

The Visible Light of the Menorah

by Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

The bitter conflict between Napoleon and Russia had been raging for months. Civilian travel within Russia was treacherous for all, but especially for Jews, for whom such journeys were fraught with danger even in the most tranquil of times. But what can one do if his livelihood depends on travelling from region to region, from city to city? The merchant [whom we shall call] Menashe, with a family to feed, had little choice but to accept the risks of his trade - war or no war.

He undertook these business trips each year soon after the High Holidays, making his way from his shtetl to the distant, unwelcoming regions of Russia beyond. The success of these ventures often depended upon personal connections and sheer guile. Indeed, despite the edicts of the Czar, Menashe had, at times, even sneaked into cities where Jews were denied entry.

This year, he knew, his journey would be especially perilous. Before taking to the road, he fortified himself by receiving a blessing for success from his Rebbe, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi.

On the day of his departure, he bade farewell to his wife with more anxiety than usual.

Every few days, by mail or word of mouth, Menashe's wife received notice from her husband, informing her of his whereabouts and activities. She was delighted when a letter arrived from Petersburg, dated the second day of Chanukah, informing her that his business dealings had gone well and with G-d's help, he'd be returning home soon.

Then she heard nothing more.

Days passed, then weeks, and still not a word. Her small children stared out of the window, awaiting the gifts their father always brought when he returned from his far-away travels. But there was no sign of Menashe. No posts, no regards, no reports of chance encounters. Months passed. It was as though he had disappeared into thin air.

Had these been normal times, a few Jewish community activists would have travelled to Petersburg to make enquiries, but with the country at war, such a venture would be useless. Officials in Petersburg, a Czarist capital city, had more pressing issues to contend with than missing Jews. As for Menashe's wife, she sent urgent letters to every agency that might prove helpful, but received replies from none. Not knowing where to turn next, she sought the advice of the Rebbe.

"I am a veritable agunah" [an abandoned but still legally married woman, since it is unknown whether her husband is currently alive or not], she told the Rebbe. "As for my children, they're suffering as though they are orphans."

The Rebbe consoled the woman and assured her that, with God's help, her husband would return home safely.

Spring passed, then summer and autumn too, and soon the winter winds were already announcing their presence. The war continued to rage, the Russian forces losing one battle after the next. These were days of great travail for the entire population and, as usual, especially for Jews.

Still, a man must earn a living. The previous year, it was Menashe who had traveled through the embattled region; this year, Tzvi Hirsch [as we shall call him] would face the same challenge. Like Menashe, Tzvi Hirsch was a devoted chassid of the first Chabad Lubavitcher Rebbe, and therefore sought the tzaddik's blessing before commencing his trip.

As Tzvi Hirsch prepared to leave the room after receiving the desired blessing, he heard the Rebbe calling to him.

"Tzvi Hirsch, you said you'd be gone for several months, yes? That you expect to be away during Chanukah?"

"Yes, I'll still be on the road," Tzvi Hirsch replied.

As in years past, he'd planned his itinerary so he could celebrate Chanukah in a town inhabited by Jews and, if possible, with other chassidim. But why was the Rebbe asking about this now?

"I want to remind you," the Rebbe continued, "an essential requirement of the mitzvah of lighting the menorah is Pirsumei Nisa, (the public proclamation of the Chanukah miracle). That is why the Talmud instructs us to put our menorah outside the front door opposite the mezuzah or next to a window facing a public area so its light will be visible to the world."

"Yes, of course," Tzvi Hirsch said. "I always place my menorah near the window in my house."

"Good," said the Rebbe. "But remember, the performance of Pirsumei Nisa isn't limited to one's own home. One must ensure the menorah is visible in whatever location one finds oneself. May you have a safe, successful trip."

Tzvi Hirsch was a considerably more successful merchant than Menashe, for whom every ruble was a struggle. Tzvi Hirsch's formidable connections allowed him to walk through doors closed to other Jews and to sojourn in royal cities like Petersburg, from which Jews were officially barred. But this was wartime, and all the thoroughfares were controlled by hostile military personnel. Meanwhile, a heavy snow had blanketed the roads, rendering the main arteries impassable.

On the eve of the first night of Chanukah, Tzvi Hirsch found himself stranded in a forsaken, isolated village, where he doubted even one Jew could be found. Given the weather conditions, he had no choice but to resign himself to spending the coming days at the local inn.

Alone in his room, Reb Tzvi Hirsch welcomed the holiday of Chanukah, reciting the traditional liturgy that recalls the miracles of the past and expresses the hope that they will recur in our own day. At the end of prayers, he removed a menorah from his bag, and prepared to place it on a chair across from the mezuzah affixed to a doorpost, forgetting for a moment he'd find no mezuzah in this gentle inn. Casting about for an appropriate spot, he suddenly remembered the Rebbe's exhortation to light the Chanukah menorah in public view.

