

שפה ברורה

הלכות חנוכה

THE HALACHOS OF  
CHANUKAH



THE MIDWEST REGION OF  
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# THE HALACHOS OF CHANUKAH

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS KUNTRIS IS PRIMARILY FOR THE HALACHOS OF CHANUKAH OUTSIDE ERETZ YISROEL.

## HADLAKAS NEIROS

### I. Materials

#### A. Menorah

1. **Acceptable Materials** - A menorah can be made out of any material. The only exception is that oil menorahs should not be made out of pottery or clay.
  - a. **Glazed Pottery** - Is acceptable because it is easy to clean.
  - b. **Children's Projects** - Children may light candles in a clay menorah that they made in school.
2. **Quality of the Menorah**
  - a. **Beautiful Menorah** - Even though all menorahs are acceptable, one should try to have a beautiful menorah as a *hiddur mitzvah*.
  - b. **Silver Menorah** - If it is within one's means, it is best to have a silver menorah.
    - i. If one puts the oil in glass cups resting in the silver menorah, it still counts as using a silver menorah.
    - ii. Upon the purchase of an expensive menorah a *beracha* should be said -
      - Bought for the family- "*Hatov V'hameitiv*"
      - Bought for an individual- "*She'hechyanu*"
  - c. **Disposable Menorahs** - Although using a disposable

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menorah does not fulfill *hiddur mitzvah*, it certainly has the status of being a *kli* and may be used on Chanukah.

3. **No Menorah Available** - One should make an effort to light in a menorah or something that has the status of a *kli*. If there are no menorahs available, it is acceptable to fulfill the mitzvah by lining up candles without the use of a menorah.
  - a. **Sharing a Menorah** - Two people can share one menorah by having one person light on the right side of the menorah and the other on the left. This practice is only acceptable through the third night, because by the fourth night there will no longer be a gap between their candles to help differentiate between the two sets.
  - b. **Lining Up Cups** - It is acceptable to line up cups to act as the menorah even though they are not connected.
4. **Shape of the Menorah**
  - a. **L'chatchila** - Ideally, the menorah lights should be in a straight line.
  - b. **Round Menorah** - Not acceptable for the mitzvah.
  - c. **Candles are at Different Heights** - Preferable not to use for the mitzvah.

## B. Oil/Candles

1. **Acceptable Materials** - All oils and candles are acceptable for the mitzvah of *Hadlakas Neiros*. The following are the possible exceptions -
  - a. **Oil from a Shemmitah Year** - Not acceptable.
  - b. **Oil Left Under a Bed** - Some poskim recommend not using it.
  - c. **Non-Kosher** - Technically acceptable. It is worthwhile to have a hechsher just to guarantee that it is 100% olive

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oil. The companies often mix in other ingredients without putting it on the label.

2. **Preferred Materials** - The preferences for what to use are in the following order
  - a. Olive Oil (because it lights best and it most accurately commemorates the miracle of Chanukah).
  - b. Other Oils.
  - c. Candles.
    - a. If one has some oil but not enough for all the lights, he should not light a combination of oil and candles. He should just use all candles.
    - b. Warning - Candles burn very quickly and very often will burn out before the requisite time has lapsed to fulfill the mitzvah. One would either have to get bigger/thicker candles or arrange for the candles to last for longer (i.e.- freeze them, etc.). If one is using candles that only last 30 minutes, he should light at *tzeis hakoachavim* and not earlier.
3. **For Children** - It is acceptable to give children candles to light instead of oil as long as the candles will last long enough.
4. **Congeaed Oil** - Counts as oil and not as a candle.
5. **Electric and Gas** - Are not acceptable means of fulfilling the mitzvah.
6. **Amount of Oil** - One must place enough oil in the cup to last for at least 30 minutes.
  - a. **Lighting Early** - If one is lighting before the designated time (for example, on Erev Shabbos), there will have to be enough oil to last past 30 minutes past Tzeis Hakoachavim. According to most poskim, one can hold that Tzeis is 50 minutes after shkiyah for this halacha.
    - b. **Hiddur Mitzvah** -There is a *hiddur mitzvah* to light with

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longer candles, but there is no *hiddur mitzvah* to add a lot of extra oil.

- c. **Fill up to the Top** - It is preferable to fill the oil cups to the very top. If one does not want to use that much oil, one can put water into the bottom of the cup to lift up the oil.

## C. Wicks

1. **Acceptable Materials** - All materials can be used to make the wicks for *Hadlakas Neiros*.
2. **Preferred Materials** - Cotton and linen are the preferred materials to use for the wicks.
3. **New Wicks** - Some individuals have a minhag to use new wicks every night. Many others do not have this minhag.
4. **Floating Wicks** - They are acceptable to use for the mitzvah, and they count as lighting with oil even though the wick has a small layer of wax on it. Some are stringent and dip the wicks in oil before lighting.

## II. Location in the House

### A. History

Originally, the Rabbis established that the primary place to light a menorah was at the entrance of the house, opposite the mezuzah. Lighting in this location accomplished the two goals of publicizing the miracle (*pirsumei nisa*) and that one would be surrounded by mitzvos (mezuzah on one side and the menorah

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on the other). It was only in times of danger that people lit the menorah indoors.

