebirth.html) of [Jesus](yeshua.html) on the [ninth](nine.html) of Tevet. Both the translation of the Torah into Greek (as discussed above) and Christianity were attempts to universalize Judaism. Although both attempts missed the mark as far as [Jewish](gen-jew.html) tradition is concerned, it is important to note the common [desire](needs.html) to bring Torah (in some manner) to the entire [world](worlds.html).

Regarding all of the fast days instituted for the destruction of the [Temple](temple.html), the prophet Zechariah proclaimed: “So said the God of Hosts: The fast of the [fourth](four.html) [month], the fast of the [fifth](five.html) [month], the fast of the [seventh](seven.html) [month], and the fast of the tenth [month] shall be for the house of Judah for joy and happiness and for happy holidays…”.[[45]](#footnote-45)

Rabbi Ginsburgh then makes a bold, fascinating and innovative leap of imagination by discussing what these holidays could possibly look like, especially the [tenth of Tevet](tevet10.html) [coming](coming.html) only [eight](eight.html) days after [Chanukah](chanukah.html). He dangles this possible scenario: The [eight](eight.html) days of [Chanukah](chanukah.html) could be prolonged another [eight](eight.html) days and culminate on the [tenth of Tevet](tevet10.html). These sixteen days would rectify, clarify and renew [Adam](adam.html)’s original universal [holiday](festival.html)!

He even makes another bold proposal: the [first](one.html) [eight](eight.html) days could be according to Beit Hillel, when we add a [new](new.html) light each night, while the second [eight](eight.html) days could be according to Beit Shammai, when we begin with [eight](eight.html) lights and lessen them each night until only [one](one.html) remains. This [one](one.html) remaining candle would symbolize a [world](worlds.html) united in peace and harmony serving the [One](one.html) God. This would also fulfill in practice the Talmudic statement: “These and these are the words of the Living God.”

Rabbi Ginsburgh makes clear that this is not a proposal that can be instituted now and only means to show in an inventive way how [one](one.html) could take all the various traditions regarding these days and times in order to forge a universal [holiday](festival.html) that would reflect a Messianic vision of peace for all humanity.

[Chanukah](chanukah.html), as we discussed above, is a [time](time.html) to [dream](dreams.html) big, and even more, it is a [time](time.html) for [dreams](dreams.html) and miracles to come true. [Sitting](mashal.html) in the [spiritual](physical.html) radiance of the lights of [Chanukah](chanukah.html) is a propitious [time](time.html) to envision and [pray](prayer.html) for a [world](worlds.html) of universal peace and harmony.

\* \* \*

Another perspective:[[46]](#footnote-46)

Our sages may have been aware of an additional reason for [eight](eight.html) days: It was because [Chanukah](chanukah.html) may have covered over an earlier phenomenon with their historical cultural layer; a phenomenon that had its moorings, like so many cultures, in nature. After all, [Shavuot](shavuot.html) began as a [first](one.html) fruits agricultural [festival](festival.html) that became the [time](time.html) of the giving of the Torah. Sukkot was a harvest [festival](festival.html) initially, and [Pesach](passover.html) was a spring rite [festival](festival.html), which were layered with the idea of [sitting](mashal.html) in shaded [booths](important.html) in the desert wandering, and being released from bondage, respectively. What about [Chanukah](chanukah.html)? It may well have been the layered application to a [holiday](festival.html) popular in the ancient [world](worlds.html) that celebrated the winter solstice. [Talmud](orallaw.html) [Avodah Zarah](idolatry.html) gives us this story.[[47]](#footnote-47) Since, according to the [Mishna](orallaw.html), we are not allowed to do commerce with the pagans within [three](three.html) days of their holidays, it was important to discuss those holidays. The [Talmud](orallaw.html) shares that among them were the holidays that preceded and followed the winter solstice. The [first](one.html) was an [eight](eight.html)-day [holiday](festival.html) called Kalantes, and the second was an [eight](eight.html)-day celebration that followed it called Saturnalia. The [two](two.html) holidays were a total of 16 days and were observed from Dec. 13- Dec. 29.

The following story is told in the [Talmud](orallaw.html) passage there: What are the origins of these pagan rites? [Adam](adam.html), the [first](one.html) man, became very concerned (as he was born on [Rosh Hashana](teruah.html)h) and noticed as the days went by, that they were shorter. “Oy!” says [Adam](adam.html), “it’s because of my [sin](sin.html) that God is returning the [world](worlds.html) to darkness to Tohu vaVohu, to its chaotic state!” He became more and more vexed, until he began to notice that the days began to lengthen once again after the solstice, and he realized that these diurnal periods were cyclical. He was so ecstatic and relieved that in the ensuing year(s) he established these [eight](eight.html) days before and [eight](eight.html) days after, and dedicated them to [heaven](heaven.html), but the pagans came later and made it into astral worship.