And so, Tzvi Hirsch dutifully set up his menorah near the window of his shabby room. Who would see the modest flames of these wicks? The storm had intensified during the past few hours; no one in his right mind would dare extend a finger into the howling wind, let alone hazard a walk outside.

Nevertheless, Tzvi Hirsch set aside his puzzlement and kindled the menorah with all the zeal he could muster. A surge of homesickness overwhelmed him as he thought about the joyful Chanukah celebrations at the court of his Rebbe. Fighting pangs of loneliness, he pulled a chair up next to the menorah, and began singing a chassidic melody.

The second night of Chanukah was no different. Tzvi Hirsch lit the two wicks in front of the window as an unrelenting gale lashed against the pane. Once more, he sat across from his menorah and immersed himself in Chassidic song and prayer. So absorbed was he in his devotions that he failed to notice the door open, or the man who'd quietly entered his room.

The unobserved visitor was immaculately dressed in a military officer's outfit, his jacket bedecked with medals. He stared silently at the Jew swaying slowly in his chair, oblivious to his surroundings.

When Tzvi Hirsch finally opened his eyes, he lurched from his seat, and quickly removed his cap in reflexive obeisance. But the officer merely smiled, and readily accepted Tzvi Hirsch's invitation to have a seat.

It Once Happened...

"Allow me to explain my presence here," the officer said. "I came to this province on military leave. I'm staying in a room nearby. Last night I noticed a peculiar light coming from your room. A mere flicker, hardly enough to yield warmth or even light. I thought, how strange! And when tonight, I saw two such glimmers from this room, I asked myself, what is going on in there? I knocked on the door and receiving no reply, let myself in. And what do I see? A Jew busying himself with a small lamp. And so I ask myself, what is a Jew doing in this remote part of the country? And what is he doing with this little lamp of his?"

"I will explain," said Tzvi Hirsch, speaking in fluent, sophisticated Russian. He recounted the history of the holiday, the Maccabees' valiant battle for freedom, the ritual lighting of the candelabrum, one additional light each night, progressing to eight, in commemoration of the discovery of a small flask of pure oil that miraculously burned in the destroyed Temple for eight days.

"So, the Jew is innocent after all!"

"What Jew?" asked Tzvi Hirsch. "Innocent of what?"

"He did tell us the truth."

"Sir, what Jew? The truth about what?"

The officer leaned back in his chair. "I am a military judge in the military court in Petersburg," he said. "Last year - around this time, in fact - we were presented with a Jew arrested as a spy. His name was Menashe, as I recall. The evidence pointing to his guilt was substantial. For one thing, he was found in Petersburg, where Jews are not permitted entry. For another, he was carrying false papers. And then there was this business of the lights. He was kindling his lamp near a window, one night one candle, two on the next night and so on. We concluded this was a signal to the enemy, a code communicating the number of battalions arriving in the city.

"The Jew admitted that he was in the city illegally, but insisted that he was there only to conduct some business and certainly not to spy. What about the lamp, the lights in the window? He said this was a ritual belonging to the Jewish holiday of Chanukah.

"He didn't convince the court, although that may have been because, to tell the truth, we weren't inclined to believe his account. The man was sentenced to a ten-year prison term."


"What happens now?" Tzvi Hirsch asked, astonished.

"Well," said the officer, "I see now we should have listened more judiciously to what the Jew had to say. As soon as I return from my furlough, I'll see to it that he is given his freedom."

When Tzvi Hirsch returned to his town, he was greeted by the news that Menashe was already in his own home, reunited with his family. Not even Menashe knew what had prompted his sudden release, although he and his family were exuberantly grateful when they found out.

As for Tzvi Hirsch, each year when he lit his menorah, he made sure not only to proclaim the miracle of Chanukah that had occurred two millennia earlier, but also the miracle that occurred in his own day.

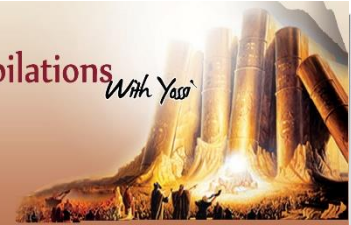
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Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times - Parshat Mikeitz

Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	3:59	5:15
Tel Aviv	4:13	5:16
Haifa	4:03	5:14
Be'er Sheva	4:18	5:18



How the Gulag Judge Lit the Menorah

By Asharon Baltazar

Repeatedly arrested for his “counter-revolutionary” activities to preserve the flickering flame of Judaism in the Soviet Union, Reb Mordechai Chanzin frequently found himself behind bars. His first sentence amounted to 10 years in a forced-labor camp. After his release, Reb Mordechai was again found guilty and punished with five more years. His third and final sentence resulted in six years. Overall, between the years 1935 and 1956, he spent 21 years in Soviet prisons and camps. In his short stints of freedom he selflessly devoted himself to preserving Judaism behind the Iron Curtain.

