

# THE HALACHOS OF SHABBOS CHANUKAH

by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

*The following is a discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.*

Lighting Chanukah candles on erev Shabbos and on motzaei Shabbos entails halachos that do not apply on weekday nights. The following is a summary of the special halachos that apply to Shabbos Chanukah.

## ✘ PREPARATIONS:

If possible, Friday's Minchah should be davened before lighting Chanukah candles (1). There are two reasons for davening Minchah first:

1. The afternoon Tamid sacrifice, which corresponds to our Minchah service, was always brought before the lighting of the Menorah in the Beis ha-Mikdash (2);
2. Davening Minchah after lighting Chanukah candles appears contradictory, since Minchah "belongs" to Friday, while the Chanukah candles "belong" to Shabbos (3).

But if no early minyan is available, then it is better to light first and daven with a minyan afterwards (4).

The oil or candles should be able to burn for at least one hour and forty-five minutes (5). If the oil and candles cannot possibly burn that long, one does not fulfill the mitzvah even b'dieved.

Enough oil (or long enough candles) to burn for at least one hour and forty-five minutes must be placed in the menorah before it is lit. If one neglected to put in enough oil and realized his error only after lighting the menorah, he may not add more oil. He must rather extinguish the flame, add oil, and then re-kindle the wick. The blessings, however, are not repeated (6).

One who does not have enough oil for all the wicks to burn for an hour and forty-five minutes must make sure that at least one light has enough oil to burn that long (7). If there is enough oil for only five lights to burn for the required length of time instead of the six that are required on Friday night this year, for example, some poskim maintain that only one should be lit, while

others hold that five should be lit (8).]

Since it is customary in most homes that children under bar-mitzvah light Chanukah candles, too, this custom should be observed on erev Shabbos as well. Preferably, the child's menorah should also have enough oil (or long enough candles) to burn an hour and forty-five minutes. If, however, it is difficult or impractical to do so, a child may light with the blessings even though his lights will not last for the full length of time (9).

The menorah should be placed in a spot where opening or closing a door [or window] will not fan or extinguish the flame (10).

A guest who is eating and sleeping over, lights at the home of his host even if his own home is in the same city. Preferably, he should leave his home before plag ha-Minchah (11).

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### **✘ THE TIME OF LIGHTING ON EREV SHABBOS:**

All preparations for Shabbos should be completed before Chanukah candles are lit so that all members of the household-- including women and children--are present at the lighting (12).

There are two points to remember about lighting Chanukah candles on Friday afternoon:

1. Chanukah candles are always lit before Shabbos candles;
2. Chanukah candles are lit as close as possible to Shabbos.

The procedure, therefore, is as follows:

L'chatchillah, Chanukah candles are lit immediately before lighting Shabbos candles. B'dieved, or under extenuating circumstances, they may be lit at any time after plag ha-Minchah (13).

Depending on individual localities, plag ha-Minchah on Erev Shabbos Chanukah is generally a few minutes less or few minutes more than an hour before sunset (14).

In most homes, where the husband lights Chanukah candles and the wife lights Shabbos candles, the correct procedure is to light Chanukah candles five minutes or so (15) (depending on the number of people in the house who are lighting Chanukah candles) before lighting Shabbos candles. As soon as Chanukah candles have been lit, the wife lights the Shabbos candles.

If many people are lighting and time is running short, a wife does not need to wait for everyone to finish lighting Chanukah candles; rather, she should light her Shabbos candles immediately (16). [If sunset is fast approaching, the wife should light Shabbos candles regardless of whether or not the Chanukah candles have been lit by her husband. If she sees that her husband will not light his menorah on time, she should light Chanukah candles herself, followed by Shabbos candles.]

In a home where the man lights both the Chanukah and the Shabbos candles [e.g., the man lives alone; the wife is away for Shabbos] the same procedure is followed. If, by mistake, he lit Shabbos candles before Chanukah candles, he should light his Chanukah candles anyway [as long as he did not have in mind to accept the Shabbos].

In a home where the woman lights both Chanukah and Shabbos candles [e.g., the woman lives alone; the husband is away for Shabbos], she must light Chanukah candles first. If, by mistake, she lit Shabbos candles first, she may no longer light Chanukah candles. She must ask another person--a man or a woman--who has not yet accepted the Shabbos to light for her. The other person must recite the blessing of lehadlik, but she can recite the blessing of She'asah nissim [and shehecheyanu if it is the first night] (17).

A person (or a family) who is very embarrassed because he has failed to light Chanukah candles by sunset, may ask a non-Jew to light the Chanukah candles for him (18). This may be done until 30-40 minutes past sunset (19). No blessings are recited (20).

If, after lighting the candles but before the onset of Shabbos, the candles blew out, one must rekindle them. One who has already accepted the Shabbos should ask another person who has not yet accepted the Shabbos to do so (21).