## B. Contemporary Application

Since that time, there have been several periods in Jewish history when it was not safe to light outside, and over time three different minhagim have emerged (it is beyond the scope of this work to explain the source of each minhag) -

1. **Eretz Yisroel** - Light outside opposite the mezuzah.
2. **Outside of Eretz Yisroel**
  - a. **Minhag Hachassidim** - Light inside the house opposite a mezuzah.
  - b. **All Others** - Light inside the house in a window that faces the public.
3. **Important Note** - Now that the minhag in *Chutz La'aretz* is to light indoors, the primary focus of the mitzvah has shifted to be for the '*bnei habayis*' (members of the household) and not for the people in the street. This change has led to several differences in halacha, such as the latest time for lighting and other differences that will be mentioned below.

## C. Placement of the Menorah - How high off the ground?

1. **Minimum Height** - 3 *tefachim* (9.4 - 11.3 inches). It is measured from the floor of the room and not from outside. Therefore, if someone has a basement apartment and the window is at ground level it is acceptable to place the menorah in the window even if it is within 3 *tefachim* of the ground outside.
2. **Maximum Height** - 20 *amos* (31.4 - 37.7 feet).

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3. **Preferable Height** - Between 3 and 10 *tefachim* from the ground. When it is lit in that range, it is clear that the menorah was lit for the mitzvah and not for other reasons. (If one feels that it will be safer to place the menorah higher, it can be raised even *l'chatchila*).
4. **Important Note** - All of these measurements are measured from the flame and not from the bottom or top of the menorah.

## D. Lighting in the Window

1. **Which Window** - Whichever one will have the most *pirsumei nisa* to the family and the people outside.
2. **Right Side of Window** - Many sources recommend lighting in the right side of the window, but people are generally not particular about this.
3. **Height Within the Window** - Even when lighting in a window, the menorah should ideally be within 10 tefachim of the ground. If, however, the window is above 10 tefachim, this limitation does not apply.
4. **Menorah that has a Back** - If the menorah has a back and can only be seen from one side, it is better to have it face inside. This is because the primary focus of the lighting is for the members of the household. If the menorah can be set at an angle so that it can be seen from both inside and outside, that would be best.
5. **Storm Doors** - If one has a storm door, the most *l'chatchila* place to light the menorah may be between the door to the house and the storm door. It is both in a window and opposite a mezuzah. This location is usually not practical, however, because of the concern that it will block the door or that children may knock it over.
6. **Apartment Building** - If one lives in an apartment building

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and the windows are above 20 *amos* from the ground level -

- a. There are no other buildings around that are also that height - All poskim agree that there is no need to light in the window, and that the menorah may be lit inside if that is more convenient.
  - b. There are other buildings around that are the same height (or at least within 20 *amos*)- Most poskim are of the opinion that one should then light in the window, others disagree.
7. **No Window Facing the Public** - If one does not have any window that faces the public, or there is a window but it faces a yard that only a neighbor or two can see, one should just light inside opposite a mezuzah.

## E. Lighting Opposite a Mezuzah Details

1. **Mezuzah** - Most poskim are of the opinion that the menorah can be put opposite the mezuzah in a doorway that was not clearly obligated to have a mezuzah in the first place.
2. **Within a Tefach** - The menorah should ideally be within a *tefach* of the doorpost.
3. **Height** - As stated above, the menorah should ideally be placed between 3 and 10 *tefachim* from the ground, but if necessary it can be as high as 20 *amos*.

## III. Time for Lighting

### A. Prescribed Time for Lighting

The Gemara says that the proper time to light the menorah is Chanuka\7

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from “*mishetishka hachama*” until “*tichleh regel min hashuk*”.

## B. What is “Mishetishkeh Hachama”?

There is a difference of opinions. Some are of the opinion that it is “*techilas shkiyah*” (the beginning of *shkiyah*. i.e.-sunset) and others are of the opinion that it is “*sof shkiyah*” (the end of *shkiyah*. i.e.- *tzeis hakochavim*). This debate has led to various minhagim concerning the ideal time to light.

1. Light at *shkiyah* or very close to *shkiyah*.
2. Light at *tzeis*.
3. Light somewhere in between to try to fulfill both opinions.

## C. Practical Examples

The following is a list of some of the common minhagim for the proper time to light the menorah along with the names of the Gedolim that personally followed that minhag.

1. At *shkiyah* (The Vilna Gaon and Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach).
2. 10 minutes after *shkiyah* (Rav Moshe Feinstein).
3. 20 minutes after *shkiyah* (Chazon Ish).
4. 25 minutes after *shkiyah* (Rav Aharon Kotler).
5. 50 minutes after *shkiyah*.

## D. Maariv or Lighting: Which is First?

If one normally davens Maariv right after *shkiyah*, he should continue to do so and then light afterwards. If one has a set minyan at a later time, he can light first and daven later.

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## E. How long should the candles last for?

Technically, the candles only need to stay lit for 30 minutes. However, out of concern that the proper time to light the menorah is 50 minutes after *shkiyah*, one should ideally have his candles last 30 minutes past that time. If one lit very early, like on Erev Shabbos, there will have to be a lot of oil to last for that long.

## F. Extinguishing the Candles

Once the menorah has been lit long enough to fulfill the mitzvah, the candles can technically be extinguished at that time. However, this should only be done for a good reason. One example is someone who is leaving his house and doesn't want to leave a lit menorah unsupervised.

## G. Delaying Lighting

There is a benefit to light the menorah exactly at the right time, but for a good reason the lighting may be delayed. Even then, however, it should be lit as early as possible because of '*zrizim makdimim l'mitzvos*'.