Among his many experiences, there was one story that he would tell again and again:

As the Siberian winter deepened, Chanukah came, and a group of young Jewish men, all prisoners of the Gulag, convened for a short meeting. The topic: how to obtain and light a secret menorah. One promised to supply margarine to be used as fuel. Some frayed threads from standard-issue camp garb would suffice as wicks. Even small cups to hold the margarine were procured from somewhere. Of course, all this was against camp regulations, and they all understood the implication of their actions should they be caught.

Reb Mordechai was the eldest of the group of 18 men, and was therefore honored to usher in the holiday by lighting of the first candle. In the dead of night, in a small garden shed, the hardy crew crowded around their makeshift menorah and listened to Reb Mordechai’s emotional voice as he recited the first blessings, tears trickling down his cheeks. Reb Mordechai and his comrades gazed silently at the small yellow light, each one recalling Chanukah in his parents’ home.

The loud crash of the door opening shattered the men’s reverie. Camp guards rushed through the doorway and flooded the cramped space. The Jewish inmates were grabbed by brutish hands and shoved through the camp. When they reached a small dank cell, they were ordered to pile inside.

The first to be brought to trial was the ringleader, Reb Mordechai. Inside the small courtroom, which consisted of the judge’s desk and a bench for the defendant, the proceedings were all but pro forma. Reb Mordechai had already predicted his indictment, and solemnly awaited the verdict.

“This is an act of treason,” said the prosecutor. “By lighting the candles, you intended to signal to enemy forces. The penalty for this is death.”

The judge regarded the young man standing in front of him. “Do you have anything to say for yourself?”

Reb Mordechai’s heart pounded in his chest as he approached the judge. “Is it just me, or is it the rest of the group too?”

“All of you,” enunciated the judge dryly.

Reb Mordechai was devastated.

The courtroom began to spin around him. Whatever indifference he was able to afford until then vanished in the terror-stricken realization that his fellow brothers would be led to their deaths. He blamed himself.

Reb Mordechai burst into bitter tears, and for a few minutes he stood in front of the judge, sobbing uncontrollably. Years of crushing pain and pent-up emotions overwhelmed him and couldn’t be stopped.

“Come close,” said the judge.

Reb Mordechai took a step towards the judge’s desk. Softly, the judge asked about his relatives, their means of livelihood and other personal details. Reb Mordechai answered the judge’s inquiries.

“What do you have to say for yourself?” the judge pressed on.

Mustering temerity he did not feel, Reb Mordechai addressed the judge, “We are Jews, and we lit the candles that night to observe the holiday of Chanukah.”

“You lit Chanukah candles? You lit Chanukah candles?” the judge repeated to himself, clearly unsettled. “You don’t say . . . Chanukah candles.”

Recomposing himself, the judge called to the two guards present in the courtroom and asked them to stand outside. When the door clicked closed, the judge turned his attention back to Reb Mordechai.

“If you lit Chanukah candles, let me demonstrate the right way to light them.”

Reb Mordechai watched the judge light a small lamp. Picking up the incriminating documents gingerly, with trembling hands, the judge slid the first one off and held it to the flame. The paper caught fire and disappeared quickly in an orange blaze and a few wisps of smoke. As if he were afraid to delay lest he change his mind, the judge worked quickly through the pile, saying “You see? This is how you light Chanukah candles.” Soon there was nothing remaining of the pile.

Finished, the judge scooped up the scattered ashes, strode over to the window and tossed them into the Siberian wind. Sitting down, the judge reached for the buzzer on his table and summoned the guards.

“Take this group of 18 men,” the judge barked, “and separate them, making sure that it would be impossible for them to see one another. There’s no point in killing them; they are not worth even one bullet.”

The guards marched out, and Reb Mordechai was again left alone with the judge. The latter faced Reb Mordechai and said in a trembling voice, “I too am a Jew, and I beg you to make sure that the future generations of our people will know to light the Chanukah candles.”

In 1956, a few years following Stalin’s death, hundreds of thousands of prisoners were pardoned and their names cleared. Among them was Reb Mordechai Chanzin, who was finally given permission to leave the camps that had robbed him of decades of life. Chanzin moved to Moscow, where he became secretary to Chief Rabbi Yehudah Leib Levin. A decade later, through the efforts of the Rebbe, he was allowed to immigrate to Israel, where he was reunited with his brother Dovid, the rabbi of Petach Tikva

Reprinted from an email of Chabad.org maagazine.

