

SAFETY IS KEY WHEN LIGHTING CHANUKAH CANDLES. Please do not do anything that would endanger you or those in your building by leaving unsafe fires burning. Also, laws and regulations in place for your building should be followed, both in general and on Chanukah.

Fuel: Oil vs. Candles

Any type of fuel may be used for fulfilling the mitzvah. Some prefer **olive oil** since the original miracle took place with oil, and you can measure out how long you want your lights to burn, although **candles** might be easier to use. Electric lights do not qualify for the traditional halakhic requirement of lighting candles.

How to light

The most basic mitzvah of Chanukah is *ner ish u-v'eito* – one candle per household. A preferred method is lighting one candle for each member of the household, and the most preferred option is to **light one candle on the first night and increasing one candle each subsequent night until there are eight candles on the last night.** The universal custom is to follow this opinion. If for whatever reason one does not have enough candles, one can fulfill the obligation by lighting only one candle per night.

Women are fully obligated in lighting Chanukah candles. A married woman may opt to have her husband light for her or she may light her own Menorah.

Ashkenazi students living independently of their parents should light their own Chanukah candles while at school, the way they would at home.

Sephardic students need not light as long as their parents are lighting for them. If they wish, they **may light but without a Beracha.**

Roommates should not fulfill the mitzvah together since they are not related.

Setting up the Menorah

The candles should be **placed in the Menorah starting at the right.** Each night as we add an additional candle from right to left, we should **light the newest candle -- moving from left to right.**

Where to light

The preferred building in which to **light** one's Chanukiyah is **in one's domicile** (dorm/apartment/house, the place where one sleeps). For those who cannot light in their domiciles, it is **also possible to light in the place where one eats.**

Slifka will be having **candle lighting** available during the evenings, with a time each night (usually **7 pm**) for group lighting!

The Menorah should be placed **near a window or public space**. The goal in lighting candles is **to publicize the miracle** of the Menorah. This was originally achieved by placing the Menorah outside – next to the street, in a place where it would be visible to the outside. Nowadays, we light the menorah inside and the key audience of the Mitzvah is members of the household. We still recognize the original goal of the Mitzvah by placing the Menorah near a window.

Shamash

There is a prohibition against deriving any benefit from the Chanukah lights and against using them for any practical purpose (this includes using their light to read and also includes using one candle to light another). To protect against this, **we light a Shamash – a helper candle** in addition to the candles corresponding to the night of the holiday. The Shamash is also used to kindle each candle. The Shamash should be noticeably set aside as the Shamash and not confused with the other candles being lit.

Berakhot/Blessings

The following berakhot are said when lighting the Chanukiyah:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר (של) חנוכה

Baruch Atah A-donai E-loheinu Melech ha-Olam Asher kiddeshanu be-mitzvotav ve-tzivanu le-hadlik ner (shel) ¹¹ Chanukah

Blessed are you Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to light candle/light of Chanukah.

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם שעשה נסים לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה

Baruch Atah A-donai E-loheinu Melech ha-Olam She-asah nisim la-avoteinu ba-yamim ha-heim ba-z'man ha-zeh

Blessed are you Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who has wrought miracles for our forefathers, in those days at this season.

the first time performing the mitzvah, usually on the **first night**:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה

Baruch Atah A-donai E-loheinu Melech ha-olam she-hechyanu ve-kiyemanu ve-higyanu la-zman ha-zeh.

Blessed are you Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.

One should light the Shamash, then **recite all of the berakhot and afterwards light the candles**. The paragraph of *ha-nerot halalu* is recited immediately after lighting the candles.

When to light

Weekday

There is some ambiguity over when the ideal time to light candles is. The gemara says *mi-she-tishka ha-hama*, when the sun sets. Most authorities understand this to mean that the **ideal time to light** is at *tzeit ha-kochavim* (when the stars come out; which is **approx. 4:40pm** in New Haven) because the candles are fully visible once it is fully dark. **Others** feel that *shekiah* is the optimal time to light (**approx. 4:22pm** in New Haven) because then passersby will know that the lighting is for a mitzvah, since it is not yet fully dark. Whenever one lights, the candles should burn for at least half an hour after it is fully dark.