Note, here, the [Talmud](orallaw.html) maintains that this [festival](festival.html) was [first](one.html) a holy [time](time.html) dedicated to God. Only after does it become a pagan rite. Note, also, that the only place we find this phrase “in the ensuing year(s) he established these [eight](eight.html) days” in all of the Talmudic literature is here, in the description of these [festivals](festivals.html), and the [festival](festival.html) of [Chanukah](chanukah.html) in TB [Shabbat](sabbath.html)! Clearly, then, the rabbis are aware of this [connection](connection.html) to the [eight](eight.html)-day [festivals](festivals.html) marking the decreasing and increasing light of the [sun](hachama.html)! This is likely seen in [one](one.html) of the comments that discusses the debate between the schools of Hillel and Shammai in [Mishna](orallaw.html) [Shabbat](sabbath.html) with regard to what [one](one.html) does in lighting the menorah. Do we begin with [one](one.html) candle, and work our way up each day, reflecting the expansion of light in the miracle of the oil, or do we begin with [eight](eight.html) candles and work our way down each night, reflecting the diminishing amount of miracle oil? A sage in the [Gemara](orallaw.html) there notes: according to [one](one.html), Shammai’s view reflects the days [coming](coming.html) in (nichnasim); according to Hillel’s school’s opinion, it reflects the days branching out (yotzim)! This seems to be exactly the process of days before and after the solstice that the [festival](festival.html) of Kalantes and Saturnalia mark! Perhaps another reason the Hillel school opinion prevailed is that it stressed the joy of expanding light, rather than shrinking light!

Now it is an excellent thing that the [Talmud](orallaw.html) came along and told us the [eight](eight.html) days are due to the miracle of the oil that lasted [eight](eight.html) days! Because of all the other explanations–of the menorah, Sukkot in the newly dedicated [Temple](temple.html) and the miracle of the altar [fire](fire.html) being found–evaporate when the [Temple](temple.html) is destroyed in 70 CE and [Jews](gen-jew.html) [exiled](galuyot.html) into the diaspora. And the solstice, after all, is celebrated by every culture. A solstice [festival](festival.html) would not have preserved [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people in the diaspora. Nor is the solstice tightly connect to [Chanukah](chanukah.html), which is based on the rather mobile [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [calendar](calendar.html), making it in early or in late December. The little cruse of oil and the miracle of light it shed, and the Pirsuma denisa, the need to broadcast this miracle by a home ceremony of dispersing light in our windows or on our doors, helped this [holiday](festival.html) and our people endure. It also made it, like all of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) holidays, which at [first](one.html) were based on natural [cycles](cycles.html), before each received a [spiritual](physical.html)/ theological/ historical layer. [Chanukah](chanukah.html) may not have survived without the little cruse of oil! However, it is also ironic that we, in our modern era, diminish and rue the fact that [Chanukah](chanukah.html) has been taken off its [spiritual](physical.html) moorings, and made into a homogenized version of simply another [festival](festival.html) of light, so common among all cultures at the [time](time.html) the short days in winter. [Jews](gen-jew.html) may well have been enamored of these universal [festivals](festivals.html) of light, and our sages wisely decided to give it a “distinctly [Jewish](gen-jew.html) twist” so as to draw them away from potential pagan influences. May we be mindful and grateful for [Chanukah](chanukah.html)’s uniquely [Jewish](gen-jew.html) and historical aspect as a [holiday](festival.html) that sealed our [Jewish](gen-jew.html) identity, even as we swam in a sea of Hellenism. But we should also be mindful of [Chanukah](chanukah.html)’s universal aspect of celebrating and marking, in its own way, the increasing light after the solstice. Our season’s “turning toward morning, spring and increasing light” is also a cause for our celebration.

# Origin of the [Festival](festival.html) of Lights

There is a deep mystical reason why nearly every major culture celebrates a [festival](festival.html) of lights. In addition to continuing the tradition started by [Adam](adam.html), this [festival](festival.html) has its roots in the Torah, in Bereshit (Genesis), the [first](one.html) book of the Torah.

In Bereshit, the [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html) [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word of the Torah is אור - Ohr, *light*.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:3*** *And God said, Let there be light (yehi Ohr - אור): and there was light.*

In Bereshit 1:3, the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) is *Yehi Ohr -*אור יהי, Let there be light! The gematria of *yehi* is [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html), and therefore, on another level the pasuk can be read: [*Twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*five*](five.html) *is the light*. No wonder the [Mishkan](mikdash.html), the [tabernacle](mikdash.html) in the wilderness, was completed on the 25th day of [Kislev](feasts.html), 2449. No wonder *ayeka* can also be read, aiyeh KOH, "Where is [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html)?" or that there are [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html) [letters](letters.html) in the [Shema](shema.html).

There was a [creation](bara.html) of some kind of light on the [first](one.html) day of [creation](bara.html) that was altogether different from the light of the [sun](hachama.html) and the [moon](chodesh.html) that was created on the [fourth](four.html) day. The question is just exactly what was this “light” before light?[[48]](#footnote-48)

***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:14-16*** *God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *to separate between the day and the night. ‘And God made* [*two*](two.html) *great lights, the greater light for dominion in the day, and the lesser light for dominion at night, as well as the* [*stars*](mazaroth.html)*.*

In Kabbalah, the epiphany of [creation](bara.html) is termed *Ohr aiyn sof*, which means “the appearance of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s light.” The instant of [creation](bara.html) is the [birth](thebirth.html) of relationship, and this [birth](birth.html) is expressed by the word “light”. The expression and manifestation of G-d in [creation](bara.html) is called “light”.

The [*Shema*](shema.html), *"Hear O Israel,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *our Lord,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is* [*One*](one.html)*"*,[[49]](#footnote-49) is the ultimate [Jewish](gen-jew.html) statement of what life is all about. Life is about the potential relationship with *echad*, with [HaShem](hashem.html). It has been observed that the [*Shema*](shema.html) contains [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html) [letters](letters.html), and it just happens that the word “light” is the [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html) word in the Torah. Bear in mind that “light” was also created on the [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html) day of the month of [*Elul*](elul.html), and the [holiday](festival.html) of [Chanukah](chanukah.html), the [Festival](festival.html) of Lights, begins on the [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html) day of the month of [*Kislev*](feasts.html).