The Torah in this week’s Parsha, tells us, that Yosef recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. What does that mean? Why did they not recognize him? How did they not know it was him? Perhaps, some will say that they never imagined their kid brother, who they sold to Egypt, would become the Second in Command of the entire country. However, when he asked about their younger brother, and then when Binyamin came down and he asked about their father and how is he feeling, showing much concern about their father, and then when seating them, he seats them in age order, how did they not catch on that this was Yosef!?!

R’ Matityahu Solomon explains, that they did not recognize him because Hashem did not want them to, because Hashem wanted the story to play out as it did. When Hashem does not want you to see, something could be right in front of your nose and you would not notice.

Chanukah, is just one example of this sort of miracle, the salvation was right in front of their eyes, it just needed the children of Matityahu the Kohen Gadol to realize that all they needed to do was start to fight the war, and Hashem just showed them success the entire way.

Friends, at times we feel lost and things are simply not going the way they could, or the way we feel they should, whether it is financially, emotionally, or spiritually. We have to remember there is a solution sitting right under our nose, and at the right time, Hashem will open our eyes and we will see that it came at the perfect time and not a minute too early. We need to daven to our Father in Heaven and beg Him to “open our eyes” and to have the intellect to understand all that is happening around us.

Some say that the oil they found was from the oil Yaakov Avinu used when he poured it on the Even Shesiya after he woke up from his dream, yet no one found it until Chanukah, simply because Hashem did not want them to find it until the right time.

Friends, we need to remember this, when ever we are in dark times, we need to remember that there is an end, it is perfectly planned, this long exile has an end date, we may not know it but it could be right there in front of our nose.

So may Hashem open all of our eyes to always see His Yeshuot V’ Nechamot and let’s pray with all our hearts, for the recovery of all the sick from this crazy pandemic, as well as praying for our soldiers and healthcare professionals, and Chevra Kadisha members worldwide, and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children and parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual Shabbat, happy Chanukah and Chodesh Tov.

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NO MITZVOT IN THIS PARSHA

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 112

NUMBER OF WORDS: 1558

NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5972

Shabbat Chanukah / Day 6.
FIRST DAY ROSH CHODESH TEVET

This year, We take out three Sifrei Torah; in the first Sefer Torah we have six Aliyot in the weekly Parsha (Mikeitz). In the second Torah we have one Aliyah in Parshat Pinchas – (Bamidbar 28:9-15) the two paragraphs "וביום השבת" and "ובראשי חדישיכם." The Mafir reads in the third Sefer Torah from Parshat Naso (Bamidbar 7:42-7:47) from "ביום הששי" until "בן דעואל" until.

The Haftarah is read in Zechariah 2:14 4:7 "רוני ושמחי", some add the first and last Passuk of the Rosh Chodesh Haftarah, followed by the first and last Passuk of the Machar Chodesh Haftarah.

מקץ
פרשת

This week is sponsored by
Eli and Danielle Renov
In honor of the birthday
of their son
חזקאל מאיר

☞ EREV CHANUKAH

On *Erev Chanukah*, we say *Tachanun* during *Shacharit* but not at *Mincha*.

Some have the custom to take out and prepare their *Menorah* three days before *Chanukah* and they keep it out till the third day after *Chanukah*.

☞ MENORAH LIGHTING: WHO?

All men light the *Menorah*. Boys are also trained to do so from a young age.

Women are obligated to light the *Menorah*. Practically, a married woman fulfils her obligation through her husband's lighting, and a girl fulfils her obligation through her father's lighting. Therefore, they should be present when the *Menorah* is lit, and they should have in mind to fulfil their obligation. Even very young girls should be present when the *Menorah* is lit. For this reason, the *Menorah* lighting should be scheduled at a time when everyone can be present. [Nevertheless, they have still fulfilled their obligation even if not present.]

In the following circumstances, a woman should recite the *Brachot* and light the *Menorah* herself:

- An unmarried woman who does not permanently live with her father. [This includes seminary girls.]
- A woman who is temporarily away from her family home and husband/father, and she is not guesting with someone who is lighting the *Menorah*, e.g. she is in a hotel, hospital, or empty home.
- A woman who remains at home, but her husband/father is away for the night.

A woman who is temporarily away from her family home and husband/father, but she is guesting with a host who is lighting the *Menorah*, she automatically fulfils her obligation through her father's/husband's lighting at the family home, unless:

- It is daytime in her time-zone when her husband/father lights *Menorah*.
- Her husband/father is away from the family home and lighting elsewhere.

In these two cases, the woman should participate in her host's lighting by sharing in the expenses of the oil and wicks, and she should also be present when the *Menorah* is kindled.