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#### **ON SHABBOS:**

The menorah may not be moved with one's hands for any reason, neither while the lights are burning nor after they are extinguished (22). When necessary, the menorah may be moved with one's foot, body or elbow (23) after the lights have burned out. If the place where the menorah is standing is needed for another purpose, a non-Jew may be asked to move the menorah after the lights have burned out (24).

If Al ha-Nissim is mistakenly omitted, the Shemoneh Esrei or Birkas ha-Mazon is not repeated.

Children should be discouraged from playing dreidel games on Shabbos, even when playing with candy, etc. (25). A dreidel, however, is not muktzeh (26).

Oil may be squeezed out of latkes on Shabbos, either by hand or with a utensil (27).

Chanukah gifts may not be given or received, unless they are needed for Shabbos use (28).

In the opinion of some poskim, women are obligated to recite Hallel on Chanukah.

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#### **ON MOTZAEI SHABBOS:**

Candle lighting must take place as close as possible to the end of Shabbos (29). Indeed, some have the custom of lighting Chanukah candles even before havdalah, while others light them

immediately after havdalah. All agree that any further delay in lighting Chanukah candles is prohibited. Therefore, one should hurry home from shul and immediately recite havdalah or light Chanukah candles.

A Shabbos guest who lives nearby and must go home immediately after Shabbos is over, should light in his home (30). If, however, he does not leave immediately after Shabbos, he should light at the home of his host (31). Preferably he should also eat melaveh malkah there (32).

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## FOOTNOTES

1 Mishnah Berurah 679:2. Many working people, though, are not particular about this practice, since it is difficult to arrange for a minyan on such a short day.

2 Sha'arei Teshuvah 679:1 quoting Birkei Yosef.

3 Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 679:7 quoting Pri Megadim.

4 Birkei Yosef 679:2; Yechaveh Da'as 1:74.

5 See Beiur Halachah 672:1. The breakdown is as follows: 20 minutes before sunset, 50 minutes till the stars are out, and an additional half hour for the candles to burn at night. Those who wait 72 minutes between sunset and tzeis ha-kochavim, should put in oil to last for an additional 22 minutes at least.

6 O.C. 675:2 and Mishnah Berurah 8.

7 Mishnah Berurah 679:2.

8 See Mishnah Berurah 671:5 [based on Chayei Adam and Ksav Sofer] and Beis Halevi, Chanukah who maintain that when the "correct" number of candles is not available, only one candle should be lit. Harav E.M. Shach (Avi Ezri, Chanukah), however, strongly disagrees with that ruling.

9 Based on Igros Moshe O.C. 3:95, Y.D. 1:24 and Y.D. 3:52-2. See also Eishel Avraham (Tanina) O.C. 679 who permits this.

10 O.C. 680:1.

11 See Chovas ha-Dar 1:12.

12 Mishnah Berurah 672:10. See also Chovas ha-Dar 1:10.

13 See Igros Moshe O.C. 4:62.

14 Note that only on Erev Shabbos is it permitted to light this early. During the week, plag ha-Minchah should be figured at about an hour before tzeis ha-kochavim; see Mishnah Berurah 672:3 and 679:2 as explained by Harav M. Feinstein in Sefer Hilchos Chanukah pg. 21 and pg. 41. See also basic explanation in Igros Moshe O.C. 4:62. See also Mor u'Ketziyah 672:1 and Moadim u'Zemanim 2:152.

15 For one half hour before this time, it is not permitted to learn or eat.

16 Ben Ish Chai, Vayeishev 20.

17 Mishnah Berurah 679:1.

18 See Mishnah Berurah 261:16. [See also Da'as Torah 673:2 that one can fulfill his obligation through the lighting of a non-Jew. See Har Tzvi O.C. 2, pg. 258.]

19 See Igros Moshe O.C. 4:62 and 74 (hatmanah 1).

20 See Rambam (Chanukah 4:9) and Ohr Gadol (Mishnayos Megilah 2:4).

21 Mishnah Berurah 673:26, 27.

22 O.C. 279:1.

23 Mishnah Berurah 308:13; 311:30; Igros Moshe O.C. 5:22-6. Chazon Ish O.C. 47:13, however, does not agree with this leniency.

24 Mishnah Berurah 279:14.

25 See Mishnah Berurah 322:22.

26 See Igros Moshe O.C. 5:22-10.

27 Mishnah Berurah 320:24,25.

28 Mishnah Berurah 306:33.

29 Those who wait 72 minutes to end Shabbos all year round, should do so today as well-- Igros Moshe O.C. 4:62. But those who wait 72 minutes only on occasion but at other times they do not, should not wait 72 minutes on this night--Harav S.Z. Auerbach and Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Shevus Yitzchak, pg. 75).

30 Chovas ha-Dar 1 note 65.

31 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Piskei Teshuvos, pg. 498).

32 See Teshuvos v'Hanhagos 1:391.

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*The series is distributed by the Harbotzas Torah Division of Congregation Shomre Shabbos, 1801 South Taylor Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118--HaRav Yisroel Grumer, Marah D'Asra*

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