The [number](nchart.html) [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html), it turns out, is a very significant [number](nchart.html). As a rule, where you find allusions to [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html) in the Torah, you also find [HaShem](hashem.html) and “light”.

The Talmudic tradition regarding the original *light* is that its presence in the [world](worlds.html) was short-lived. In fact, the [Talmud](orallaw.html) tells us that the *light* was apparent within [creation](bara.html) for just [thirty-six](thirtysix.html) hours, and then it was hidden. The question, of course, is why was the *light* hidden? And the answer is that in hiding the *light*, [HaShem](hashem.html) was creating a cosmic framework for the fundamental dynamic of man’s existence; it’s called hide-and-seek.

[HaShem](hashem.html)’s *light* was hidden just enough to make it not overwhelmingly apparent. As a result, man would not be irresistibly drawn to the *light*. It was this hiding of the *light*, therefore, that set the stage for [Adam](adam.html), the [first](one.html) human being.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 3:8-9*** *And they [*[*Adam*](adam.html) *and Eve] heard the* [*voice*](voice.html) *of God manifesting itself throughout the garden, at the approach of evening, and the man and his wife hid from God, amongst the trees of the garden. And God called out to the man, and said to him, ‘Where are you[ayeka]?’*

Is it possible that [HaShem](hashem.html) didn't [know](daat.html) where [Adam](adam.html) was? Clearly not. Rather, within these words lies a hint to another message. According to our Sages, the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word used to express “where are you?”, *ayeka,* is a highly unusual word, so unusual, in fact, that it is actually an allusion to the hidden “light”.

Consider the following and remember, the original *light* was manifest for just [thirty-six](thirtysix.html) hours before being hidden.

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Zuta, Eicha 1:1*** *Rabbi Shimon the son of Pazi said, ‘The numerical value of ayeka [“where are you”] is* [*thirty-six*](thirtysix.html)*.’*

And further:

*“The word light appears* [*thirty-six*](thirtysix.html) *times in the Torah.”[[50]](#footnote-50)*

When [HaShem](hashem.html) called out to [Adam](adam.html) and said, “*ayeka*, where are you?” what He was actually doing was pointing out to [Adam](adam.html) the [consequences](conseq.html) of his action. The deeper meaning of *ayeka* is, “Where is the light?”[[51]](#footnote-51) [HaShem](hashem.html) was telling [Adam](adam.html) that he had allowed an enormous opportunity to slip through his [fingers](body.html).

“[Adam](adam.html)”, [HaShem](hashem.html) was saying, “you had a chance, by virtue of your free will, to reveal the hidden *light*, and you missed your chance. [Adam](adam.html), when I hid the *light,* I was creating the potential for a fully genuine relationship, a relationship that wouldn’t be imposed but would be freely embraced. [Adam](adam.html), in hiding the *light*, I actually gave you the possibility for closeness, and instead, you created distance. [Adam](adam.html), you could have revealed the *light*, but now, [Adam](adam.html), *ayeka*! Where is the *light*!

And so the *light* remained hidden, hidden, but not extinguished.

As a result of [Adam](adam.html)'s failure, the *light* remained hidden, and it would take another [two](two.html) [millennia](millenium.html) before someone would arise with the potential to reveal it. That person was [Avraham](avraham.html), and [Avraham](avraham.html) was a man who was more than enlightened, he was *light* itself.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 1:2-3*** *The earth was unformed and void, and darkness was upon the surface of the depths… and God said, ‘Let there be light’.*

***Maharal, Gevurot 5:34***[*Avraham*](avraham.html) *is the light. The* [*generations*](toldot.html) *preceding* [*Avraham*](avraham.html) *were unformed and darkness, and* [*Avraham*](avraham.html) *was the light of existence.*

And of course, [Avraham](avraham.html) had an encounter with [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html), with the hidden “light”.

To grow to the point where he would be able to utilize all of his abilities, [Avraham](avraham.html) had to [face](body.html) [ten](ten.html) tests. With each successive test, [Avraham](avraham.html) came a step closer to actualizing his potential for bringing *light* into the [world](worlds.html).

By the end, as [Avraham](avraham.html) and his son [Isaac](isaac.html) were approaching the place of his final test, the Torah says, “*And* [*Avraham*](avraham.html) *said to the young men accompanying him, ‘Stay here with the* [*donkey*](chamor.html) *while the lad [*[*Isaac*](isaac.html)*] and I go there.’”* What’s interesting is that the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word used here for “there”, *koh*, is an unusual word. But the use of this strange word is no mistake. In fact, it’s an allusion to something else, the *light*. You see, this is the same word, with the same numerical value of [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html), that appeared in the story of [Adam](adam.html). So when [Avraham](avraham.html) said that he and [Isaac](isaac.html) would go *koh*, “there”, what he was actually saying was that he and [Isaac](isaac.html) would go *koh*, “to the light.”

[HaShem](hashem.html) now had an answer to His question. [HaShem](hashem.html) said to [Adam](adam.html), *ayeh-koh*, “Where is the light”? [Two](two.html) thousand years later the answer came back: The *light* is with [Avraham](avraham.html).