☞ MENORAH LIGHTING: VENUE

One must light at home (where he usually eats and sleeps) and nowhere else. Even if eating out, one must still light the *Menorah* at home.

If one is away from home the entire night, he should light at the place where he is lodging. If he is still there the following night, he may light there as well, even if he intends to relocate later during the night.

One should avoid crossing the International Dateline during *Chanukah*. Similarly, one should avoid travel plans that prevent him from lodging overnight in a dwelling. One who finds himself in such a situation should consult a *Rav*.

☞ MENORAH LIGHTING: WHERE?

Some hold the *Menorah* is lit inside, some hold it should be lit in a doorway, some hold by the window and others hold outside.

For those who hold the *Menorah* is situated at a doorway, on the side opposite the *Mezuzah*. If there is no *Mezuzah*, such as in a hotel, the *Menorah* is placed at the right side of the door. [If the *Menorah* was placed on the wrong side, one has still fulfilled his obligation.]

The *Menorah* should be placed within the actual doorway, as close to the doorpost as possible. [If this is not feasible, it should at least be placed within a *Tefach* (8cm) of the doorway.] It does not matter if the flames span north-south or east-west.

It is preferable to use the doorway of the room where one eats, as opposed to the doorway of the room where one sleeps.

Although it is preferable for the head of the household to light at the main eating area, nevertheless, each child should light at the entrance to his personal bedroom, unless there are safety concerns.

When more than one person lights at the same venue, each set of flames should be noticeably distinct from the others. In practice, this is easily accomplished when everyone uses a separate *Menorah*. However, when two people improvise by sharing the same *Menorah* (e.g. during the first nights of *Chanukah*), or by not using a *Menorah* at all, there should be a clear gap between each set of flames.

Those who have the custom to light in the window should make sure it is safe to do so.

The *Menorah* should be lit facing the street rather than the back of the house.

It should be lit on the right side of the window.

Some have the custom to light outside on the edge of their property closer to public property.

If one regularly lights outside, yet someone gave them a new silver *Menorah*, in fear of it being stolen one should rather light their old *Menorah* outside.

Those in a *Yeshivah* dormitory, seminary or at an overnight camp should follow the instructions of their *Hanhalah*.

The *Menorah* is situated so that the flames are anywhere between 3 *Tefachim* (24cm) and 10 *Tefachim* (80cm) from the floor. If the *Menorah* is placed lower or higher, it is still

acceptable (unless the flames are higher than twenty *Amot* – 9.6 meters). A large *Menorah* which is taller than 10 *Tefachim* may be used even in the first instance.

The *Menorah* must not be situated in a place where there is a strong possibility that it will be extinguished, e.g. by winds or vandals.

☞ PREPARING THE MENORAH

Ideally, a nice *Menorah* should be used.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe discouraged the use of *Menorahs* with round branches as per Rashi's interpretation. Instead, Chabad use either a *Menorah* with diagonal (or square-shaped) branches, or one with no branches at all.

The *Menorah* must be designed so that all the flames are in a straight line and at the same height. The flames should not be too close together, as they need to appear noticeably distinct. [Furthermore, wax candles need to be sufficiently spaced so that the heat of the flames do not melt the wax of the adjacent candles.] One should be especially attentive to this when improvising without a *Menorah*.

Each day of *Chanukah*, the *Menorah* is prepared in advance, so that it is ready at the appropriate time.

On the first night, one prepares a lamp at the extreme right. On the second night and thereafter, one adds a lamp to the immediate left of the others, preparing the lamps from right to left.

The *Shamash* is situated higher or separate than the other flames.

One *Shamash* is sufficient for multiple *Menorahs* when they are right next to each other, but not when they are situated in different parts of the room.

☞ THE WICKS

Wicks are preferably made of cotton or linen. [If these are unavailable, the wicks may be made of any material.]

Some have the practice to replace the wicks every day and some have the custom not to do so, being that used wicks are easier to kindle. [According to the latter custom, the newly added lamp is prepared with the wick that was lit first on the previous night.]

☞ THE FUEL

Ideally, olive oil is used to fuel the flames, and a beeswax candle for the *Shamash*. [If these are not available, one should use a type of oil or wax candle that burns a clear flame. If this is not possible, any type of oil or wax candle may be used.]

The *Menorah* may be prepared with oil remaining from the previous night.

Before kindling, one ensures that the *Menorah* has sufficient fuel to last the required duration

– at least 50 minutes in total, and at least 30 minutes after *Tzeit Hakochavim* (whichever is longer).

Some candles manufactured for *Chanukah* typically burn for only half-hour. If these are lit before *Tzeit Hakochavim*, one would not be able to recite the *Brachot*. Furthermore, even if lighting after *Tzeit Hakochavim*, such candles tend to burn for less than half-hour in a warm environment. Therefore, longer lasting candles should be used. [When necessary, there is room to be lenient for a child under *Bar Mitzvah* who is unaware that the candles are burning less than they should.]

