

Chanukah Laws and Review



SETTING *up the* CHANUKIYA

One should prepare his Chanukiya well in advance of lighting time, so that there will not be a delay in lighting at the proper time. Especially so on Friday because things get hectic as Shabbat approaches. (And especially NOT SO for Motza"Sh lighting - no preparation for lighting after Shabbat may be done on Shabbat).

Some have the custom of setting up their Chanukiya in the morning for the evening (this goes for every day – except Shabbat, of course). This not only serves the practical purpose, as above, but it also commemorates the practice in the

Beit HaMikdash called Hatavat HaNeirot, whereby the Kohen (Gadol) tended the Menora and prepared it in the morning for kindling in late afternoon. Since our lighting on Chanukah directly commemorates the lighting of the Menora in the Beit HaMikdash, this suggestion provides a nice “added touch” to the mitzva and symbolism.

AL HANISIM is added to every Amida and Birkat HaMazon throughout Chanukah. There is no reference to Chanukah in BRACHA MEI'EIN SHALOSH (a.k.a. AL HAMICHYA).

Forgetting AL HANISIM does NOT

invalidate either the Amida or Birkat HaMazon. That means that neither is to be repeated because of the omission.

However, if one realizes the omission before the end of the Amida, AL HANISIM can be said right before YIHUY L'RATZON, with the modified introduction, below. In Birkat HaMazon, an omitted AL HANISIM becomes a HARACHAMAN, right before HARACHAMANHU Y'ZAKEINU, as follows (there are variant texts for this)...

הַרְחַמֵּן הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה לָנוּ נִסִּים וְנִפְלְאוֹת כְּשֵׁם שְׁעָשִׂיתָ
לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בְּיָמֵינוּ הָהֵם בְּזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה, בְּיָמֵי מַתְיָהוּ...

BRACHOT before LIGHTING

Brachot should be recited BEFORE beginning to light the candles. This complies with the general rule for Brachot of Mitzva, that they be recited immediately before performance of the mitzva, if possible. This means, that on the first night, wait until all three brachot are said before lighting the candle. And, even on the eighth night, don't start lighting the candles until you finish both brachot.

(Some hold that this applies to the first b'racha - the mitzva b'racha, but not necessarily to the other b'rachot. Check with your Rav if you are not sure which opinion to follow.)

PLACEMENT of the CANDLES

Opinions differ, but a common practice is to place the first candle (or oil cup) in the right side of the Chanukiya. If one lights at the doorpost, then the first candle should be closest to the doorpost, even if it is the left side of the Chanukiya. From the second night on, the custom (one of the customs) is to place the candles (or all) from right to left, and to light it, left to right.

At the doorpost, one adds it from the doorpost out, and lights it starting with the candle closest to the doorpost.

ESSENCE and HIDUR

The essential performance of the mitzva of Chanukah is the lighting of a single candle each night.

The custom that we follow of increasing the number of candles each night is a HIDUR MITZVA (enhancement of the mitzva).

It is because the first candle you light fulfills the mitzva, that the b'rachot should be said before any lighting.

One practice that has developed because of the distinction between the first candle and the others, is to begin reciting/singing HANEIROT HALALU after the first candle is lit, while lighting the others.

Alternatively, one can wait until the lighting is done to say HANEIROT HALALU. Stick to family practice, unless good reason to switch.

RIGHT *after* LIGHTING

One should not just light the Chanukah candles (and sing Maoz Tzur) and then go on to business as usual, but rather one should look at the candles for a while, ponder G-d's miracles, spend some time with the family talking about the message of Chanukah and how it relates to our time, play a little dreidel, sing a song or two, have a special Chanukah snack, have some Chanukah fun. And most importantly, the learning of TORAH should be part of lighting. It is recommended to learn some Torah, share a Dvar Torah, have a family shiur... right after candle lighting (or sometime in the evening).

The decrees of the Greeks included a ban on learning Torah. Our celebrating Chanukah marks our freedom from Greek oppression, including the ability to learn Torah in public without fear. So let's do just that!

