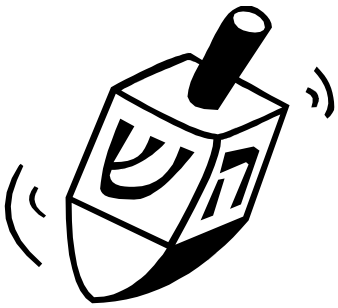
Pitome!
Idea Page

Let's Play Dreidel!

Family Education at your Fingertips!

by Nina Gelman-Gans



The dreidel is a four-sided top. It provides the basis for a Chanukah gambling game — whoever wins the most beans wins the game. This game can be enjoyed by all ages.

Instructions:

- Every player gets 10 or 20 counters (beans, M&M's, chocolates...).
- Every player contributes two beans into a central pile. This becomes the "pot."
- Players take turns spinning the dreidel. According to the letter that faces up, players contribute to or collect items from the pot.
- The player who wins all the counters wins the game.

ש	ה	ג	נ
SHIN	HAY	GIMMEL	NUN
Shtehl	*Halb*	*Gantz*	*Nisht*
put two back!	take **h**alf!	**g**et all!	**n**othing!

The Dreidel - Chanukah Connection

The dreidel also celebrates the miracle of Chanukah. Each letter of the dreidel is a mnemonic for the Hebrew phrase "**N**es **G**adol **H**aya **Sh**am". It translates as "a great miracle happened there".

When the Syrian-Greeks conquered Israel, they forbade Jews to practice their religion. Of course, the Jews didn't take "no" for an answer. They studied in secret. If they were discovered by soldiers, the scholars would hide their books, and pull out spinning tops, pretending to gamble.

Against all odds, the Jewish Maccabee soldiers persevered against the conquering Syrian-Greek army. They won back the Holy Temple and regained control over the Holy Land.

The current game of dreidel is based on a German gambling game.

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PO Box 30961 ✱ Santa Barbara, CA ✱ 93130
ideas@pitome.com ✱ www.pitome.com