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CHANUKAH SERVICE BY SHAY ST. JOHN

I. Be still...joyously attuned...ready and willing to acknowledge that within us now, miracles are happening!

- Hannukah celebrates and honors the miracle that happened as the Macabees came together to dedicate their temple - finding the oil had been desecrated.
- There was only enough for one night - but in order to dedicate the temple, they must burn the oil for 8 nights.
- And the light from that one vial of oil burned the 8 nights it was needed.
- And so Chanukah honors the light that shines and anoints the temple of our own soul and brings us into oneness.

II. And so I invite you to relax and become still with me on this first night of Chanukah as we look back and feel the power and beauty of this words as they must have been a part of the celebration so familiar and so much a part of the Jewish household in which Jesus lived.

- Blessed art thou, the eternal, our God, king of the Universe, who hath sanctified us with his commandments and charged us to kindle the Chanukah light.
- Blessed art thou, the eternal, our God, king of the universe, who wrought miracles for our forefathers in former days at this season.
- Blessed art thou, the eternal, our God, who hath preserved us alive, sustained us and caused us to attain this season.

III. The lights we kindle we kindle in commemoration of your acts, your salvation, and the wonders which thou didst accomplish for our forefathers through the medium of thy holy priests.

- Throughout the 8 days of Chanukah these lights that shine are sacred.
- We contemplate them, thanking Thee for their gift in our world.
- For the miracles thou hast wrought throughout our history, for the miracles of this day, we sing praises and acknowledge thy wondrous acts.
- Baruch atah Adonai Elohenu melech ha'olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Chanukah.
- Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, who made us holy with his word and bade us on this feast of lights to burn one candle more each night.

IV. This night we celebrate the first night of Chanukah and also - unlike our Jewish brothers and sisters - we will light each of the eight candles - and as I light them one by

one from the one central candle - feel the expansion of light growing within your entire being.

- And we come unto the light - recognizing that in the light we experience our deep and abiding oneness with God - and so it is we echo the words heard in the temple:

Rock of strength! Great Aid of yore!
Tis sweet due praise to sing thee;
Rear our house of praise once more.
Thank offerings there we'll bring thee.
Rock of ages, let our song praise thy saving power,
Thou amidst the raging foes wast our sheltering tower.
Yours, O Lord, the message cheering,
That the time is nearing,
In which we will see all people free,
And tyrants disappearing.

V. Tonight is Chanukah - a season which God Itself blesses and hallows - because this is a season of holiness, we purify ourselves so that we may receive the Spirit.

- So long as we feel anger, guilt, resentment or unforgiveness within ourselves, we carry darkness and will be unable to receive the gift of light that Chanukah offers us.
- We prepare ourselves, therefore, for entry into Chanukah and Christmas and Chanukah's entry into our heart as we release negative feelings.
- Close your eyes with me and picture within the deep recesses of your own being any feeling of negativity or hurt, anger or resentment.
 - Image the face of a person you feel distant from - or an experience that is less than good - and use this image - whatever it may be - to be a symbol of all the hurt - known and unknown - all the anger - consciously felt or not - all the unforgiveness - known or unknown - that may rest in the recesses of your mind.
 - And with me in the stillness of meditation, greet that face or that experience and repeat each phrase after me as you hold a clear image of this person or this experience.

I greet you, dear friend:
I welcome you into my heart.
In the purity and wholeness of Chanukah
I declare there are no negative feelings between us.
I do not forgive you...
For you have done nothing that needs forgiveness.
You are pure. You are perfect.
You are radiant with the light of Chanukah...
And I love you.
Thank you for being a part of my world.

VI. We have now freed ourselves of resentment and anger toward others.

- And so it is we are ready to move more deeply within and banish all guilt or anxiety we may feel toward ourselves.
- With your eyes still closed: repeat after me:

"Ashamnu -we have been wrong.
Bagadnu -we have done foolish things.
Gazalnu -we have hurt ourselves.
Dibarnu dofey.
We have hurt others. We now put this all aside.
We cleanse our slate. And we cleanse our soul.
Thank you, God, that I am free.

VII. Vayomer, Adonai. Savarkti kidvarkath.

And the Lord says, thy record is pure, for you have declared it to be so.

