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"חוקי חיים"

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לעשות רצונך
בלבב שלם



שע"י "חדר הזרעה" שבגנת מנחת יצחק פעיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א - בראשות הרב חיים אהרן בלייער שליט"א

Halochohs compiled by HaRav Chaim Bleier – Translated from the Hebrew edition by R' Zerachya Shicker

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Chanukah – 2

Parshas Vayeishev 5782

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The Menorah

Beautiful Menorah

- It is proper to try to get as nice a menorah as possible (מ"ב סי תרע"ג) (סק"ח). This is not an application of hiddur mitzvah, which would require spending one-third more on it (ש"ע סי תרנ"ו סי"א); rather it is to honor the mitzvah. Thus, one may spend more than one-third extra, e.g., by buying a silver menorah, which is 1,000 times the price of olive oil and wicks (הגר"ח קנייבסקי, נר הנוכה פ"ו הע"ב). Alternatively, one may spend more than one-third extra on a silver menorah since the rule of one-third for hiddur mitzvah does not apply to Chanukah candles as we see from the mitzvah to fulfill mehadrin min hamehadrin, which costs more than an extra third of the basic mitzvah (ח"י מרן הגר"ז הלוי חנוכה פ"ד הל"א ד"ה והנה).
- Nevertheless, the halacha that one must collect money for the mitzvah of Chanukah candles does not apply to cover the cost of a silver menorah (ע"פ ש"ע סי תרע"א סי"א ומ"ב סק"ג). Nowadays, this halacha does apply to cover the costs of olive oil and fulfilling mehadrin min hamehadrin since everyone does this and one who cannot is considered to be lacking (הגר"ח קרליץ, חוט שני חנוכה עמ"ש ג').
- Preference of menorah types.** Some give the following order for the preference of the material of the menorah [most preferred to least preferred]: gold; silver; copper; iron; glass; wood; earthenware (סד' לאברהם, שדי חמד מערכת חנוכה אות ז', כך החיים ס"ק ס').
- According to this, it is better to buy a metal menorah than a glass menorah with Swarovski crystals or a menorah decorated with gold plating [Matanel company] which can each be found today.

Does It Need to Be a Kli?

- Some poskim hold that the holder for the candles must be considered a kli, as will be explained (בשם) חסד לאברהם נהר נ"ח מעיין ב' בשם). (קונטרס הל' חנוכה לר"י סגי נהור בנו של הראב"ד, שו"ת אבני נזר סי' ת"ק). Most poskim imply it does not need to be considered a kli (שו"ת שבט הלוי).
- Eggshells.** Some say one should not light Chanukah candles in eggshells or onion skins since they are not keilim (חסד לאברהם הו"כ) (בשע"ת סי' תרע"ג סק"ג); as mentioned above, most poskim are not concerned with this.
- Wax candles without a holder.** Some say one is not yotzei his chiyuv to light Chanukah candles with wax candles attached to a table or wall without a holder (שו"ת אבני נזר שם לפי חסד לאברהם), but most poskim hold one is yotzei (כנ"ל ובמ"ב סי' תרע"א סק"ח).
- Holder that cannot stand on its own.** Some say one should not use a holder that cannot stand without being propped up since that is not considered a kli (חסד לאברהם); others are not concerned with this.
- Candle in a potato.** Some say one should not put his Chanukah candles into a hole in a potato since a potato is a food, not a kli (שו"ת אבני נזר הנ"ל) [those who made great sacrifices to light candles in potatoes in the concentration camps are considered to have lit in menorahs of gold]; most poskim hold this is permissible.
- Bottle cap menorahs.** It is common for children to make menorahs consisting of candles stuck into upside-down bottle caps as a project in preschool. Although bottle caps are generally thrown out after they are used, bottle caps are keilim and they are kosher for Chanukah candles according to all poskim (חוט שני חנוכה פ"ט סק"י).

Glass Cups in a Silver Menorah

- 11. Considered glass or silver?** Very often, people light in glass cups in a silver menorah. The poskim discuss whether this is considered lighting in a glass menorah, which does not have the advantage of the silver menorah hiddur, or lighting in a silver menorah since the glass cups are held by a silver menorah. They conclude that the poskim who say the candle holder must be a kli would hold that it is viewed as lighting in glass, while the majority who say a kli is not necessary would hold that it is viewed as lighting in a silver menorah (שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"ה סי' קנ"ז).
- 12. Glass cups that cannot stand on their own.** Many glass cups designed to be placed in a menorah have a round protrusion at their base and cannot stand on a flat surface on their own. Some say one is not yotzei with these according to the poskim who hold the candle holder must be able to stand on its own (above, 8) [if this is true, it would come out that a preschool child's bottle cap menorah (above, 10) is more kosher than his father's silver menorah with glass cups that cannot stand on their own].
- Others say since the cups are made to be used with the menorah, not alone, they are secondary to the menorah. [This idea has a precedent in hilchos tumah: although wooden vessels that cannot hold contents [פשוטי כל עץ] cannot become tamei, when they are secondary to a metal vessel, they can become tamei like metal (כלים פי"ג מ"ו)]. Consequently, lighting in them is viewed as lighting in the silver menorah and the cups do not need to be able to stand on their own (שו"ת שבט הקהתי ח"ג סי' ר"א, והסכים עמו הגר"ח קנייבסקי, גם) (אני אודך חנוכה אות כ"א).

