

Chanuka Dinim Compiled by Rabbi Uri Orlian

Time to Light

- The first candle is lit Tuesday night, December 12th.
- There are 3 primary opinions when one should light: at sundown [Shkiah], at Tzeis HaKochavim [apx 40 minutes after Shkiah], or 13 ½ minutes before Tzeis. One should follow their minhag if they know their minhag. Otherwise, it is advisable to light from 10-25 minutes after shkiah [apx. 4:35 this year].
- Ideally one should arrange their schedules to light at the aforementioned times, and not later. *Although this is difficult on workdays, one should arrange their Sunday schedule [& Chanuka party schedule] to enable lighting b'zman.*
- One is permitted to light with a bracha as long as passerbys [time varies based on where you live] or family members can see the candles. If one returns home after that, one should nevertheless light without a bracha, or awake a family member, if feasible, to light with a bracha.
- Candles must burn for at least ½ hour. If one lights b'zman, it is ideal to place enough oil that will burn until ½ hour after Tzeis.
- Since modern-day "*Tichle Regel Min HaShuk*" is much later than it was in the time of the Gemara, it is proper to have the candles burn for much longer than the ½ hour minimum.

Before Lighting

- Before lighting the first night of Chanuka, one should stipulate that they intend to dedicate to the mitzva of Neiros Chanukah only those candles/oil/wicks that will end up being consumed by the mitzva. *[Otherwise, the leftover oil/wicks/wax that are used but not consumed are "Muktza Lmitzvaso" and can not be used, and must be therefore burnt after Chanuka.]*
- Once the zman for lighting arrives, it is prohibited to become involved in other activities, including beginning a meal, learning Torah, doing the laundry, etc. A snack, however, is permitted.

Shabbos

- On Erev Shabbos, it is proper to daven mincha early, so lighting can be after mincha.
- Chanuka candles are lit first, then shabbos candles. The earliest that the chanuka candles can be lit is at Plag HaMincha [3:30 this year].
- Make sure that the flame will burn for at least ½ hour after the zman hadlaka- [aim for 1¼ hours of fuel]. The classical multi-colored Chanukah candles in the blue boxes are NOT suitable for this purpose and cannot be used. If you usually use candles, tea lights will do the trick.
- One should do whatever preparations can be done on Friday to enable the Motza'ei Shabbos lighting to be done as early as possible.
- On Motza'ei Shabbos: Shuls light Chanuka candles before Havdala. Individuals in their home should follow their minhag what to do first, otherwise, either one is fine.

Where to Light

- In America, the minhag is to light in the window that is most noticeable to passerbys. If it is unsafe, then light where it will be safer. Make certain to keep drapes far from flames.
- If the window is not feasible, one can light in the interior of the home, since it is seen by family members, ideally in the doorway (if safe and feasible).
- Windows in apartment buildings that are above 20 Amos [*Assuming an Amah is 19 inches, like R' Chaim Naeh, 20 Amos = 31.6 feet. Assuming 24 inches, like Chazon Ish, 20 Amos=40 feet*], which is above the permitted height, can still be used if there are windows from opposing apartment buildings that are within a 20 Amah height differential.

בית הכנסת שערי תפילה

- The mitzva of Hadlaka Neiros exists only in a shul and in a home- not at a wedding/communal gathering etc.

How to Light

- It is proper that the room's lights be dimmed before lighting, so that the candles can be seen in contrast to the relative darkness that surrounds them
- Ideally one should stand near the candles on the left side of the menorah so that one need not pass over the candles on the right when lighting.
- The first candle is to be lit at your extreme right. Each night thereafter, the newest candle should be added to the left of the previous night's candle as you face the Menorah. Light the candles from left to right.
- The candles only need fuel to burn for a half hour of night. *[Please note that if multiple menoras are close to one another, the candles melt more quickly, and the classical multi-colored candles in the blue boxes will not even last the requisite ½ hour.]*
- It's preferable to light with olive oil because that was the oil used in the Beit Hamikdash which with the miracle occurred.
- There is a custom for women to not work during the zman hadlaka, ie. the first ½ hour following hadlaka. However, only melacha that is prohibited on Chol Hamoed is included, like laundry and sewing, but cooking and preparing for a meal, which is permitted on Chol Hamoed, is permitted.

Al HaNisim

- 'Al Hanisim' is recited in Shemona Esrei and in Birchah Hamazon. If one forgets 'Al Hanisim', one does not repeat Shemona Esrei or Birchah Hamazon.
- If one remembers before mentioning the name of Hashem at the conclusion of the bracha, he should go back to 'Al Hanisim' and continue from there. Regarding Birchah Hamazon, there is a special 'Harachaman' which can be found in many Siddurim.

Aveilus

- R' Shlomo Zalman Aurbach ruled that an Avel is permitted to participate in a family's yearly Chanuka party.

Chanuka on the Road

- One who visits friends or family, but will be returning home that evening, cannot be yotze with their dinner host's lighting, but rather, should light when they return home. In other words, if you are sleeping at home you must light at home and nowhere else.
- A sleepover guest can light their own menorah with a bracha at their host's house.
- If you are a guest and eating in one location but sleeping in a different location, the primary lighting location is the place of eating. If that is not possible, then one may light at the location of sleeping.
- If a person leaves their home in the afternoon, they can light as early as Plag HaMincha [3:30 this year], and leave sufficient oil to burn until ½ hour after zman. But it is preferable to light very late at night for family members, rather than to light before Shkiah.
- If a person is in transit for the entire nighttime, they fulfill their obligation by having their family or a friend light in the traveller's house.
- If one spouse is traveling, and the other spouse is home, the traveling spouse fulfills his or her obligation via the lighting at home.

Please consult the Rav regarding specific scenarios!