- We have purified our thoughts and feelings. We are now ready to experience the radiance of Chanukah and the light of Christmas.
- You are holy, Lord our God, and Your presence permeates the Universe.
 - Through your commandments we share your holiness.
 - In holiness we welcome Chanukah with light.
 - God, you manifest in us as Chanukah joy - you manifest in us as Chanukah peace. You manifest in us as Chanukah holiness.

VIII. From the point of light within the mind of God let light stream forth into the human mind and descend upon the earth.

- From the point of love within the heart of God let love stream forth into the human heart. May light return to earth.
- From the center, where the will of God is known, let purpose always guide the human will -the holy purpose which always brings us toward the light.
- From the center which we call the human race let your plan of light and love work out and restore thy perfection here on earth.
- Baruch atah adonai elohenu melech ha'olam she'asah nisim la'avotenu bayamim hahem baz'man hazeh.
- Blessed art thou, the whole world's king, who did so wonderful a thing for our fathers - true and old - at this time in days of old - El Shaddai - we honor you through song and joy as we let our light shine this night.

IX. El Shaddai - Adonai - Elohenu - Jehovah - God - our Father - our mother - our creator

- You are holy - your presence permeates the universe
- By your word evening enters - with your wisdom you open the divine gates of

morning -and with understanding you make the cycles of time and the changing of seasons.

- You set the stars in their courses in the sky according to your will. You create day and night, rolling away the light before the darkness and the darkness before the light.
- With everlasting love do you love your people.
- Torah and commandments, rules and justice do you teach us. We rejoice in the words of your Torah and in your commandments forever, and upon them do we meditate day and night.
- El Shaddai, Jehovah, Lord God, grant us peace - your most precious gift.
- Enable us, who are intoxicated with Your presence, to be your messengers of peace to all the world.
- Bless all nations by making them strongholds of peace so that the advocates of peace may prevail in the council of nations.

Bestow contentment upon all the peoples of the earth so that health and happiness may reign within their homes.

Strengthen the bonds of friendship and fellowship uniting all people throughout creation.

Lord of our being, may every soul become intoxicated with your presence, for you, O God, are the giver of peace.

Let us pray on this first evening of Chanukah for peace - peace that anointed the temple of the Macabees and peace that anoints the temple of our own heart.

Eternal God, we pray that strength and courage abundant be given to all who work for a world of reason and understanding. We ask that the good that lies in every persons heart be magnified so that all people will come to see not that which divides them, but that which unites them.

That each hour brings us closer to victory - not of one nation over another, but of all people over their own negative beliefs.

Let the true spirit of this season, this celebration of light, its joy, its beauty, its wholeness, and above all its abiding faith live among us, as we build a future in which all people will know they are one with another and one with you, O Lord.

This is our Chanukah prayer - our celebration of Light - this night. May the light of Chanukah and the light of Christmas so fill your mind and heart that you go forth in absolute and perfect peace.

X. It is now time for us to acknowledge the bountiful gifts God has so generously bestowed upon us as we share a portion of those gifts.

- And I invite you to take whatever gift you would share this evening and hold it in your holy hands - close your eyes and concentrate on your gift - consecrate it to the expression of goodness and peace in the world.
- Know and understand that it is through God's gracious bounty that you have received all your gifts and are able to share from the rich storehouse of your good with this ministry of light.
- With your eyes closed, visualize your gift filled with light and repeat after me: From the exhaustless riches...of God's limitless substance...I draw all things needful... both spiritual and material to bless and enrich my life and my world. I give freely to God and God gives freely to me.
- This night, dear God, we thank you, for your ever increasing and expanding flow of absolute good. And as our offering is taken, let us relax and feel the power as we hear *Silent Night* bridge Chanukah and Christmas.

XII. This is a divine night - a holy night - a night of light - a night of rebirth - a night of peace - and as I share this benediction with you, I will pause - and I ask that you affirm at that time, "So may it be:"

"Our God, creator of us all, cause your threefold blessing to rest upon us as it did upon our ancestors when your holy priests pronounced the great benediction.

The lord blesses you and keeps you.

The Lord's face shines through you and brings grace to you.

The Lord's face shines through you, causing you to radiate the blessing of peace to all you encounter.

Beloved ones, so is it! Go forth knowing the peace of God that fills us now!
