

CHANUKAH DINIM

The first Chanukah candle is to be lit on **Tuesday evening, December 20th**. On Friday evening, **December 23rd** when the **fourth** candle will be lit, the kindling of the Chanukah candles precedes the kindling of the Shabbos candles. Since the Chanukah candles (which are lit before dark) must burn for at least one half hour after nightfall, it is imperative that a sufficient amount of oil or a large candle be used, so that it will last approximately one hour and fifteen minutes from the time you kindle it - assuming that you will do so immediately before lighting the Shabbos candles. If one is in Shul on Motzo'ai Shabbos for Havdalah, the Chanukah candles are lit first and then Havdalah is recited; but if one is at home, Havdalah is made first and then the Chanukah candles are lit.

Kindling the Candles

When one kindles the first Chanukah candle, three *brachos* are recited prior to the kindling: '**Lehadlik**,' '**She'asa Nisim**' and '**Shehecheyanu**.' The remaining nights only the first two *brachos* are recited. All the *brachos* should be said prior to the lighting of the *Menorah*. It is preferable that one not speak until he completes lighting all the candles.

Time of Kindling

The Chanukah lights should be kindled immediately after nightfall, approximately 45 minutes after sunset. Although, preferably, one should light at the proper time, one may light at any time during the night with the *brachos*. This *Halacha* applies only as long as someone from the household is awake or there are passers-by. Otherwise, the candles are to be lit without a *bracha*. Chanukah candles must burn for a minimum of one half hour after nightfall. The *Menorah* should remain in the same place where you first kindled the lights for the entire period that they are burning and should not be moved from place to place. In the event that one will not be able to light at the appropriate time, (i.e. due to a wedding, trip, etc.) a *shaila* should be asked as to the proper procedure for lighting.

Menorah

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 *Menorah* should be placed in a window that faces the street so that passers-by can see it. If you live in an apartment on a high floor, the *Menorah* should be placed on a table near the entrance of your apartment. When two or more people are lighting in the same household, care should be taken not to position the *Menorahs* too close to one another. Chanukah candles, once lit, are prohibited from use. For this reason, there must be another source of light in the room. Our custom is to light an additional candle, called a *Shamash*, which should be distinguished from the other candles by a higher or lower position.

'Al Hanisim'

All eight days of Chanukah, the '*Al Hanisim*' prayer is recited in *Shemona Esrei* immediately after '*Modim*' and in *Birchas Hamazon* before '*Ve'al Hakol*'. If one forgets to recite '*Al Hanisim*', he need not repeat the *Shemona Esrei* or *Birchas Hamazon*. If he remembers before mentioning the name of *Hashem* at the conclusion of the *brocha*, he should go back to '*Al Hanisim*' and continue from there. Regarding *Birchas Hamazon*, there is a special *Harachaman* which can be found in many Siddurim.

Chanukah on the Road

1. If a man will be away from home overnight during Chanukah (i.e. on business), he should have his wife or a representative light for him in his home. The same *halacha* applies if the wife is away.
2. Although you fulfil your obligation of *ner Chanuka* with your *shaliach*, it is preferable that you also light (with the *brachos*) where you are staying that evening. You should either light earlier than they light for you at home, or tell them not to have you in mind when they light so that you can make the *brachos* yourself when lighting.
3. Similarly, if you are travelling by boat, train or plane, you can fulfil your obligation with your spouse's or representative's, lighting. If it is possible to find a non-hazardous place to light even one candle (on any night) and let it burn for a half-hour, you should do so with a *bracha*. If you can light it for only a moment and blow it out, you should do so without a *bracha*.
4. If the entire family is going to be on the plane, train or boat, you do not have an obligation to light because you have no home at this time.
5. If you will be coming home very late in the evening but a family member will still be awake (a spouse or an older child), you should light when you come home. The rest of the family should light earlier.
6. If you come home late and you are not sure if your spouse lit for you, you should light without a *bracha*.
7. If you are in a different time zone (i.e. in Israel, Europe or the other side of the country), you can fulfil your obligation with your spouse's lighting even if your *chiyuv* comes earlier.
8. In a situation where both husband and wife will be leaving before the *zman hadlaka* (i.e. for an afternoon wedding) and coming home late that evening, it is preferable to light when you return home. But make sure that you create some type of reminder so that you do not forget (maybe set an alarm clock) - as opposed to lighting from *plag hamincha*. Otherwise, have a representative light for you at the correct time.
9. If you go with your entire family to friends or parents for dinner and you know that you will be home late that night, you should light when you come home - not at your hosts' house. This *halacha* applies even if you are spending Shabbos in this location and stay a while on Motzo'ai Shabbos before returning home.
10. If the small children will be asleep when you arrive home, it is best that they light at the home of your host.

Customs of Chanukah

- Many women keep the *minhag* to refrain from household tasks during the first half hour that the candles are burning.
- It is proper to serve festive meals on Chanukah and to sing songs of praise.
- To commemorate the dairy feast that Yehudis prepared for the Greek ruler, which brought about his downfall, it is customary to serve dairy during Chanukah.