Do the Menorah Glasses Need to Be Toiveled?

- Glasses designated to hold a wick and flame do not need tevilah prior to their use in a menorah. When using glasses that do require tevilah, even if they have not been toiveled one still fulfills the opinion that the oil should be fit for consumption since although there is a halacha that utensils for food require tevilah, food put into them before they are toiveled does not become assur. Thus, the oil in them is still fit for consumption.
- 15. Shot glass.** If one bought shot glasses that he will use for drinking lechayims but he wants to first use them for Chanukah candles, some hold he should toivel them before doing so. This is not, as a certain talmid chacham wanted to say, because oil in a non-toiveled glass is not fit for consumption [like oil that a mouse fell in, which is repulsive (שו"ת פרי אליהו ח"ג סי' כ"ה)]; rather it is because some say that a utensil that will be used with food must be toiveled even before first using it for non-food purposes (דרכ"ת סי' ק"ב סק"ט). However, one may use it temporarily for a menorah without tevilah (ספר הכשרות פ"ד הע"מ מ"ב).

Issur to Eat Before Lighting

Eating a Meal

- Once the time to light Chanukah candles arrives, one may not eat a meal before he lights. If one began a meal, he must stop until he fulfills the mitzvah (מ"ב סי' תרע"ב סק"י). He should not eat in the half hour before the zman either (שעה"צ סק"י).

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17. The issur is to eat more than a kebeitzah [Chazon Ish – 100 grams; Rav Chaim Na'eh – 57 grams] of bread (שורע סל רל"ב ס"ג) or pas haba'ah b'kisinin (מסגרת השלחן על קצושיע סל ס"ט סק"ב). One may not drink alcoholic beverages either. One may eat fruit or drink non-alcoholic beverages in any quantity. One may also eat a cooked food item made from one of the five grains if he does not eat it as a meal (מ"ב סל רל"ב ס"ג).
18. **Women.** The minhag is that women also stop eating before their husbands light Chanukah candles (שורע בצל החכמה ח"ד סל נ"ח, הגרש"א). (הליכות שלמה הנוכה פט"ז ס"ג). In a case of some sort of need, a woman may rely on the poskim who hold that since she does not light herself, there is no issur for her to eat (מ"ב סק"ד), (הגר"ש וואזנר, הגר"ש א"א).
19. **Yeshiva bochur in another city.** A yeshiva bochur who went to his parents' house in another city in the afternoon to be with them for their lighting and mesibah but plans to light in yeshiva after returning there at night may not eat a meal with his family. Although he will light in a different city, he has not yet fulfilled his mitzvah (הגר"ש וואזנר, קובץ מבית לוי ח"י עמ' כ"ב).

Minhag for Women Not to Do Melachah

Issur Melachah for Women

20. The minhag is that women do not do melachah as long as the candles are burning (שורע סל תרע"ט ס"א). This has not been accepted as a true issur, only as a minhag. Thus, it is not overly strict, and in a case of need, a woman may be meikel (פניני הנוכה עמ' קל"ב) (הגר"ש א"א).
21. **Women.** This minhag is specifically for women since the Chanukah miracle came about through women (מ"ב סק"ג). According to most poskim, the reason for this minhag is to make it clear that the candles' light may not be used (מ"ב סק"ד). Some say it is to emphasize the fact that Chanukah was established as a time of Yom Tov and praise and gratitude to Hashem (הובא בכף החיים סק"ו).

Duration of the Issur

22. The issur melachah applies for the minimum amount of time that it is assur to derive benefit from the candles, i.e., when they are lit in the house, a half hour (מ"ב סק"ד) after tzeis hakoachavim, even for those who light at shekiyah (ביה"ל סל תרע"ב ד"ה ובלבד).

Which Melachos Are Ossur?