1. **Yeshivas and Kollelim** - There is a big debate among the poskim if the afternoon *seider* of a yeshiva should be shortened to allow everyone to light at the ideal time. Each yeshiva has its own minhag. Some yeshivas adjust their schedules so that the Talmidim will be home on time to light at the ideal time, but then the missed learning will be made up at a different time.
2. **Leaving Work Early** - If one is able, it is certainly praiseworthy to leave work early to enable an on-time lighting. If this is not possible or it will cause a financial loss, one can light after returning from work at the regular time.

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## 3. Waiting for other Family Members

- a. **Wife Home Before Husband** - Most poskim agree that she should wait for her husband to come home and he will light at that time. There is no need for her to light on-time as his *shaliach*.
- b. **Husband Home Before the Wife** - There is a debate among the poskim if he should wait to light until his wife comes home or not. Most poskim are of the opinion that for *Shalom Bayis* and other reasons, he should wait for her to return before he lights.
- c. **Single Son Home Before His Parents** - He should light himself at the correct time and not wait for his parents to come home.

## H. Lighting After “Tichleh Regel”

Certainly, the ideal time to light the menorah is until “*tichleh regel*”, which in our generation is fairly late anyways since people are driving at all hours of the night. However, being that the primary lighting is for the *bnei habayis*, one may light the menorah, if necessary, even much later.

## I. Latest Time to Light

The absolute latest that one can light the menorah and still fulfill the mitzvah is *alos hashachar* (dawn) the next morning, but if it is late at night the halacha may vary depending on if there are others present at the time of the lighting or not.

1. According to many opinions, one should only make a *beracha* late at night if there are other people present. If necessary, another member of the household should be woken up to be present for the lighting.
2. Rav Moshe Feinstein was of the opinion that even late at

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night, one can light normally with a *beracha* even without others being present.

3. Note - One can still light the menorah even right before *alos*, even though the menorah will not be lit for 30 minutes prior to *alos*. There is a debate, however, if a *beracha* should be said.

## J. Lighting Early

1. **At Shkiyah** - In a case of need, one can light the menorah right after *shkiyah* even if that is not his normal minhag.
2. **After Plag Hamincha but before Shkiyah** - In extenuating circumstances, one can light the menorah from *plag hamincha* (1¼ halachic hours before the end of the day). In all cases of lighting early, a Rav should be consulted.
  - a. **Which Plag** - There is a debate in halacha if *plag* is measured from before *shkiyah* or before *tzeis*. This is very noteworthy in our case, because *plag* being measured from *tzeis* is not very much more before *shkiyah* and would not gain that much more time. Practically, how do we *pasken*?
    - i. Rav Moshe Feinstein - We are stringent that it is generally measured from *tzeis* and is therefore not a very useful option on Chanukah. The only exception is on Erev Shabbos when all agree that the earlier version of *plag* is used.
    - ii. Many Others - It is always measured from the earlier *plag*. According to this opinion, in cases of need, one would have approximately an extra hour before *shkiyah* to light.
  - c. **Lighting Very Early or Very Late** - If one has a choice to either light the menorah late at night or to light before *shkiyah*, he should rather light the menorah late at night if he will not forget.

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4. **Lit Early and Schedule Changed** - Someone who did not expect to be home at the proper time for lighting, and he therefore lit the menorah before *shkiyah*. If his schedule changes and he ends up being home after *shkiyah*, he would not need to light again.

## K. Shabbos Chanukah

### 1. Erev Shabbos

- a. **Proper Time for Lighting** - The proper time for lighting the menorah on Erev Shabbos is between *plag hamincha* and *shkiyah*. It is preferable to be closer to *shkiyah* than to *plag*.
- b. **Mincha** - It is proper for practical and halachic reasons to light the menorah after Mincha. That being said, one should not miss davening Mincha with a minyan in order to ensure that he lights after Mincha. If need be, he should just light the menorah and daven afterwards with a minyan.
- c. **Shabbos Candles** - One should be careful to light the menorah before the Shabbos candles are lit.
  - i. If the wife already lit Shabbos candles - The husband can still light the menorah.
  - ii. If the one who was supposed to light the menorah already lit Shabbos candles - Someone else who did not accept Shabbos yet should light the menorah on their behalf and say all the *berachos*.
- d. **Amount of Oil/Candles** - There should ideally be enough oil to last from the time of lighting until 80 minutes after *shkiyah* (thirty minutes past *tzeis*). Since most candles do not last this long, one who normally lights with candles would either need to obtain bigger candles or light on Erev Shabbos with oil.

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## 2. Havdallah on Motzei Shabbos

- a. **In Shul** - The menorah should be lit first and then havdallah should be made.
- b. **At Home** - There are different minhagim whether havdallah or lighting the menorah should be done first. One should follow his family minhag. If one has no clear minhag, he should light the menorah first.

## IV. Who Lights

### A. Who is Obligated

Every Jewish person, male, female and child of chinuch age has an obligation to fulfill the mitzvah of *Neiros Chanukah*. This can be fulfilled either by lighting a menorah themselves or by a representative.

### B. How Many People Light in Each Home?

There are three levels of lighting the menorah -

1. **Basic Fulfillment** - One person lights one candle each night for the entire family.
2. **Mehadrin (Better)** - Each person lights one candle each night of Chanukah.
3. **Mehadrin min Hamehadrin (Best)** - A candle each night to correspond to which night of Chanukah it is. According to minhag Ashkenaz, each person lights each night of Chanukah and adds a candle for each night. According to minhag Sefarad, only one person per household does this.

