

# Weekly Halacha Discussion

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A discussion of Halachic topics provided weekly. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

## Eruv Shabbos Chanukah: Laws and Customs

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

### Preparations

If possible, one should *daven Minchah* on Friday before lighting Chanukah candles.<sup>1</sup> 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*;<sup>2</sup> 2) *Davening Minchah* after lighting Chanukah candles appears contradictory, since *Minchah* “belongs” to Friday, while the Chanukah candles “belong” to Shabbos.<sup>3</sup> But if no early *minyan* is available, then it is better to light first and *daven* with a *minyan* afterwards.<sup>4</sup>

The oil or candles should be able to burn for at least one hour and forty-five minutes.<sup>5</sup> If the oil and candles cannot possibly burn that long, one does not fulfil the mitzvah even *b'dieved*, according to some opinions.

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.<sup>6</sup>

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.<sup>7</sup> If, for example, Shabbos falls on the sixth night of Chanukah, and there is only enough oil for five lights to burn for the required length of time instead of the six that are required, most *poskim* maintain that only one should be lit, while a minority opinion holds that five should be lit.<sup>8</sup>

Since it is customary in many 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, many *poskim* permit a child to light with the blessings even though his lights will not last for the full length of time.<sup>9</sup>

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

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*.<sup>11</sup>

### 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.<sup>12</sup>

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'chatchilah*, 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*.<sup>13</sup> Depending on the locale, *plag ha-Minchah* on *erev Shabbos Chanukah* is generally a few minutes more or less an hour before sunset.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> (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.<sup>16</sup> 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 the Chanukah menorah 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 ner shel Chanukah*, but she can recite the blessing of *she'asah nissim* (and *shehecheyanu* if it is the first night).<sup>17</sup>

If, after lighting the Shabbos candles but before the onset of Shabbos, the Chanukah candles blew out, one must re-kindle them. One who has already accepted the Shabbos should ask another person who has not yet accepted the Shabbos to do so.<sup>18</sup>

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 *Beur Halachah* 672:1. The breakdown (in this case) 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 *tzais 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 *Mishnah Berurah* 671:5 (based on *Chayei Adam* and *Kesav Sofer*) maintains that when the “correct” number of candles is not available, only one candle should be lit. See also *Beis ha-Levi, Chanukah*. Harav E.M. Shach (*Avi Ezri, Chanukah*), however, strongly disagrees with that ruling.

9 Based on *Igros Moshe O.C.* 3:95, *Y.D.* 1:137 and *Y.D.* 3:52-2. See also *Eishel Avrohom (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. See Hebrew Notes, pgs. 4-8, where it is proven from several sources that during the week, *plag ha-Minchah* should be figured at about an hour before *tzais ha-kochavim* and not one hour before sunset. See also *Mor u'Ketziyah* 672:1.

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 *Mishnah Berurah* 673:26, 27. Concerning asking a non-Jew to light; see Rambam (*Hilchos Chanukah* 4:9), *Ohr Gadol (Mishnah Megillah* 2:4), *Da'as Torah* 673:2 and *Har Tzvi O.C.* vol. 2, pg. 258.