We generally strive to fulfill Mitzvot as early as possible to show our eagerness and zeal to perform God's commandments). At the same time, on Chanukah this should be balanced with the goal of *pirsumei de-nisa* – publicizing the miracle to the members of one's household and passers-by on the street, which would certainly allow for waiting until **Slifka lighting at 7 pm. One may light Chanukah candles as long as there are people to see them** – members of the family, roommates and/or passers-by on the street (probably around 10 pm in most parts of New Haven). If no one else is awake to see the candles, then one may still light (with a berakha) until dawn, but one has not ideally fulfilled the Mitzvah.

One should ensure that one's Chanukah lights burn for the required time, both by ensuring sufficient fuel and a non-windy location. If they extinguish on their own before that time, one need not relight them, though one is allowed to relight them without saying a brakha. Generally, once a candle or oil is lit for the sake of the *mitzvah* of *nerot Chanukah* attains a level of *kedushah* (sanctity). It may not be used for any purpose other than *nerot Chanukah*. Candles or oil that are not fully burned should therefore be used the subsequent night of Chanukah.

If you don't want to stay with your candles the entire time that they burn, after the half-hour-post-*tzeit-ha-kochavim* mark one may blow them out.

Shabbat

Erev Shabbat – Shabbat creates a bit of a conundrum when it comes to Chanukah candles. On the one hand, we begin Shabbat before the designated time of lighting Chanukah candles. On the other hand, once Shabbat candles have been lit, one may not light the Chanukah candles since lighting fires is prohibited on Shabbat. **One should therefore light Chanukah candles before lighting Shabbat candles**, and ensure that the **candles** are long enough or that there is enough oil that they **will burn for** at least ½ hour after *tzeit ha-kochavim* (approximately **50 minutes after Shabbat begins**). Special "Shabbat Chanukah" candles are available, or one may shave

down normal Shabbat candles to fit in one's Menorah. (If using oil, simply put enough oil in each cup to ensure it will burn for long enough.)

Slifka will be having communal candle lighting at 3:50 pm this Friday.

Motzei Shabbat – In one's home, one should **first say Havdalah and then light Chanukah candles**. In synagogue we reverse the order in order to maximize the *pirsumei nisa* (publicizing the miracle).

Travel

If one is traveling and will not have occasion to light Chanukah candles at the appropriate time, a few options exist:

1. The most preferable is appointing someone to light for you by proxy, ie your parents
2. You can light once you arrive so long as it is still dark and someone is still awake.
3. You may light them with a brakha from *plag ha-mincha* onward (approx. 3:24pm in New Haven). Attention must be paid to ensure that the candles will last until ½ hour past *tzeit ha-kochavim*.
4. If you are traveling the entire night (i.e., on a plane), it is not clear whether you are obligated in candle lighting at all. Consult a rabbi in such a case.

Shul

The custom has developed to light Chanukah candles in Shul in order to achieve the goal of *pirsumei de-nisa* – publicizing the miracle.

There is also a minhag to light Menorah in the morning in shul without a brakha.

Guests

Guests (sleeping at someone else's house; not just eating over) may light a Chanukiyah at their hosts' home or may pay their host a nominal sum of money and fulfill their obligation in the host's lighting.

Hallel/Al ha-nisim

On Chanukah **we add *al ha-nissim* in the Amidah and Birkat ha-Mazon**. If one forgot to recite *al ha-nissim* in the amidah one need not repeat the amidah.

If one forgets it in Birkat ha-Mazon, if he/she realizes their mistake before reciting the next Beracha it can be recited at any point. If one has already said the next Beracha, one may recite it during the *ha-Rahamans* at the end of Birkat ha-Mazon.

There is no mention of Chanukah in *al ha-Michya*.

A **full Hallel is recited** on all days of Chanukah.

We recite Psalm 30 (*mizmor shir chanukat ha-bayit...*) at the end of *Shaharit* each day of Chanukah.

Tahanun is not said, starting at Mincha on Erev Chanuah.

Foods

There are many traditional foods eaten on Chanukah. These include latkes, jelly donuts (*sufganiyot*) and anything else fried in oil. There is also a tradition to eat cheese and dairy products to commemorate the story of Judith (See Rema in OH 670:2).

Ve-Tein Tal U-Matar

Unrelated to Chanukah, last night we started including Ve-Tein Tal U-Matar in the Beracha of Barech Aleinu (or for Sefaradim saying Barech Aleinu). If one forgets to include it, it can be inserted in the Beracha of Shema Koleinu; if it is not, the Amidah should be repeated.