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## C. Women

Even though this is a time-bound positive mitzvah, which women are usually exempt from, women do have an obligation to fulfill this mitzvah. This is because of a concept called “*af hein hayu b’oso haneis*” (they were also saved by and involved in bringing about the miraculous victory of Chanukah). Any woman who is alone should light her own menorah for this reason. If, however, she is with another person who is already lighting, sometimes the minhag is for her to fulfill the mitzvah with that person as her *shaliach*.

1. **Wife** - The common minhag is for a wife not to light her own menorah and to be *yotzei* with her husband’s lighting. When possible, it is important for her to be present for the *berachos*.
2. **Daughter** - There are different minhagim. Some girls light their own menorah and others are *yotzei* with their father’s lighting. One should follow her family minhag.
3. **Guest** - The common minhag is for her to be *yotzei* with her host’s lighting (See V3 below).
4. **Children** - Children of chinuch age (above 5-6 years old) have an obligation to fulfill the mitzvah. They can either be *yotzei* with their parent or, as is commonly done, they can light their own menorahs. If the child lit early and then became a bar mitzvah that night - he does not need to light again.

## D. Adding Candles Each Night Details

1. **Placing the Candles** - The first candle should be placed in the far right position and then additional candles should be added at the left.
2. **Lighting the Candles** - The candles should be lit from left

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to right.

3. **Don't Have Enough Candles** - If one has more than one candle but not enough for that particular night (i.e.- 3 candles on the 5th night). It is better to light just one candle, rather than lighting all three.
4. **Lit the Wrong Amount of Candles** -
  - a. **Lit Too Many** - Extinguish the extra ones.
  - b. **Lit Too Few** - Just add the missing candles (without a *beracha*).
  - c. If the candles already went out, the menorah should be lit again without a *beracha*.

## E. Shaliach

Although it is always better to perform a mitzvah yourself and not through a *shaliach* (agent), in a case of need, one can fulfill the mitzvah of lighting the menorah by having a *shaliach* light on his behalf in his home. Please note, the *shaliach* can never light on behalf of the other person in the *shaliach's* own home. According to most poskim, it is better for one to light by himself at a later time, and not have a *shaliach* light for him at the ideal time.

## V. “Beiso”- What is Considered His House

### A. “His” House

One can only fulfill this mitzvah by lighting in a place that is considered his house (“*beiso*”) according to halacha. What is Considered “His” House

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1. **Personal Home** - One's home or apartment are always considered "*beiso*", whether or not he will be sleeping there that night and even if he hasn't been home in a long time.
2. **Other locations ("Temporary Home")** - One cannot consider another location "*beiso*" unless he fulfills certain requirements to give it that status. Generally, it will need to be his primary dwelling that night.
  - a. For example, one can't just choose to light a menorah at his neighbor's house, even if they are having a *mesibah* together at that location.
  - b. One cannot send a message ahead to have someone light on his behalf. He needs to first arrive for it to count as his house for lighting.
3. **Joining the Lighting of the Host** - If one does not have his own menorah and is staying at someone else's house who will be lighting, he can arrange to become a partner in his host's lighting.
  - a. **Procedure for becoming a partner** - The guest should either give a very small sum of money to the host or lift up (acquire) the container of oil before it is poured into the cups. Ideally, the host should add a little extra oil on behalf of the guest.
  - b. **Procedure for the Lighting**- Ideally, the guest should be present at the time of the lighting, but even if he is not present he still fulfills the mitzvah.
  - c. **"Ben Bayis"**- Someone who is a long-term guest in the host's home can automatically be part of the host's lighting without having to give any money or lifting the bottle of oil, but it is still best for him to light himself if he is able to.
4. **Leaving Right After the Lighting** - Can someone light a menorah in a home that he won't be sleeping in that night?

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It depends on the following factors -

- a. **Leaving Personal Home** - One's home is always considered "*beiso*". Therefore, even if he leaves right after lighting and won't be sleeping there again for a while, he should still light in his home.
- b. **Leaving Temporary Home** - Someone established another location as "*beiso*" by staying overnight. Now it is the next night and he wants to know if he can light in that temporary home even if he won't be sleeping there any longer. It would depend on the following- (Please note there are many opinions on this topic. The following is just one approach. Please speak to your Rav if you have any questions or to see if he has an alternative approach)
  - i. **Stayed Only One Night** - (For example, he slept at someone's house on Monday night and now it is Tuesday night and it is the proper time to light the menorah, but he doesn't plan on staying there again on Tuesday night.) There are varying opinions. Some poskim are lenient and permit him to light in his "temporary home" especially if he stayed there for a Shabbos. Most poskim, however, recommend that he should light in the location that he will actually be staying at that night.
  - ii. **Stayed Two Nights or More** - (For example, he stayed at someone's house on Monday and Tuesday night and now it is Wednesday night, but he plans on leaving after lighting.) Most poskim are of the opinion that he established himself long enough in his temporary home that it is considered "*beiso*" and he may light there even if he plans on leaving right afterwards, but it is still better for him to light in the location that he will actually be staying at that night.
  - iii. **Best Option** - In all of these cases, if he is driving

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back to his real home that night, and he will be there by an early hour, it is generally preferable to light at his real home than to light at a temporary home.

