



### Chanukah

On Thursday, Erev Chanukah, *Tachanun* is omitted at Mincha; *Tachanun* and *Lamenatzei'ach*, as well as *Kel Erech Apayim* before, and the *Yehi Ratzons* after *Kerias Hatorah*, are omitted throughout Chanukah. Fasting and *Hespeidim* are prohibited. *Al Hanisim* is said in *Shemoneh Esrei* and *Bircas Hamazon*. If one forgets these recitations, he need not repeat the *Tefillah*, though he may include it at the end of *Elokai Netzor*, or he may recite the compensatory *Harachaman* at the end of bentching followed by *Bi'mei Mattisyahu*.

Each day at *Shacharis*, the complete *Hallel* is recited. The *Kerias Hatorah* each day of Chanukah corresponds to the days of the *Korbanos Ha'nesiim* at the Chanukas Hamizbeiach (Parashas Naso). Some congregations recite *Mizmor Shir* (Psalm 30) after the *Shir Shel Yom*. Women should recite *Hallel*.

On Chanukah days that coincide with Rosh Chodesh, full *Hallel* is recited. *Kerias Hatorah* includes two Sifrei Torah; three Aliyos of the Rosh Chodesh *keriah* are *leined* from the first Sefer (the first two usual *aliyos* are *leined* together), followed by one *aliyah* for Chanukah from the second Sefer. Mussaf of Rosh Chodesh follows. Davening ends with *Borchi Nafshi* after the Yom (some add Psalm 30 as well).

The Achronim agree that there is a minor mitzvah to gather on Chanukah to give thanks to Hashem, publicizing the miracle. Singing and saying words of praise to Hashem renders a meal a *seudas mitzvah*. There is a minhag to eat dairy items in commemoration of Yehudis' defeat of the enemy general by feeding him dairy items. The practice of eating latkes, donuts and fried items is based on the miracle surrounding oil (Rabbeinu Maimon, Ibn Ezra).

There is a Minhag for women to refrain from *melachah* for the half hour after the lighting. Many Poskim say this only extends to activities which are restricted on Chol Hamoed.

There is a praiseworthy *minhag* of giving gifts to our children's *melamdin* (R' C. Palaggi zt"l). This sets an example of *hakaras hatov* for your child and displays the importance of chinuch. A gift accompanied with warm words of thanks is a tremendous source of *chizuk* for our Rebbeim and teachers.

Following Chanukah, the used wicks, cups and oil should be disposed of in a respectful manner (i.e. by placing them in a plastic bag before disposing of them). Some have the minhag to burn them on the last day of Chanukah; others do so on Erev Pesach during *bi'ur chametz*.

### Who Lights

Both men and women are obligated in this mitzvah.

There is a mitzvah of *chinuch* to train a minor son in this mitzvah. While only the head of household is obligated to light, the Ashkenazic *minhag* is to zealously have each male household member light independently. A woman fulfills her obligation via her husband or with the in-home lighting of an adult male household member, even if she is away from home. Ideally, a husband should wait for his wife to return home before lighting, even if he will miss the preferred *z'man*. If a husband is away for the night, he may technically fulfill his obligation with his wife's lighting back at home (if he is in a similar time zone). However it is best that he light in his location on his own and have in mind not to be *yotze* through his household. The wife, in turn, should light at home, having in mind as well not to be *yotze* with her husband's lighting.

### What to Light

It is preferable to use olive oil. Other than the *shammash*, one should use either oil or candles but not a mix of both. There should be enough oil in the cup at the time of lighting for the Menorah to burn for at least a half hour after nightfall (*tzeis hakoachavim*). If, inadvertently, any of the candles go out before *tzeis*, it is not necessary to relight them, so long as the original lighting was done from *shekiah* and onward. However, it is praiseworthy to re-light them without a *berachah*. Unlike *Neiros Shabbos*, most Poskim say one cannot use an electric Menorah, even under extenuating circumstances.

### Where to Light

Common practice in the USA is to light indoors by a window which faces the street and is not higher than 20 *amos* (approximately 35.5 ft) from street level. Others light by the front door or any other doorway within the home, opposite the Mezuzah. Now, the primary *Pirsumei Nisa* (publicizing of the miracle) is to the members of the household. Thus, lighting by a window located in a very "out-of-the-way" place in the home is not recommended. Once lit, a menorah may not be moved more than a minimal amount.

A menorah is lit in shul each evening before Maariv (with all *berachos* recited) and before *Shacharis* (without *berachos*). In many shuls the menorah is positioned in the southern part of the shul, with the candles positioned beginning from the east, and kindled from west to east.

The menorah must be lit at one's place of residence, even if only his temporary residence. A newly arrived guest who will be staying overnight can light upon arrival even though they only recently took up residence. One who will depart from home after the *z'man hadlakah* may still light at home and then depart (even immediately). A guest who has established a temporary residence may light at his host's home prior to departing (but should remain there for half an hour). Alternatively, one can wait

and light at home if they will arrive at the proper *z'man*. One who is being hosted and is sleeping and eating in different places should light at whichever of the two is considered primary.

### When to Light

The *minhagim* differ as to the optimal time to light the Menorah, and whether Maariv should be davened prior to lighting. Opinions vary from *shekiah* until *tzeis hakoachavim* and people should follow their *minhag*. In cases of extreme necessity, there may be room to allow lighting as early as *p'lag haminchah* (approximately an hour before *shekiah*).

One should preferably not take a nap, engage in an absorbing task, or begin a meal (including eating a large amount of *pas habaah b'kisnin* [bread-like mezonos foods]) in the half hour before the *z'man*, lest he forget about the upcoming mitzvah. Once the *z'man* arrives, one must stop all activity and perform the mitzvah. One who is unable to perform the *hadlakah* until a later time should appoint a *shomer* or set an alarm to remind him, which then removes the above restrictions. If one is lighting late, it is best to have someone on hand to witness his lighting.

### How to Light

Common practice is to light the candle in the rightmost position on the first night. From the second night and on, the candles are added from right to left; lighting begins with the newest candle and moves to the right. The *neiros mitzvah* should not be used to light one another; rather the *shamash* or another flame source should be used to light all the *neiros*. One should have a lit candle in his right hand prior to reciting the *berachos*, and should position his hand so that the lit *shamash* is positioned closest to the night's new *ner* (so that he does not 'pass over' any other *neiros* when lighting the newest *ner*). (Those who light adjacent to a doorway may light the rightmost candle first as it is closest to the doorpost.) The *berachos* of *L'hadlik Ner Shel Chanukah* and *She'asa Nissim* are recited, as well as *Shehecheyanu* on the first night. Following the *Hadlakah*, *Haneiros Hallalu* and *Ma'oz Tzur* are recited or sung. One should be sure that one wick is reliably aflame before reciting *Haneiros Halalu* (so as not to create a *hefsek* between the *berachos* and the lighting). One may not derive benefit from the menorah lights; for this reason the additional *shamash* is left lit adjacent to the Menorah lights.

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