If one realized after lighting that there is insufficient oil, he should not merely add more oil. Instead, he must extinguish the flames, add more oil, and then relight the flames without the *Brachot*.

🕯️ MENORAH LIGHTING: WHEN?

Many light the *Menorah* after *Maariv* and some light immediately after sunset, between *Mincha* and *Maariv*.

If that is not possible, one should light as soon as possible after that time. [Technically, one may light all night, until dawn. However, if very late, one should arrange for another person to be awake and present for the *Menorah* lighting.]

Davening with a *Minyan* takes precedence to lighting *Menorah* at the ideal time.

When lighting after *Tzeit Hakochavim*, one *davens Maariv* first, unless there is no *Minyan* scheduled until later, or unless he **regularly davens** with a *Minyan* that is scheduled later.

If one cannot light the *Menorah* at night, he may also light any time after *Plag Hamincha*. [In this case, one will need to use additional oil, enough to last until half-hour after *Tzeit Hakochavim*.]

One may not light before *Plag Hamincha*. If he did so, he must relight at the correct time, and recite the *Brachot* again.

🕯️ BEFORE LIGHTING

Once the sun sets, one may not perform any activity that might distract him from lighting the *Menorah*. Therefore, one may not eat more than 57 grams of bread, drink alcoholic beverages, perform work, or even study *Torah*.

Similarly, one should not begin these activities within the half-hour period prior to sunset, unless he appoints a *Shomer* (guardian) to remind him to light the *Menorah* at sunset. Nevertheless, one may learn during this time.

If, for whatever reason, one began these activities within the half-hour period prior to sunset, he may continue until sunset. At that time, he must immediately stop whatever he is doing.

One may begin these activities **before** the half-hour period prior to sunset and continue until sunset. [Technically, he may continue even after sunset and light the *Menorah* afterwards. Nevertheless, it is commendable to stop as soon as the sun sets in order to light the *Menorah*.]

One may not take a nap within the half-hour period before sunset, or afterwards, until he lights the *Menorah*.

All the above applies to all men and women, even if he or she will discharge their obligation through watching or participating in someone else's lighting of the *Menorah*. [Nevertheless, there is room to be lenient for those who are not actually lighting the *Menorah* themselves.]

🕯️ MENORAH LIGHTING: HOW?

Before making the *Brachot*, one lights the *Shamash*. While making the *Brachot* and lighting the flames, the *Shamash* is held in the right hand.

On the first night, three *Brachot* are said. On the following nights, only two *Brachot* are recited, as *Shehecheyanu* is omitted.

One must recite the *Brachot* and kindle the flames whilst standing unsupported, without leaning on anything. If this is not possible, or after the fact, the *Mitzvah* is fulfilled even if sitting.

After one **completely** finishes reciting all of the *Brachot*, the flames are lit without delay, from left to right.

One may not speak between the *Brachot* and the conclusion of lighting the *Menorah*. [If one did speak, he does not repeat the *Brachot*, unless he said something totally unrelated to the lighting of the *Menorah*, and he did so before kindling even one flame.]

Although the *Menorah* is not supposed to be moved once lit, one may move it a *Tefach* or two if this is necessary to facilitate its lighting, and then return it to its original position. (This may be practically relevant for someone who is infirm and cannot reach the *Menorah*.)

Haneirot Halalu is said or sung after all the flames are completely lit and the *Shamash* is set down, followed by *Maoz Tzur* in many communities.

🕯️ AFTER LIGHTING

The flames should burn for at least 50 minutes in total, and for at least 30 minutes after *Tzeit Hakochavim* (whichever is longer).

If a flame extinguished during this time, it is appropriate to relight it (without reciting the *Brachot*).

During this time, the *Chanukah* flames may not be used for any purpose. This includes using a flame to light another *Chanukah* flame or the *Shamash*.

Similarly, benefit may not be derived from any of the light generated by the flames. This is one of the reasons why the *Shamash* flame is placed higher than the other flames, in order that any inadvertent benefit may be attributed to the *Shamash*. Nevertheless, one should not rely on the *Shamash*, and instead ensure that the room is well-lit.

The *Menorah* should not be moved during this time.

It is customary for women and men to refrain from any labor (i.e. sewing, knitting, laundering or ironing) during this time. It is also preferable to avoid leaving the house to

go shopping, or the like. However, cooking and cleaning is permitted.

One should sit by the *Menorah* for at least half-hour, and utilize the time for learning, or for *Chanukah* inspiration.

After the flames have burned for the required amount of time, the *Menorah* may be moved, even if the flames are still burning. Similarly, at this time, women may perform labor outside the view of the burning flames.