5. **Hotel** - If one is staying overnight at a hotel, that is the location where he should light his menorah that night. The challenge is that many hotels will not allow the lighting of fires on their premises. Therefore, one should follow the following guidelines -
  - a. One should never attempt to light the menorah against hotel policies. According to some poskim, one would not even be *yotzei* if he did.
  - b. One should request permission to be able to light a fully supervised menorah either in his room or in the lobby, or preferably in the room in which he'll be eating. If permission is granted to light in the lobby or dining room, he should make a point to spend some time and eat near the menorah. The menorah can be extinguished after the minimum time has passed for him to fulfill the mitzvah.
  - c. If the hotel is not willing to grant permission, then the only other option is to have a *shaliach* light on his behalf back at his home.
6. **Wedding Hall** - If one is attending a wedding in an out-of-town city and he is there during the proper time for lighting, and he plans on driving home through the night, the halachos are as follows -
  - a. If he will arrive home before *alos*, even if it is very late at night - He should light at home.
  - b. If he will arrive home after *alos* - Then the wedding hall is considered "*beiso*" for that night and he should light at the wedding hall. A Rav should be consulted.
7. **Office** - One should not light a menorah at his office. In a case of need, a Rav should be consulted.

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8. **Travelling Through the Night** - This is a very complicated issue. If it is possible to light on the train or in the car, it should be attempted. This, however, is an unlikely solution. The best option is to have a *shaliach* light back in one's home. If one is not travelling through the night, one should not light in the car even if it is possible. An RV vehicle may be an exception.
9. **One House for Sleeping and Another for Eating** - If one has one house for eating and another house for sleeping, the menorah should be lit in the house in which he will be eating.
  - a. Practical Application - If one is going away for Shabbos and he will be sleeping in one house but having the meals in another, he should light in the house in which he will be eating. If he is sleeping in one house and eating in two different houses, some poskim are of the opinion that he should light in the house in which he will be eating on Friday night and others are of the opinion that he should light in the house in which he will be sleeping.
  - b. There are many factors in deciding this halacha, a Rav should be consulted in every situation.
  - c. Please note that this halacha applies when it is two separate houses. It does not mean that in one house it is better to light in the dining room over the bedroom.
10. **Yeshiva Bachurim** - Because of the previous halacha, there are some poskim that are of the opinion that bachurim should light in the Yeshiva dining room and not in the dormitory. Other poskim disagree and are of the opinion that they should light in the dormitory. Practically, one should follow the minhag of the Yeshiva.
  - a. **Sleeps at Home** - A bachur who sleeps at home but eats at the Yeshiva, should light at home. The cafeteria is seen as a restaurant and does not establish his residence.

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- b. **Came Home for Shabbos** - A bachur who came home for Shabbos and will be returning to the Yeshiva on Motzei Shabbos should preferably light at home on Friday night and on Motzei Shabbos.

## VI. Lighting Procedure, Berachos and Zemiros

### A. Berachos

Two *berachos* are recited before lighting the menorah. On the first night of Chanukah the third *beracha* is added.

1. “*L’hadlik ner shel Chanukah*”
2. “*She’asa Nissim*”
3. “*She’hechiyanu*”

### B. Miscellaneous about the Berachos

1. **Berachos Out of Order** - If one said the *berachos* out of order, he was still *yotzei* and does not have to say the *berachos* again.
2. **Hefsek During Lighting** - One should avoid making a *hefsek*, such as speaking or engaging in other activities, until after he completes lighting the menorah. If a *hefsek* was made, the halachos are as follows -
  - a. **Hefsek in Between Saying the Berachos and Lighting the First Candle** - Should say a new *beracha* and then light.
    - i. **Said “She’hechiyanu” by Accident on the Second Night** - There is a debate if this is considered a *hefsek*.

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Practically, no new *beracha* should be recited.

- ii. If the oil spills or the wick needs to be fixed before lighting - Not a *hefsek*.
  - b. **Hefsek in Between Lighting the First Candle and Before Finishing Lighting All the Candles** - There is a debate if another *beracha* should be said. Practically, a *hefsek* should be avoided, but if it did happen no new *beracha* should be made before finishing lighting the candles. (One can answer *amen* to another person's lighting as long as he has already lit at least one candle).
3. **Forgot to Say the Beracha**
- a. **Finished Lighting** - Still fulfilled the mitzvah and no *beracha* should be said at this time.
  - b. **In Middle of Lighting** - Just say a *beracha* at that point and light the rest.

## C. Lit For the Shul and Said “She’hechyanu” Already

If one lit the menorah in shul on the first night and said the *She’hechyanu*, most poskim are of the opinion that he can only say it again at home if others are also being *yotzei* with his lighting. Therefore, if there will be no one else being *yotzei* with him at home, it is better for him to avoid being the one that lights the menorah in shul that night. Practically, if he did light in shul and there is no one else being *yotzei* with him at home, he should not say the *She’hechyanu*.

## D. Lighting

1. The left most candle should be the first one lit and then move to the right.
2. One should not move to the next candle until the wick of the candle that he is currently lighting has caught well.

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## E. Position during berachos and lighting

1. Whenever possible, the *berachos* should be said while standing. The lighting, however, can be done while sitting, if necessary.
2. One should ideally stand a little to the left of the menorah in order to ensure that the first candle that he comes across when lighting is the leftmost candle so that he doesn't pass over other candles closer to him.

## F. Which Hand-

Righties should light with their right hand and lefties with their left.

## G. Intent During lighting

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach emphasizes that one should have in mind while lighting that it is being done “*l'hodos uli'hallel*” (to give thanks and praise to Hashem).