[Avraham](avraham.html)’s grandson, [Yaaqob](israelja.html), was also associate with the light. When [Yaaqob](israelja.html) Abinu had his vision of a ladder going up to [heaven](heaven.html) and [angels](angels.html) ascending and descending, he had that vision at Beit El,[[52]](#footnote-52) the [Beit HaMikdash](mikdash.html) (The House of the Holy [One](one.html)), the [Temple](temple.html).

***Bereshit (Genesis) 28:11*** *And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put [them for] his pillows, and lay down in that place to* [*sleep*](mashal.html)*.*

Then he said something very strange:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 28:17*** *And he was afraid, and said, How* [*awesome*](awesome.html) *[is] this place! this [is] none other but the* [*house of G-d*](housegod.html)*, and this [is] the gate of* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*.*

The [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for “[awesome](awesome.html)”, נורא Nora, can be rearranged to spell ארון Aron, The [ark](ark.html) of the [covenant](covenant.html). The Sages therefore understand that the place where [Yaaqob](israelja.html) Abinu slept, was the place of [connection](connection.html), the place where the [ark](ark.html) of the [covenant](covenant.html) would be placed!

When [Yaaqob](israelja.html) Abinu picked up the stones from under his [head](body.html) and returned them in the morning, he found a stone that had a jar of oil in it, and he used it to pour on the top stone.[[53]](#footnote-53) When it refilled itself, [Yaaqob](israelja.html) [knew](daat.html) it was set aside for [HaShem](hashem.html). He said, “It's not right to leave this here...”

(This happened at the beginning of an [exile](galuyot.html) that would last [thirty-six](thirtysix.html) years, the [number](nchart.html) of candles we light over the [eight](eight.html) days of [Chanukah](chanukah.html).)

Hmmmm. Sounds familiar, doesn't it? Oil that replenishes itself. In fact, the above [Midrash](orallaw.html) continues by telling us that this same oil lasted throughout the [generations](toldot.html), and was even used to anoint the [Mishkan](mikdash.html) ([Tabernacle](mikdash.html)) in Moshe's day, hundreds of years later, and it never lost a drop, but constantly replenished itself. ([twelve](twelve.html) log of oil, [one](one.html) for each of the [twelve](twelve.html) rocks he slept on)!

By the way, this cruse of oil also explains another mystery:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 32:22-24*** *And he rose up that night, and took his* [*two*](two.html) *wives, and his* [*two*](two.html) *women servants, and his* [*eleven*](eleven.html) *sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had. And* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.*

These verses refer to [Yaaqob](israelja.html)'s return to Canaan in advance his confrontation with [Esau](edom.html). On his way back from Paddan Aram and all his years with his uncle Lavan, he had to cross the Yabok (Jabbok) river. Person by person, piece by piece, [Yaaqob](israelja.html) moved each from [one](one.html) side of the river to the other. However, nightfall caught him on the “wrong” side of the river, where he fought with the “stranger” whom the [Midrash](orallaw.html) identifies as [Esau](edom.html)’s [angel](angels.html). What had caused him to be there at that [time](time.html)? The [Talmud](orallaw.html) tells us:

***Chullin 91a*** *And* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *was left alone. Said R. Eleazar: He remained behind for the sake of some small jars.*

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) tells us his reward for going back for those “small jars”:

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Tzeidah LaDerech*** *G-d said to* [*Yaaqob*](israelja.html)*, "For endangering yourself for a small container, I Myself will repay your children with a small container to the Chashmonaim [at the* [*time*](time.html) *of* [*Chanukah*](chanukah.html)*]."*

What made [Yaaqob](israelja.html) so conscientious that, after a full day of [traveling](mashal.html) and moving, he went back for those little containers. The truth is, the containers [Yaaqob](israelja.html) returned for was no ordinary containers, nor were they empty. These jars contained the oil from Beit El!

After [Yaaqob](israelja.html) and his family had crossed the river Yabok, [Yaaqob](israelja.html) returned alone to see if he had forgotten anything. He found that he had left some small containers of oil. Why did he bother to risk his life (he was by himself) for such seemingly insignificant pots of oil? We are told that a Tzadik[[54]](#footnote-54) values the smallest of his possessions and would not let anything go to waste, as each of his belongings has been acquired honestly. There is an opinion that these containers were the pots of oil that lasted for [eight](eight.html) days, that comprised the miracle of [Chanukah](chanukah.html) in the [Temple](temple.html).

Later we find a [Remez](remez.html), a hint, that [Yaaqob](israelja.html) celebrated [Succoth](succoth.html) and [Chanukah](chanukah.html). According to the [*Zohar*](orallaw.html) *Vayikra* 100b the [first](one.html) point of the *pasuk*, “[Yaaqob](israelja.html) journeyed to [Succoth](succoth.html),” is a hint that [Yaaqob](israelja.html) observed [Succoth](succoth.html), the [festival](festival.html) that corresponds to him.

***Bereshit 33:17***[*Yaaqob*](israelja.html) *journeyed to* [*Succoth*](succoth.html) *and built for himself a house.*

The second part of the pasuk, “He built for himself a house,” can be explained as a hint to [Chanukah](chanukah.html). According to the [Gemara](orallaw.html)[[55]](#footnote-55) the proper way to fulfill the [mitzvah](cmds613.html) of kindling [Chanukah](chanukah.html) candles is to place them *“al petach* beito *mibachutz”*, “by the entrance of [one](one.html)’s house from the outside.” During the [eight](eight.html) days of [Chanukah](chanukah.html) we light a total of [thirty-six](thirtysix.html) candles. The numerical value of the word “*lo*”, “for himself”, is [thirty-six](thirtysix.html).

