



A Nightly Hanukkah Practice for Dedication and Miracles 5786/2025

JCFS Chicago addiction services

Beth Fishman PhD, Program Manager

Hanukkah is a holiday of re-dedication and miracles. In fact, the word *hanukkah* means “dedication” in the sense of “...the solemn setting apart...to a special use or purpose.”¹ In the Hanukkah narrative, the Second Temple in Jerusalem was desecrated (separated from the Sacred) by the forces of King Antiochus. After the successful Maccabean revolt, the Temple was re-dedicated as a sacred space and the *Ner Tamid*/Eternal Flame was lit. This is where the *Nes Gadol*/Great Miracle enters the Hanukkah story: the oil that was enough for only one day lasted the eight days needed to secure more oil to maintain this Sacred light.

We can think of active addiction as a process in which we become separated from the Sacred, and recovery as the process by which we “recover” our essential holiness. In this way, re-dedication is a core recovery value, and great miracles are the result. The word “recovery” tells us that there is something essential in ourselves that remained holy despite any actions we might have taken during active addiction. Our tradition teaches that one level of the soul, the *Neshama*, sits closest to our internal connection to Divinity and is never sullied by the travails of life.² In recovery we are quite literally recovering this foundation of spiritual wholeness, the part of ourselves that addiction did not and could not touch. Returning to our essential holiness allows great miracles to enter our lives and the lives of those around us.

During Hanukkah, we might dedicate each night to one of the miracles brought by our return to spiritual clarity. Here are eight suggestions for the nightly naming of recovery miracles to which we can dedicate our attention and awareness. We invite you to take these suggestions or add others that speak to your own experience. May this practice enhance the blessings of the holiday.

On this night, I dedicate the light:

- 1 to a person who has been instrumental in my recovery
- 2 to an action I take each day that strengthens my recovery
- 3 to a positive *middah*/character trait I have found in myself in recovery
- 4 to an act of service by which I bring light to others
- 5 to something or someone I am grateful for
- 6 to a reading or concept that I find inspirational
- 7 to a place in my life where I experience love, support, and connection
- 8 to a deeply meaningful moment in recovery



JCFS Chicago addiction services supports individuals, families, and organizations in the Jewish community when addiction is a struggle and when recovery is celebrated. Please contact Beth Fishman PhD addiction services program manager for more information.

1 <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/4612-consecration>

2 <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/what-does-the-hebrew-word-neshama-mean/>