## H. An Individual that Will Not Be Fulfilling the Mitzvah That Night

An individual that has no menorah and is not fulfilling his mitzvah with someone else as his *shaliach*, has the following halachos -

1. If he is on the street and sees someone else's lit menorah - He should say “*She'asa Nissim*” and “*She'hechyanu*” (if it's the first night). If he somehow gets a menorah later, he should light and only say the *beracha* of “*L'hadlik*”.
2. If he does not see a lit menorah at all that night - He may not say any of the *berachos*.

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## I. “Haneiros Halalu”

Minhag Yisroel is to say/sing “*Haneiros Halalu*” after lighting the menorah. If one knows it by heart, he can start saying it after the first candle is lit. If he doesn’t know it by heart, he should say it immediately after completing the lighting. Some individuals have the minhag to always wait until the completion of lighting to say “*Haneiros Halalu*.”

## J. Additional songs

1. Minhag Ashkenaz- Sing *Ma’oz Tzur*.
2. Minhag Sefarad - Also recite “*Mizmor Shir Chanukas Habayis*” (Tehillim 30) and “*Lamnatzeiyach Bin’ginos*” (Tehillim 67).

## VII. “Hadlaka Oseh Mitzvah” and “Kavsa Ein Zakuk Lah”

### A. Hadlaka Oseh Mitzvah

At the time of the lighting, all the halachic requirements need to be in order (location, height, amount of oil, etc). If the menorah is lit in an unacceptable way and only afterwards it is repaired or moved to be within the framework of halacha, he did not fulfill his mitzvah. For example-

1. If one lit the menorah with only a small amount of oil and he realizes this later. He can’t just simply add more oil. He would have to refill and relight the menorah with a *beracha*.
2. If one lit the menorah above 20 *amos*, and only afterwards moved it to be within 20, he did not fulfill his mitzvah and would have to light again.

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## B. Moving the Menorah

1. **From Inside to Outside (or vice versa)** - If one lit inside and then brought the menorah outside or vice versa, he did not fulfill his mitzvah. This is because it looks like he lit for his own personal needs.
2. **From Room to Room** - One should avoid lighting the menorah in one room and carrying it to another room. If it was done, he still fulfilled his mitzvah.
3. **Practical Case** - If someone is not feeling well and has a hard time getting out of bed, he should not have someone bring the menorah to his room for him to light and then carry it back to the window. The best options are to either have a *shaliach* light for him by the window, make the extra effort to light himself by the window, or if necessary, light by his bed and leave it there.
4. **If one lit the menorah while holding it and then put it down** - He did not fulfill his mitzvah and he would have to light again. This is also because it looks like he lit for his personal needs. This case may happen if someone wants to place the menorah in a hard to reach place, and he lit while it is in his hand and afterwards placed it in its location.
5. If the menorah was already lit long enough to fulfill the mitzvah, it can be moved at that time. Nevertheless, it is best to never move a menorah unless one has a good reason.

## C. Kavsa Ein Zakuk Lah-

If one lights the menorah completely in accordance with halacha and it should have lasted the requisite amount of time, but it went out by accident, he is not obligated to relight the menorah.

1. **Lit After Shkiyah** - He does not need to relight the menorah,

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but it is advisable to do so (without a *beracha*).

2. **Lit Before Shkiyah** - On Erev Shabbos and other times that one needed to light before *shkiyah*, if the candles went out before *shkiyah* it is highly advisable to relight the candles (but still without a *beracha*).
3. **Examples** -
  - a. Wind - If the menorah was lit in a location where it was not expected to be blown out and it then gets blown out, there is no obligation to relight the menorah. If, however, it was lit in a windy location and it got blown out, there is an obligation to relight the menorah (without a *beracha*).
  - b. Candle gets put out while adjusting it - This is considered an accident and there is no obligation to relight.
  - c. Someone knocked the table by accident - This is considered an accident and there is no obligation to relight.
  - d. Blown out intentionally- There is an obligation to relight (without a *beracha*).
4. **Please Note** - As stated above, in these cases there may be no obligation to relight but if the candles did not stay lit for at least thirty minutes it is the proper thing to do.
5. **If the Shamash Gets Blown Out** - If the shamash gets blown out and there are no electric lights, it should be relit.

## VIII. Benefit From the Candles While They Are Lit

### A. Prohibition

Once the menorah is lit, one is not allowed to use or get any

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benefit from the candles. Several reasons are given for this prohibition -

1. One was not allowed to get any benefit from the menorah in the Beis Hamikdash. Being that we light our menorahs in memory of the menorah that was in the Beis Hamikdash, they follow the same halachos.
2. It's a disgrace to the mitzvah to use the candles for mundane purposes.
3. It is more recognizable that the candles are for the mitzvah if they aren't used for any other purpose.

## B. Examples

1. **Reading by the Light of the Candles** (even the words of "*Haneiros Halalu*") - Prohibited.
2. **Lighting a match from a Candle** - Prohibited.
3. **Walking Using the Light** - Permitted.
4. **Sitting by the Candle and Enjoying the Light** - Permitted.

## C. Shamash

One reason why we have a *shamash* candle is to help avoid this issue. We consider it as if the benefit is from the *shamash* and not the mitzvah candles.

1. **Placement of the Shamash** - It should ideally be higher than the other candles or closer to the members of the household. This helps substantiate the claim that the primary benefit is coming from that candle and not the others.
2. **How Many Shamash Candles are Needed** - If there are many menorahs, only one *shamash* needs to be lit for all of them, but it is common practice for each person to have his own *shamash*.