INDOORS/ OUTDOORS

The original place for lighting and displaying of the Chanukiya was outdoors at the entrance to one's home or courtyard.

Over many generations in exile, where lighting outdoors was inconvenient (weather-wise) to say the least,

and often dangerous ("neighbors"), the practice evolved to light indoors.

When lighting inside the home – for whatever reason – the one place that the Chanukiya should not be placed is where the Shabbat candles usually are. They need to be in an eye-catching, attention-grabbing location so they can serve their function of Publicizing the Miracles. Many people who have come to Israel, still light inside, at the window, as they had been doing in their countries of origin. Others have gone back to the original practice of lighting outdoors, which is common in Israel – especially in Jerusalem.

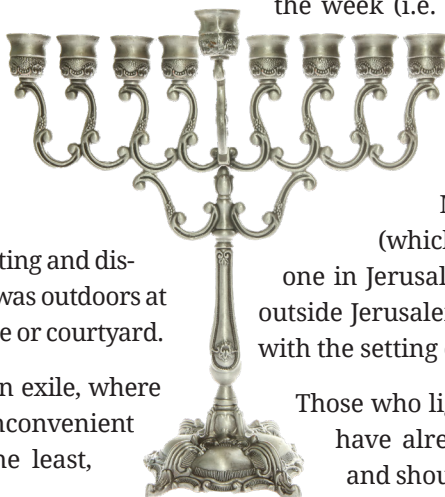
When lighting outdoors, the candles are usually protected from getting blown out by being placed inside a specially made box.

WHEN TO LIGHT *Weeknights*

There are two opinions as to when is the ideal time to light Chanukah lights during the week (i.e. except for Friday and Motza"Sh, when Shabbat affects the timing, as we will soon present).

Minhag Yerushalayim (which many, but not everyone in Jerusalem follow – and some outside Jerusalem do follow) is to light with the setting of the sun.

Those who light with sunset should have already davened Mincha, and should subsequently daven



Maariv at the appropriate time.

THE OTHER OPINION

The “rest of the Jewish world” lights when the “light of the sun has left the sky”, i.e. Stars-Out a.k.a. Tzeit HaKochavim.

UNTIL WHEN?

Candles must burn at least a half hour after צאת הכוכבים. This was the original (time of the Gemara) time period after dark that people were still around outdoors and became the definition of the time range for PIRSUMEI NISA, publicizing the miracle.

Although in our day, people are out later than this time, the halacha only requires the half hour after stars-out.

However, it is recommended that one use longer candles or more oil to extend this time (somewhat), in recognition of the expansion of the current-day Pirsumei Nisa time-frame. We would further suggest that one’s candles should stay lit at least a half hour after the latest stars-out time, namely Rabbeinu Tam time. This is only a recommendation, not in any way meant to be a halachic ruling.

HOW EARLY *can one* LIGHT?

When necessary, one may light as early as PLAG MINCHA (1¼ halachic hours before

sunset). This is by no means preferable, but if circumstances are such that you have to light early - leaving town, and the like, then PLAG is the earliest.

LIGHTING *for* שבת

It is preferable to daven Mincha before lighting Chanukah candles, but one should not miss out on a minyan to daven before lighting. Chanukah candles should be lit

BEFORE Shabbat candles - even if different people are lighting each. Count on 5-10 minutes before the posted Shabbat lighting time; adjust according to your household’s experience.



IN JERUSALEM..

Some follow the practice of delaying Shabbat candle lighting for 20 minutes 4:20 this year (instead of the scheduled 4:00) and lighting Chanukah candles right before Shabbat candles.

For other cities where candle lighting is 30 min. before sunset one should ask his/her local Rav.

HAVDALAH *and* CANDLE LIGHTING

The general practice, when lighting at home, is to say Havdalah before lighting the menorah.

Chanukah CANDLE LIGHTING

KAVANA: One should have in mind to fulfill the Rabbinic Mitzva (with Torah backing) of **NER CHANUKAH** plus the **HIDUR MITZVA** of the extra candles (each night after the first).

One should acknowledge G-d and thank Him for the Chanukah miracles in particular, and for all His miracles and kindnesses in general.