Even after the required amount of time has passed, it is still inappropriate to derive benefit from the flames or to extinguish them (unless leaving them unattended would create a safety hazard).

During *Chanukah*, the *Menorah* should not be used for any other purpose. Similarly, after the *Menorah* flames are extinguished, the leftover wicks and fuel should not be discarded or used for other purposes. Instead, it should be kept until the last day of *Chanukah*.

🕯️ SHUL MENORAH

The *Shul Menorah* is situated at the southern side of the *Shul*, with the flames spanning east-west.

The *Shul Menorah* should be easily visible to the entire *Shul*. It is therefore placed higher than 10 *Tefachim* (80cm).

Except for *Motzei Shabbat*, the *Shul Menorah* is lit after *Mincha* and before *Maariv*. Some schedule *Mincha* so that the *Menorah* will be lit after *Plag Hamincha*, but before sunset.

The *Shul Menorah* is prepared before *Mincha* so as not to disturb anyone's concentration during *Mincha*. Just as with a personal *Menorah*, it must be prepared with enough fuel to burn until at least half-hour after *Tzeit Hakochavim*.

At the end of *Mincha*, immediately before *Aleinu*, one of the congregants recites the *Brachot* and lights the *Menorah*. Afterwards, all present say or sing *Haneirot Halalu* (and *Maoz Tzur*), followed by *Aleinu*.

On the first night of *Chanukah*, the *Shul Menorah* should not be lit by an *Avel* (within 12 months of a parent's passing or within 30 days of a spouse, child or sibling's passing).

One does not fulfil his obligation with the *Menorah* that is lit in *Shul*. Even the one who kindles the *Menorah* in *Shul* must relight at home, with the *Brachot*. [On the first night, he does not repeat *Shehecheyanu*, unless he is also lighting on behalf of others who have not yet fulfilled their obligation.]

Throughout the 24 hours of each day of *Chanukah*, the flames of the *Shul Menorah* (including the *Shamash*) remain lit whenever people are present in the *Shul*, provided that there are no safety concerns. At the very least, the flames should remain lit during the times of *davening*. [If the flames need to be relit during the course of the 24 hours, they are lit with a *Shamash*, but without reciting the *Brachot*.]

🕯️ PIRSUMEI NISSA

A major emphasis of *Chanukah* is *Pirsumei Nissa*. Most years this would include *Menorah*

lightings in the most public places possible, and events which promote the spirit of *Chanukah*, however, due to the pandemic, it is more important to adhere to the Ministry of Health relevant for one's country or city.

If permissible by the authorities, one should try to participate in these activities and help ensure their success, even if this requires postponing one's personal *Menorah* lighting to a later hour.

The flames of the public *Menorah* must be no taller than twenty *Amot* (9.6 metres) from the ground.

The public *Menorah* should not be situated in a place where there is a strong possibility that it will be extinguished, e.g. by winds or vandals.

Since it is ideal for the *Brachot* to be recited when kindling a public *Menorah*, the lighting should be scheduled after *Plag Hamincha*, and the *Menorah* should have enough fuel to burn at least half-hour after *Tzeit Hakochavim*, just as with a personal *Menorah*. [Otherwise, the public *Menorah* should still be lit, but without the *Brachot*.]

The *Brachot* are recited when burning a liquid or solid fuel – as opposed to gas, butane, propane or electricity.

The *Brachot* are recited only by the one who is lighting the *Menorah*. [On the first night, he recites *Shehecheyanu* – even if he already recited it beforehand when lighting the *Shul Menorah* or at home.] The audience should be forewarned not to recite the *Brachot* along with him, but rather, just to answer *Amen*.

The flames should be lit without moving the lamps out of place.

Just as in *Shul*, one does not fulfil his obligation by attending (or lighting) a public *Menorah*. The participants should be made aware of this. [Even the one who kindles the public *Menorah* must relight at home, with the *Brachot*. On the first night, he does not repeat *Shehecheyanu*, unless he is also lighting on behalf of others who have not yet fulfilled their obligation.]

One should try to reach out to those in hospitals, old-age homes and prisons.

When the person lighting the *Menorah* does not know the *Brachot*, one may prompt him word by word, or recite the *Brachot* on his or her behalf. [In the latter instance, if one will still need to fulfil the *Mitzvah* himself at a later time, he should have in mind to be *Motzeh* the listeners but not himself.]

Shehecheyanu is said the first time one fulfils the *Mitzvah*, even if it is after the first day of *Chanukah*.

When visiting a hospital or old age home, one should be mindful as to whether it is a place where the *Brachot* may be recited. If not, the *Menorah* should be lit without reciting the *Brachot*.