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3. **Shamash in a Lit Room** -The minhag is to have a *shamash* even if there are many other electric lights in the room.
4. **Additional Reason for a Shamash** - To have a flame available to light the other candles and to relight the candles in case they go out. This helps avoid the halachic complications with lighting candles from other candles.

## D. Time Extent of the Prohibition

Technically, after the candles have been lit for the amount of time necessary to fulfill the mitzvah, one can then get benefit from the candles. Nevertheless, one should avoid ever getting benefit from lit Chanukah candles because of *maris ayin*. Therefore, it is best not to get any benefit unless one stipulated before lighting that benefit from the candles will be permissible after the mitzvah was fulfilled.

## IX. Conduct Before and After Lighting

### A. Eating, Napping and Learning

Just like the halachos of what is prohibited before all other mitzvos, one is not allowed to learn, take a nap or eat a meals-worth of food within 30 minutes of the proper time to light the menorah. Some poskim are of the opinion that one can learn Torah up until the time of lighting, and it is not necessary to stop 30 minutes before.

1. **Started When Permissible** - Even if one started these activities when it was permissible, he would still have to stop.
2. **Meals-worth of Food** - An egg's volume of bread or

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the amount of *mezonos* that one would call a meal. It is praiseworthy to not even have a snack.

3. **Shomer** - If one arranges a *shomer* (guardian) to remind him to light, then it would be permissible to eat more than just a snack.
  - a. One can't be a *shomer* if he also needs to be reminded to light himself.
  - b. An alarm clock counts as a sufficient *shomer*.
  - c. If one spouse is home earlier than the other and the one that is home gets hungry, then that spouse can have a full meal. This is because the returning spouse will automatically remind the other to light upon returning to the house.
4. **Fulfilling the Mitzvah with a Shaliach** - If one is having a *shaliach* light on his behalf, none of these prohibitions apply.

## B. Staying With the Candles

It is not mandatory, but it is a proper minhag to stay near the lit candles for 30 minutes. This helps maximize the publicity of the miracle (*pirsumei nissa*). If, however, one has to choose between lighting early and staying by the candles or lighting at the right time and not staying with the candles, it is better to light at the right time.

## C. Prohibition for Women to Do “Melacha”

There is an accepted minhag that women should not do any melacha during the time that the candles are lit.

1. **Melachos Included** - This minhag follows very similar guidelines to the prohibitions of *melacha* on Chol Hamoed.
  - a. **Laundry and sewing** - Should not be done during this

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time.

- b. **Cooking** - May be done.
  - c. **Save from Loss** - She may certainly do any activity to help avoid any financial loss or lost opportunity.
2. **Time Length of this Minhag** - It is commonly accepted that this minhag only applies to the first 30 minutes that the candles are lit.
  3. **Exceptions** - If the candles went out on their own and are not being relit, she can then start doing melacha again. If, however, she just went to a different room, but they are still lit, she would still not be allowed to do melacha.

## X. Lighting in Shul

### A. The Minhag

Minhag Yisroel is to light a menorah with the *berachos* in shul in addition to the menorah in the individual homes. Many shuls have the minhag to have the menorah lit (without a *beracha*) during the day as well.

### B. Which Shuls

The minhag only applies to established Shuls and Batei Medrash. If ten men gather for a *minyan* (or even a set *minyan* in a house or office) no menorah should be lit.

### C. When to Light

The accepted practice is to light immediately before Maariv.

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## D. Who Should Light

Even a child of chinuch age can light the menorah in shul, but because of *kavod hatzibur* it is better for someone above Bar Mitzvah to do it.

## E. Location in Shul

The menorah should be placed to the right of the *aron* with the menorah facing east/west and the first candle closest to the aron.

## F. Presence of a Minyan

Ideally, there should be a *minyan* present when this lighting is done.

## G. Using this Lighting to Fulfill Personal Obligation

The one who lit the menorah in shul cannot use that lighting to exempt him from having to also light at home.

## H. Extinguishing the Candles

If the candles stayed lit for 30 minutes, they can then be extinguished.

## I. Multiple Maariv Minyanim in One Shul

1. **Different Rooms** - A menorah should be lit with a *beracha* in each room of the shul that has a Maariv *minyan*.
2. **Same Room** - If there will be another *minyan* in the same room, there is a debate if a new lighting with a *beracha* should be done.

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## J. Public Menorah Lightings

If a menorah is lit in a public location other than a shul, no *beracha* should be made.

## XI. Proper Disposal of Chanukah Items-

### A. Never Used

Any leftover materials that were never used have no *kedusha* and may be thrown out.

### B. Were Used

1. **Menorah and Glass Cups** - If one no longer wants to use his menorah or glass cups, they should be wrapped well and then they may be thrown out.
2. **Leftover oil, wicks, and candles** -
  - a. **If the flame went out before staying lit for 30 minutes** - The leftover oil and wicks should not be used for any other purpose and should either be burned or disposed of in a respectable fashion.
  - b. **If the flame stayed lit for at least 30 minutes** - The leftover oil may be disposed of normally, but it is best to wrap these items well first before disposal. Ideally the stipulation below (in 3) should be made. The wicks, however, should always be wrapped well before disposal. Some people save these items to burn with their *chametz*.
3. **Best Practice** - PLEASE NOTE that the best practice to help avoid any halachic concerns is to make a stipulation at

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the onset of Chanukah that all of the oil that remains after the menorah stayed lit for 30 minutes does not have any kedusha.