23. Some say the melachos not to be done when the candles are lit are the same ones that are assur on Chol Hamoed (קובץ מבית חול חמועד, הגר"ש וואזנר, קובץ פניני הנוכה עמ' ק"ח אות ג). Others say they are the same melachos as the ones women have a minhag not to do on Rosh Chodesh (חזו"א, הגר"ש קרליץ, נר הנוכה פ"א העל מ"ד). Yet others say the minhag is that women do not do any activity that requires their focus (הגר"ש א"א, פניני הנוכה עמ' קל"א, שורע רבבות אפרים ח"ו סל ת"ט אות ב). This may be because of the second reason (above, 21) given for this minhag, so that they do not take their focus off praise and gratitude to Hashem. We will list some examples.
24. **Laundry, ironing.** Women should not do laundry or ironing, which is assur on Chol Hamoed, during the time of the minhag not to do melachah (הגר"ש וואזנר ועוד כנ"ל).
25. **Sewing.** Women should not sew during this time. This includes embroidering, knitting, crocheting, etc. even just for pleasure (הנ"ל).
26. **Baking, cooking.** Most poskim hold just like baking and cooking are not included in the issur melachah on Rosh Chodesh and Chol Hamoed, they are not included in the minhag not to do melachah on Chanukah. Some hold the minhag is that women also do not cook and bake during the time they do not do melachah on Chanukah (הגר"ש א"א, הגר"ש פ"ש שכך הוא מנהג ירושלים). Even for those who do not cook or bake, some allow frying donuts, blintzes, or other things that will be eaten at that time (הליכות שלמה) (הגר"ש א"א, הליכות שלמה) (תשובה פט"ו ארחות הלכה העל 14, תשובה פט"ו חנוכה עמ' ל"ו).
27. **Washing the floor.** Women should not do strenuous activities, e.g., washing the floor or doing lots of dishes (הגר"ש וואזנר, הגר"ש קרליץ).

(הגר"ש א"א). They may wash a few dishes.

28. **Going to a store.** Most poskim hold women may make purchases at a grocery store and the like during the time of the minhag not to do melachah. Some say this is also assur since it takes their focus away from the Chanukah candles (הגר"ש א"א).

Woman Who Is out of the House

29. **Lighting outside the house.** Even if a man lights outside his house, e.g., at the courtyard or building entrance, and the candles are not visible from inside, it is considered as if he lit inside and his wife and daughters should not do melachah in the house for a half hour (הגר"ש א"א, אשרי האישי ח"ג פל"ג אות ב).
30. **Woman who works outside the house.** It could be that the minhag not to do melachah does not apply to a woman who works outside the house and is not present when her husband lights. [However, according to the second reason above (21), the minhag not to do melachah applies to women outside the house. If possible, she should get someone who can do work at that time to cover for her (הגר"ש א"א, אשרי האישי שם אות ו)].

Minhagim After Lighting

Sitting by the Candles

31. Many people stay by the candles and sing zemiros and praises for some time after lighting the candles and saying "Haneiros Halalu." Chassidim certainly do this. Even people without Chassidische minhagim should rejoice and relate Hashem's praises. The author of the Chavos Yair writes: "It seems to me that the main mitzvah is that the one who lights the menorah should remain by the candles for a half hour to see them and rejoice over them since they also commemorate the candles people joyously lit after the miracle. It says in Al Hanisim, 'They lit candles in Your holy courtyards...' In other words, after the Chanukah miracle, the people were so jubilant that they lit candles in their courtyards out of joy. The candles we light commemorate this joy; thus, it is not enough for one to merely light and then go somewhere else" (מקור חיים, קיצור) (הלכות סל תרע"ב ס"ב, שורע שב יעקב סל כ"ב). Certainly one with small children should recount the great miracle to them and imbue them with emunah (תשובה ח"א סל שצ"ו).
32. Yeshiva bochurim, who do not have children, should also stay by the candles for some time to praise and thank Hashem. Afterward, they should return to the beis medrash and learn more Torah since these days are especially suited to learning tirelessly (סוף עניניו של"ה סוף עניניו). (תפילה, קדושת לוי דרושים להנוכה ד"ה ידוע, מנהגי חת"ס פ"ט אות א). Among our many sins, most people are mevateil Torah on Chanukah.

Dreidel

33. There is a minhag for children to play dreidel on Chanukah. Dreidels have four sides with a nun, gimmel, hei, and shin respectively, which stands for "neis gadol hayah sham" ["a great miracle happened there"]. They also have much hidden meaning (בני יששכר מאמר ב' אות כ"ה). Many gedolim played with them a bit on Chanukah to fulfill a minhag Yisroel (הנהגים לחת"ס פ"ה).
34. Playing dreidel is not "mesacheik bekuvia" [lit. playing with dice – a form of gambling] since the stakes are very low. Also, very often people divide up the winnings equally after the game. Minhag Yisroel is Torah.
35. **"Drunken dreidel."** One may not play "drunken dreidel." Doing so is engaging in levity, spending time in the company of scoffers [מושב לצים], and being frivolous during holy, lofty days. Yeshiva bochurim should flee from this as they would from fire.

Cards

36. Among our many sins, some people play cards instead of singing praises to Hashem for the miracles He performed for us. The sefarim hakedoshim vehemently object to this. One who knows what is good for himself will distance himself from such activities (ביה"ל סל תרע"ד ד"ה ונהגין). If these games involve significant sums of money, one who plays them violates the issur of mesacheik bekuvia and is potentially unfit to be a witness.

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