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר
(שֶׁל)
חֲנֻכָּה.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁעָשָׂה
נִסִּים לְאַבֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בַּזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

On the first night add:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁחֲחִינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה

הַנִּרְוֹת הָלְלוּ אֱנוּ מִדְּלִיקִין, עַל הַנִּסִּים וְעַל הַנִּפְלְאוֹת וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת וְעַל
הַמִּלְחָמוֹת, שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ לְאַבֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בַּזְּמַן הַזֶּה, עַל יְדֵי כְּהֻנִּיךְ
הַקְּדוּשִׁים. וְכָל שְׂמוֹנֶת יָמֵי חֲנֻכָּה, הַנִּרְוֹת הָלְלוּ קִדְּשָׁהּ, וְאִין לָנוּ
רְשׁוּת לְהַשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בָּהֶן, אֲלֹא לְרְאוּתָן בְּלִבָּד, כְּדֵי לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְהַלֵּל לְשִׁמְךָ
הַגָּדוֹל, עַל נִסִּיךָ וְעַל נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְעַל יְשׁוּעָתֶךָ



מעוז צור ישוועתי לך נאָה לשבֿת.

תכּון בית תּפּלתי וְשם תּודָה נִזְכּר.

לעת תּכּין מטבֿח מִצָּר המִנְכּח.

אַז אָגמור בְּשִׁיר מִזְמור חֲנֻכַּת המִנְכּח :

רעות שְׂבָעָה נִפְשֵׁי בְּגוֹן כּוּחַ כָּלָה

חִי מִרְרוּ בְּקוּשֵׁי בְּשֻׁעָבוֹד מְלָכוֹת עֲגָלָה

וּבְיָדוֹ הַגְּדוֹלָה הוֹצִיא אֶת הַסִּגְלָה

חֵיל פְּרָעָה וְכָל זָרָעוֹ יָרְדוּ כְּאֶבֶן בְּמַצוּלָה :

דְּבִיר קִדְשׁוֹ הִבִּיאֲנִי וְגַם שֵׁם לֹא שִׁקְטֵתִי

וּבֹא נוֹגֵשׁ וְהִגְלִי כִּי זָרִים עֲבַדְתִּי

וַיֵּין רַעַל מִסְכֵּתִי כִּמְעֹט שְׁעַבְרָתִי

קֹץ בָּבֶל זָרְבָּבֶל לְקֹץ שְׁבָעִים נוֹשְׁעָתִי :

כְּרוֹת קוֹמַת בְּרוּשׁ בְּקֹשׁ אָגְגִי בֶן הַמִּדְבָּא

וְנִהְיָתָה לוֹ לֶפֶחַ וּלְמוֹקֵשׁ וְגִאֲוָתוֹ נִשְׁבָּתָה

רֹאשׁ יְמִינִי נִשְׁאָתָה וְאוֹיֵב שְׁמוֹ מְחִיתָ

רֹב בָּנָיו וְקִנְיָנָיו עַל הָעֵץ תָּלִיתָ :

יָנִים נִקְבְּצוּ עָלַי אֲזִי בִימֵי חֲשָׁמַיִם

וּפְרָצוּ חוֹמוֹת מְגִדְלִי וּטְמָאוּ כָּל הַשְּׁמָיִם

וּמְנוֹתָר קִנְיָנִים נִעְשָׂה גַם לַשּׁוֹשְׁנִים

בְּנֵי בִינָה יָמִי שְׁמוֹנָה קָבְעוּ שִׁיר וּרְנָיִם :

חֲשׂוֹף זְרוּעַ קִדְשֶׁךָ וְקָרַב קֹץ הַיְּשׁוּעָה

נִקֵּם נִקְמַת עֲבֹדֶיךָ מֵאַמָּה הַרְשָׁעָה

כִּי אֶרְכָּה הִשָּׁעָה וְאִין קֹץ לִימֵי הַרְעָה

דְּחָה אֲדָמוֹן בְּצֵל צִלְמוֹן הֶקֶם לָנוּ רוּעִים

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