## OTHER HILCHOS CHANUKAH

### A. Hallel

A full *Hallel* is said on all eight days of Chanukah. Many poskim emphasize that although saying *Hallel* with a *minyán* is always important, it takes on an even greater significance on Chanukah. This is because the primary goal of the entire Yom Tov of Chanukah is “*L’hodos uli’Hallel*”, and *Hallel* is an expression of this.

1. **Women** - Some poskim are of the opinion that women are obligated to say *Hallel* on Chanukah, even though they are exempt from saying *Hallel* on other Yomim Tovim (except for the night of the *seder*). In practice, women should say *Hallel* on Chanukah, and anyways it is praiseworthy for them to say *Hallel* on every Yom Tov and Rosh Chodesh.
2. **Kaddish** - On Chanukah a “*Chatzi Kaddish*” is said after *Hallel* and not the usual “*Kaddish Tiskabeil*.” If the *chazzan* said a “*Kaddish Tiskabeil*” by accident then after *U’va Litzion* he should just say a *Kaddish Shalem* without “*Tiskabeil*”.
3. **Said Chatzi Hallel** - If one only said a *Chatzi Hallel* on Chanukah, like we say on Rosh Chodesh, or even if only one word was missed, *Hallel* would need to be repeated with a *beracha*.

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## B. Al Hanissim

“*Al Hanissim*” is added into the *hodaah* (thanksgiving) part of both Shemoneh Esrei and bentsching.

1. If one forgot “*Al Hanissim*” during Shemoneh Esrei, it depends when he realized his mistake -
  - a. **Before Beracha** - Go back, insert, and continue from there.
  - b. **After Beracha** - Say it in the middle of “*Elokai Netzor*” as follows:

יהי רצון מלפניך שתעשה לנו ניסים ונפלאות כשם שעשית  
לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה. בימי מתיתיהו....
  - c. **Finished Shemoneh Esrei** - Do not repeat Shemoneh Esrei.
2. **If one forgot during bentsching**-
  - a. **Before Beracha** - Go back, insert, and continue from there.
  - b. **After Beracha** - Say it as one of the “*Harachamans*” at the end of bentsching as follows:

הרחמן הוא יעשה לנו ניסים ונפלאות כשם שעשית  
לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה. בימי מתיתיהו....
  - c. **Finished Bentsching** - Do not repeat bentsching.
3. **In “Al Hamichya”**- *Al Hanissim* is not inserted into the “*Beracha m’ein shalosh*”.
4. **Skipping “Al Hannisim”** - One should not skip “*Al Hanissim*” in order to catch *Kedusha* with the *tzibbur*.
5. **Said “Biyimei Mordechai v’Esther”**- If one said “*Biyimei Mordechai*” instead of “*Biyimei Mattisyahu*” and he already finished the *beracha*, he does not need to go back or repeat Shemoneh Esrei because of this mistake.

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## C. Migdol vs. Magdil

There is a debate among the poskim if one should say “*magdil*” at the end of bentching in the line “*magdil yeshuos malko*” like a normal weekday, or switch to “*migdol*” which is the version that is used on Shabbos and Yom Tov. Practically, the common minhag is to say “*magdil*”.

## D. Tefillah Omissions on Chanukah-

The following parts of davening are omitted on Chanukah -

1. *Tachanun*.
2. *Kel erech apayim* (said while *Sefer Torah* is being taken out).
3. *Yehi Ratzon* (said after *Krias Hatorah*)
4. *Lamnatzeyach*.

## E. Minhagim

1. **Chanukah Gelt and Presents** - There is a common minhag to give small sums of money as gifts to children and others on Chanukah. Many also have a custom to give out presents.
2. **Dreidel** - There is a common minhag to play with a dreidel on Chanukah. The classic explanation why is that when the *Yevanim* discovered Jews learning Torah, to avoid trouble the Jews would pretend to be playing dreidel.
3. **Food Made in Oil** - There is a minhag to have some food fried in oil such as *latkes* and *sufganiot*. This is done to commemorate the miracle of the menorah that happened with oil.
4. **Cheese** - There is a minhag to eat some cheese or cheese products on Chanukah. This minhag developed to memorialize the heroic efforts of Yehudis who used cheese

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to make the Greek Governor sleepy to enable her to kill him.

5. **Giving Tzedakah** - It is appropriate to increase donations to *tzedakkah* on Chanukah.
6. **Increasing Torah Learning** - It is very important to increase Torah learning on Chanukah, because it is the Torah itself that the *Yevanim* were trying to rip away from us.

## F. Festive Meals

There is no obligation to have a seudah on Chanukah, but if one chooses to make a seudah and there will be *divrei Torah* and *zemiros* it is considered a *seudas mitzvah*.

## G. Fasting and Eulogies - Should not be done.

1. **Visiting Cemetery** - It is permissible to visit a cemetery on Chanukah for a *yahrtzeit* or other reasons.
2. **Wedding Day** - A *chassan* and *kallah* do not fast on their wedding day if it is during Chanukah, but they do still say *vidui* at Mincha.
3. **Aveilus** - Regular *hilchos aveilus* apply on Chanukah.
4. **Aveil Davening for the Amud** -
  - a. **Mincha and Maariv**- He may daven for the *amud*.
  - b. **Shacharis** - This is a debate among the poskim. Some are of the opinion that he should not daven for the *amud* at all, others disagree and are of the opinion that he can daven until *Hallel* and then have someone else take over from there. Each shul should follow its minhag.
  - c. **Visiting the Kosel** - If one visits the *Kosel* on Chanukah and it is the first time in thirty days, regular *hilchos keriah* apply.