Thus, the Torah tells us not only did [Yaaqob](israelja.html) [journey](stages.html) to [Succoth](succoth.html), a hint that he observed [Succoth](succoth.html), but he built *lo bayit*, a house where he could kindle [thirty-six](thirtysix.html) candles at the entrance for the [eight](eight.html) days of [Chanukah](chanukah.html).

From the [seed](flower.html) of [Avraham](avraham.html) grew the family and then the people of Israel. This people soon found itself enslaved in a very, very dark place, a place called Egypt.

In [Hebrew](hebrew.html), the word for Egypt, *Mitzrayim*, means “tight, restricted, and closed in”.

On the [one](one.html) [hand](fourteen.html), this restrictive aspect of Egypt refers to the fact that it was impossible for prisoners and slaves to escape its borders. On a deeper level, however, Egypt was a [spiritual](physical.html) black hole, a place from which nothing could escape, not even light itself.

[Avraham](avraham.html) had bequeathed the potential for “light” to his descendants, but now Egypt was threatening to smother it. Only with the appearance of Moshe, and then the giving of the Torah, would the “light’s” potential revelation be assured.

The transformation of Moshe from a prince in the house of Pharaoh to the savior of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people is captured by [two](two.html) verses in the Torah.

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 2:11-12*** *And Moshe grew up and went out to his brothers and saw their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating* [*one*](one.html) *of his* [*Jewish*](gen-jew.html) *brothers. And he turned here and there (koh v’koh) and he saw that there was no man, so he struck the Egyptian and hid him in the sand."*

There it is again. That same strange word, koh, and that same [number](nchart.html), [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html). Moshe is to be the [one](one.html) who will lead the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people out of the place of restricted light, and how does his career begin? With a turn to *koh*, a turn toward the *light*.

***Rashi*** *When Moshe was born, the entire house became filled with light.*

Moshe, like [Avraham](avraham.html), was a man of *light*, and eventually he would lead the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people to a *light* of their own.

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Shemot, Section 2, Page 149a*** *With the hidden light, God nourishes the* [*world*](worlds.html)*.*

***Mishle (Proverbs) 6:23*** *For the* [*commandment*](cmds613.html) *is a candle, and the Torah is light.*

***Baal Shem Tov*** *The light created on the* [*first*](one.html) *day was hidden in the Torah itself.*

Could it be that the Torah itself is the repository for the original hidden *light* of [creation](bara.html)? Could it be that the *light* hidden by [HaShem](hashem.html), the *light* that [Adam](adam.html) failed to reveal, the *light* of [connection](connection.html) between [HaShem](hashem.html) and man, is now hidden in the Torah? Consider what happened to Moshe after his encounter on Mount [Sinai](stages.html).

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 34:29*** *When Moshe descended from Mount* [*Sinai*](stages.html)*, and in the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of Moshe were the* [*two*](two.html) *tablets of testimony when he descended from the mountain, Moshe did not realize that the skin of his* [*face*](body.html) *had become radiant from* [*speaking*](mashal.html) *to Him.*

With the [experience](experience.html) of receiving the Torah from [HaShem](hashem.html) Himself, Moshe became, quite literally, a radiant light.

It seems that while the *light* may be hidden, it is far from lost. In fact, the same vessel that contains the hidden *light* is the vehicle for its revelation. This is the Torah!

After the Torah was given to the Bne Israel,[[56]](#footnote-56) they sinned with the golden calf. Because of this [sin](sin.html), [HaShem](hashem.html) gave the Bne Israel the [Mishkan](mikdash.html), the [Tabernacle](mikdash.html) in the wilderness. The [Oral Torah](orallaw.html) [teaches](teacher.html) us that the [Mishkan](mikdash.html) was completed on [Chanukah](chanukah.html), [Kislev](feasts.html) [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html), but it remained folded up till [Nisan](feasts.html) 1. Thus the [Mishkan](mikdash.html), the ultimate source of light, is associated with [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html).

***Yalkut Melachim 184*** *Rabi Chanina said: On the* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*fifth*](five.html) *of* [*Kislev*](feasts.html) *the work of the* [*Mishkan*](mikdash.html) *was concluded but it was kept folded till the* [*first*](one.html) *of* [*Nisan*](feasts.html)*, as it is written: 'On the day of the* [*first*](one.html) *month, on the* [*first*](one.html) *of the month, you shall erect the* [*Mishkan*](mikdash.html) *of the tent of meeting. ‘And Israel murmured against Moshe saying: Why was it not erected immediately? Did some blemish affect it? God, however, intended to merge the rejoicing over the* [*Mishkan*](mikdash.html) *into the month in which* [*Yitzchak*](isaac.html) *was born (*[*Nisan*](feasts.html)*) ...* [*Kislev*](feasts.html) *therefore missed the inauguration though the work had been concluded therein. God therefore said: It is for me to make restitution. How did God repay* [*Kislev*](feasts.html)*? With the* [*Chanukah*](chanukah.html) *of the Hasmoneans.*

Now, let’s jump forward nearly sixteen hundred years, to the [time](time.html) of the Maccabees. As we saw earlier, the Maccabees established [Chanukah](chanukah.html), the [Festival](festival.html) of Lights, on [Kislev](feasts.html) [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html). The [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html) was chosen because that was the day they vanquished the Syrian-Greeks from the [Temple](temple.html). The Maccabees. Also [known](daat.html) as the Hasmoneans, were called Hasmoneans because they came from [Chashmonah](stages.html).

