



The Dreidel Game



It is said that when Antiochus forbade the study of *Torah*, small groups of students continued to meet in secret to study together and to teach one another. They always brought small tops with them so that if the king's soldiers were spotted in the vicinity, they could busy themselves with their tops, thereby appearing to be just children at play.



The letters which now appear on every dreidel were added at a later time to carry the message of the miracle to whomever played with one. (This probably makes the dreidel the world's first educational toy!)



ש	ה	ג	נ
<i>sham</i>	<i>ha'ya</i>	<i>gadol</i>	<i>nes</i>
there	happened	great	miracle

A great miracle happened there!

(In Israel it has a נ instead of a ש because "A great miracle happened here!")



How to Play

Everyone in the game starts with 10 or 15 pennies or nuts, raisins, beads etc.

Each player puts one of these in the middle (called the pot).

The dreidel is spun by one player at a time.

Whether the player wins or loses depends on which face of the dreidel is up when it falls.

- נ Nun means *nisht* or 'nothing' in Yiddish. The player does nothing.
- ג Gimme means *gantz* or 'all' in Yiddish. The player takes everything in the pot.
- ה Heh means *halb* or 'half' in Yiddish. The player takes half of what is in the pot.
- ש Shin means *shtel* or 'put in' in Yiddish. The player adds two objects to the pot.

When only one object or none is left in the pot every player adds one.

When an odd number of objects is in the pot, the player rolling Heh takes half the total plus one.

When one person has won everything, the game is over.