Aaron’s descendants were the ones who re-lit the menorah in the [Temple](temple.html), which was beginning of the miracle of [Chanukah](chanukah.html).

The [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html) place of encampment in the journeying of the Bne Israel, after they left Egypt, was [Chashmonah](stages.html), the home of the Maccabees. We wrote extensively on this topic in a [study](study.html) titled: [STAGES](stages.html).

# Which Came [First](one.html)?

We have looked at several [festivals](festivals.html) which are celebrated around the [worlds](worlds.html), which are all called The [Festival](festival.html) of Light. Clearly, they all have a common root. Clearly they all are derived from [Adam](adam.html)’s celebration and the Torah.

[Chanukah](chanukah.html), about 165 BCE, precedes many of the other [festivals](festivals.html) of light. They are all similar because this is the [HaShem](hashem.html)’s [time](time.html) for the hidden light, the *Ohr HaGanuz*.

In the final analysis, the [twenty](twenty.html)-[fifth](five.html) day and the [ninth](nine.html) and tenth months were clearly set apart by [HaShem](hashem.html) for a celebration of lights. This why the major religions celebrate the [Festival](festival.html) of Lights at this [time](time.html). Most of them are modeled on [Chanukah](chanukah.html) which was [HaShem](hashem.html)’s designated [festival](festival.html).

# Other [Festivals](festivals.html) of Lights

In addition to the [festivals](festivals.html) that we have already [studied](study.html), there are several other [festivals](festivals.html) that are also [known](daat.html) as the [festival](festival.html) of lights.

In the more northern countries, *Lucy Day*, which was a [festival](festival.html) of lights, is celebrated as a [holiday](festival.html) in [connection](connection.html) with Yule. Candles, torches, and other forms of light were left burning to light up the night skies. Today we can use electric lights for the same purpose.

*Santa Lucia Day* isalso [known](daat.html) as Feast of Lights.

The *Feast of Lights* (Greek Orthodox). The Feast of Lights is [one](one.html) of the oldest observances of the Christian [Church](church.html) dating back to the [Fourth](four.html) Century after Christ. Also [known](daat.html) as the Feast of the *Epiphany*, it celebrates the manifestation of Christ to the [world](worlds.html). Traditionally, it is held on January 6, the [twelfth](twelve.html) day after Christmas.

*25th Thuti* on the Egyptian [Calendar](calendar.html), the ancient Egyptians used to celebrate the Feast of Lights of Aset (Isis). This was the Day of Sekhmet's repulsion of Set; Also Wasirian (Osirian).

The Feast of Lights (*Ton Photon*) of the Greek Orthodox is celebrated on January 6 where the faithful attend a Divine Liturgy and the Great Blessing of the Water service to celebrate *Theophany*, also called “Ton Photon” (“Feast of Lights”) with reference to the [spiritual](physical.html) illumination of the Holy Spirit. The service commemorates the baptism of Christ and the manifestation of the Christian God in [three](three.html) persons.

The *Winter solstice* observance is also celebrated with the lighting of the lamps, and parallels the celebrations worldwide in which a lit [fire](fire.html) hails the returning [sun](hachama.html).

*Candlemas*, also called *Imbolc*, *Feast of Lights.*

# Conclusion

At the dawn of [creation](bara.html), [Adam](adam.html) created the [Festival](festival.html) of Lights to celebrate his [salvation](salvation.html) from eternal darkness. He realized that the winter solstice, and the return of longer days, was the way of the [world](worlds.html). He also realized that this was the meaning of [twenty](twenty.html)-[five](five.html), and that it was the way of the tenth month. He shared that [insight](insights.html) with his descendants who populated the [world](worlds.html). He also [taught](teacher.html) them how to observe this [festival](festival.html).

When [Avraham](avraham.html) sent his sons, by his concubines, to the [east](east.html):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 25:6*** *But unto the sons of the concubines, which* [*Avraham*](avraham.html) *had,* [*Avraham*](avraham.html) *gave gifts, and sent them away from* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the* [*east*](east.html) *country.*

The pasuk also indicates that [Avraham](avraham.html) gave them “gifts” when he sent them away. The [Zohar](orallaw.html) gives a hint as to what these gifts were:

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Bereshit, Section 1, Page 99b*** *R. Abba continued: ‘I once found myself in a town inhabited by descendants of the “children of the* [*East*](east.html)*”, and they imparted to me some of the Wisdom of antiquity with which they were acquainted. They also possessed some books of their Wisdom, and they showed me* [*one*](one.html) *in which it was written that, according to the goal which a man sets himself in this* [*world*](worlds.html)*, so does he draw to himself a spirit from on high. If he strives to attain some holy and lofty object, he draws that object from on high to himself below. But if his* [*desire*](needs.html) *is to cleave to the other side, and he makes this his whole intent, then he draws to himself from above the other influence. They said, further, that all depends on the kind of speech, action, and intention to which a man habituates himself, for he draws to himself here below from on high that side to which he habitually cleaves. I found also in the same book the rites and ceremonies pertaining to the worship of the* [*stars*](mazaroth.html)*, with the requisite formulas and the directions for concentrating the thought upon them, so as to draw them near the worshipper.*

Thus we learn that [Avraham](avraham.html) sent gifts of the “wisdom of antiquity” with his sons, to the [east](east.html). These people of the [east](east.html) drew near to the “other side’ and corrupted that wisdom. Their proclivity towards corruption is what caused [Avraham](avraham.html) to send them “away from [Yitzchak](isaac.html)”. Never the less, some of the truth remained. From this we understand that the [world](worlds.html) was acquainted with the wisdom of [Adam](adam.html) and of his [Festival](festival.html) of Lights.

[Avraham](avraham.html) was himself intimately associated with the [Festival](festival.html) of Lights. He gave this understanding to his descendants who went to the [east](east.html) and build societies based on that wisdom. Thus we understand why the people of the [east](east.html) have a [Festival](festival.html) of Lights.

[Avraham](avraham.html) also shared his understanding of the [Festival](festival.html) of lights with his descendants: [Yitzchak](isaac.html), and [Yaaqob](israelja.html). To these descendants he also bequeathed the truth. This understanding of the Feast of Lights was reinforced when Moshe ascended Mount [Sinai](stages.html) and learned Torah from [HaShem](hashem.html). This understanding was passed on to the entire [nation](nations.html), which [taught](teacher.html) them to their children and their children’s children.

When the Christians departed from the Synagogues in order to obey the Pope and to follow their own understanding, they also corrupted the [Festival](festival.html) of Lights and the other wisdom they had learned from the Patriarchs. Never the less, a vestige of the truth remained and has been testifying to the [Festival](festival.html) of Lights for all these centuries.

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Bereshit, Section 1, Page 100b*** *Be on your guard lest, God forbid, you be led astray from the worship of the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, since all these books mislead mankind. For the ancient children of the* [*East*](east.html) *were possessed of a wisdom which they inherited from* [*Abraham*](avraham.html)*, who transmitted it to the sons of the concubines, as it is written, “But unto the sons of the concubines that* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *had,* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *gave gifts, and he sent them away from* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the country of the children of the* [*East*](east.html)*” (Gen. XXV, 6). In course of* [*time*](time.html) *they followed the track of that wisdom into many (wrong) directions. Not so with the* [*seed*](flower.html) *of* [*Isaac*](isaac.html)*, with the portion of* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*. For it is written, “And* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *gave all that he had unto* [*Isaac*](isaac.html)*” (Ibid. 5), this being the holy heritage of faith to which* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *clave, and from the sphere of which issued* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*, of whom it is written, “And, behold, the Lord stood beside him” (Gen. XXVIII, 13), and also, “And thou, Israel, my servant, etc.” (Is. XLI, 8). Hence it behooves a man to follow the Holy* [*One*](one.html) *and to cleave to Him continually, as it is written, “and to him shalt thou cleave”.[[57]](#footnote-57)*

Men of truth and understanding still look to the Torah and the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) Sages for the truth about the [Festival](festival.html) of Lights. Our Sages have written the truth into our Siddur[[58]](#footnote-58) and have [taught](teacher.html) us from the [Oral Torah](orallaw.html), the practical performance of the [mitzvot](cmds613.html)[[59]](#footnote-59) of [Chanukah](chanukah.html) in order that the truth not be corrupted. This truth is built into [Chanukah](chanukah.html) and the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) that belong to this [Festival](festival.html) of Lights.

[Chanukah](chanukah.html) is not a monotheistic [festival](festival.html) that grew out of a pagan [one](one.html). Rather, the [festival](festival.html) started out as a cosmic, universal [one](one.html), established by [Adam](adam.html), who “instituted them [the [eight](eight.html)-day periods] for the sake of [Heaven](heaven.html).” Only afterwards did it become a pagan [festival](festival.html).[[60]](#footnote-60)

The clearest expression of the [connection](connection.html) between the story of [Adam](adam.html)’s [festival](festival.html) and [Chanukah](chanukah.html) are in the [Gemara](orallaw.html)’s statements that “the next year he made both ([eight](eight.html)-day periods) into days of celebration,” and “He established them for the sake of [Heaven](heaven.html).” These parallel the statements in *Maseket* [*Shabbat*](sabbath.html), concerning [Chanukah](chanukah.html): “The next year they established them as days of celebration, with praise and thanksgiving.” This parallel leaves no room for doubt as to the [connection](connection.html) between the [two](two.html) [festivals](festivals.html), and the clear intention of the discussion in *Maseket Avodah Zara* is to explain [Chanukah](chanukah.html) as a cosmic, primal “[festival](festival.html) of [Adam](adam.html)”; a [festival](festival.html) of light, at the [time](time.html) when the light is most restricted. It was the idolaters who defiled this [festival](festival.html), turning it into a pagan [one](one.html) that is celebrated at the same [time](time.html) of year.

As such, the agricultural aspect of *bikkurim* serves to [purify](purity.html) the cosmic [festival](festival.html) which had become a pagan celebration. The natural agricultural [cycle](cycles.html) of *Eretz Yisrael* is such that the end of the olive season (and thus the end of the *bikkurim* season) falls in the last week of [Kislev](feasts.html). This creates a situation in which the celebration of the *bikkurim* with olive oil coincides with the natural, universally-recognized need to create light at this [time](time.html) of darkness. Thus the light of pure olive oil, from the produce of the land brought as *bikkurim* to the [Temple](temple.html), replaces the impure, pagan “light and [fire](fire.html),” thereby illuminating the [world](worlds.html) with [purity](purity.html) emanating from the holiness of the land and of the [Temple](temple.html).

**\* \* \***

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1. The Biblical calendar allows Kislev to have either 29 or 30 days. Some years it has 29 days and some years it has 30 days. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. II Maccabees 1:18. Note especially v.9 *And now see that ye keep the feast of tabernacles in the month Kislev*. Normally the Feast of Tabernacles is celebrated in the month of Tishri. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Feast of Tabernacles [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The priests and Levites. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The fifteen steps (mentioned later in our Mishnah) that led from the Court of the Israelites. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. To ascend to the top, since they were fifty cubits high. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Owing to the considerable height of the lamps and the high altitude of the Temple mount on which the court was situated. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. B.C.E means “Before the Common Era” and is the way Jews designate the time before Christ’s birth. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. This lighting, of the menorah, took place in 165 B.C.E. Exactly three years before, on the same day, Antiochus Epiphanes had a pagan altar erected in the Temple, upon which sacrifices were offered (I Maccabees I, 41-64). Apart from the Talmudic reason stated here, Judas Maccabeus chose 25th of Kislev as the anniversary of the Temple's defilement, and the dedication of the new altar was celebrated with lights for eight days, similarly to the Feast of Tabernacles, which lasted eight days and was celebrated by illuminations (I Macc. IV, 36;II Macc. X, 6; supra a, p. 90, n. 3). Actually the revolt was against the Syrians, of whom Antiochus Epiphanes was king, but the term ‘Greeks’ is used loosely, because the Seleucid Empire was part of the older Empire founded by Alexander the Great of Macedon, and because it was a reaction against the attempted Hellenization of Judea. The historic data are contained in the First Book of the Maccabees. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Festivals of idolaters (Avodah Zarah 6a). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. *Psalm 139:5.* As an aid to remembering that KALANDA mentioned first in the Mishnah is behind the equinox and SATURNALIA mentioned later is before it. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The eight days preceding and following the equinox. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Torah is the Hebrew word to describe the first five books of the Bible: Genesis (Bereshit), Exodus (Shemot), Leviticus (Vayikra), Numbers (Bamidbar), and Deuteronomy (Debarim). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Yochanan (John) 7:37 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. The Children of Israel [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. The seven branched candlestick in the Temple. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. AKA ‘New Testament’ [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Chaggai 2:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. II Hasmoneans (Maccabees) 10:5-7 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. I Melachim (Kings) 8:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Lit., ‘the festival’, par excellence. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. This is the Maccabean festival commemorating the victory of Judas Maccabeus over the Greco-Syrians on Kislev 25th, 165 B.C.E. (I Macc. IV, 45 ff). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Ezra ch. 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Rashi [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. called Diwali or Deepavali. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Many Christians begin lighting their homes after Thanksgiving. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. I am aware that Boeing has this tradition. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Sikhism and Jainism also celebrate this festival. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Tanakh is an acronym for Torah (Law), Neviim (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. The so called New Testament. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. The seventh month of the Hindu luni-solar calendar. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. The eighth month of the Hindu luni-solar calendar. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. He formulated a doctrine that became the basis of the Gelug (meaning "virtuous") sect of Buddhism. It became the predominant sect of Tibet, and Tsongkhapa's successors became the Dalai Lamas, the rulers of Tibet. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. it is the state of being free from suffering. The word literally means "blowing out", referring in the Buddhist context, to the blowing out of the fires of greed, hatred, and delusion. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. *Kalanda* has become the Greek for Christmas caroling. The Gemara explains that Kalanda was the eight-day festival celebrated by idolaters after Tekufat Tebet, the winter solstice (from December 25 to January 1). [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Macrobius, *Saturnalia*I. 7. 24: subito non comparuisset. [It was then, according to Macrobius, that Italy came to be called Saturnia in honor of the planet. Cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanorum* I. 6; Ovid, *Fasti,*VI. 1. 31.]  [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. *(Saturnalia*I. 7. 31-32, transl. by P. Davies, 1969). Macrobius noted also the opinion of those who “think that the practice is derived simply from the fact that it was in the reign of Saturn that we made our way, as thou to the light, from a rude and gloomy existence to a knowledge of the liberal arts.” [Cf. above, “Tammuz and Osiris,” n. 9 on the Egyptian light festival in honor of Osiris.]  [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. The ninth month of the Biblical calendar. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. The tenth month of the Biblical calendar. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Excerpted and translated from Rabbi Ginsburgh’s Hebrew book, *“Hanerot Hallalu”)* [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Avodah Zarah 8a. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. As per Bereshit Rabbah 2:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Zechariah 8:19 [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Thanks to a lesson by Prof.Ishai Rosen-Zvi, Tel Aviv University [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Avodah Zara 8a [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. This section is based on the writings of Shimon Apisdorf. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Rokeach [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. The word ayeka can be split into two words. Aye, which means “where” and koh, which is a difficult word to translate and seems to have different meanings in different contexts. However, the numerical value of the word *koh* is twenty-five, the number that represents *light*. When looked at this way, the word ayeka literally means, “where is the light”? [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. The House of G-d [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Of the monument he built [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Tzaddik = A Righteous One, one who keeps the commands of Torah. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Shabbat 21b [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Children of Israel [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Debarim (Deuteronomy) 10:20 [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Prayer book [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Mitzvot are the actions that are required by the Torah, in order to demonstrate out love for HaShem. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. see Rambam, *Hilchot Avodat Kokhavim*, chapter 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)