Gatherings should be arranged for adults and children, especially for those not yet familiar with *Chanukah*. The opportunity should be utilized to rejoice with them; to teach them about *Chanukah*; to share words of *Torah*; to

light the *Menorah* and give *Tzedakah* with them; and to give them *Chanukah Gelt*.

Where possible, these gatherings should be scheduled to allow the *Menorah* to be lit after *Plag Hamincha*, so that the *Brachot* will be recited. If this is not practical, the *Menorah* should still be lit, but without the *Brachot*.

When distributing doughnuts, latkes or other food, one should ensure that the appropriate *Brachot* are made for each food item.

🕊️ TACHNUN & V'AL HANISSIM

Tachnun is not recited from *Mincha* of *Erev Chanukah* until after *Chanukah*.

V'al Hanissim is recited in each *Amidah* of *Chanukah*. [One should not intentionally skip *V'al Hanissim* to recite *Kedushah* or *Modim* with the *Minyan*.]

If one forgot *V'al Hanissim* at the appropriate place in the *Amidah*, he may recite it before saying *Hashem's* name at the end of that *Brachah*. After that point, he does not recite it.

V'al Hanissim is recited each time one *bentches* during *Chanukah*. If one forgot *V'al Hanissim* at the appropriate place in *bentching*, he may recite it before saying *Hashem's* name at the end of that *Brachah*. After that point, he may recite it as a *Harachaman*, as per the *Nusach* printed in some *siddurim*.

🕊️ HALLEL

Full *Hallel* is recited each day of *Chanukah*, right after *The Amidah of Shacharit*. If the *Chazzan* is a mourner (for a deceased parent) during the first eleven months, someone else takes over for *Hallel*, but not for the *Kaddish* which follows.

One must recite *Hallel* whilst standing unsupported. If this is not possible, or after the fact, the *Mitzvah* is fulfilled even if sitting.

One may not interrupt full *Hallel* other than for those things that one may respond to during the *Brachot* of *Kriat Shema*. [E.g. If the *Chazzan* recites *Kaddish*, one answers *Amen Yehei Shmei* etc, and *Amen* to *d'amiran b'alma*. One also answers *Barchu* and *Amen* when the *Brachot* are recited before and after an *Aliyah*, and may also recite the *Brachot* if he is called up for an *Aliyah*.]

It is preferable to recite *Hallel* with the *Minyan*. If one is not up to the *Minyan*, this creates a dilemma; on the one hand it is appropriate to recite *Hallel* with the congregation, and on the other hand, it is appropriate that one should *daven* in the correct order. One should therefore make a point of being up to the *Minyan* when *Hallel* is said.

If one forgot to recite *Hallel*, he should recite it with a *Brachah* as soon as he remembers, unless the sun already set.

If one mistakenly recited half-*Hallel*, he must repeat the entire *Hallel* (without a *Brachah*).

After *Hallel*, the *Chazzan* recites only half *Kaddish*. [If he mistakenly said *Kaddish Titkabel*, he should recite half *Kaddish* after *U'va L'tziyon*.]

🕊️ CHANUKAH CUSTOMS

The days of *Chanukah* should be utilized to give extra *Tzedakah* and to learn additional *Torah*. Children should also be encouraged in this regard.

One may not fast on *Chanukah* – not even a *Chattan* or *Kallah* on the day of their *Chuppah*, or for a *Yahrzeit*.

It is customary to eat foods fried in oil, such as *Latkes* and doughnuts, to commemorate the miracle of the oil.

It is also customary to eat dairy foods, to commemorate the miracle of *Yehudit*.

It is customary to eat special meals to celebrate the miracles of *Chanukah* and the reinauguration of the *Beit Hamikdash*. These meals are regarded as a *Seudat Mitzvah* if they are accompanied by song and praise for the miracles *Hashem* wrought, or when their purpose is to publicize the miracle of *Chanukah* and enhance the observance of its *Mitzvot*.

On one of the nights of *Chanukah*, the *Rebbeim* of *Chabad* would conduct a *gathering* of sorts for their family members (both men and women), which was referred to as "Latkes evening". The stories related at these gatherings included several that were repeated every single *Chanukah*.

The days of *Chanukah* should be utilized to arrange and/or participate in family, school, workplace and communal *Chanukah* gatherings. The purpose of these gatherings is to tell the story and spread the message of *Chanukah*, along with the lessons derived from it.

One gives *Chanukah Gelt* to his or her spouse and children (whether minors or adults) each day of *Chanukah*, with a special addition (double or triple) on the fourth or fifth night of *Chanukah*. [For *Shabbat*, one gives *Chanukah Gelt* either the day before or after. One who is stringent about handling money on *Motzei Shabbat* should refrain from giving *Chanukah Gelt* until Sunday.]

One gives *Chanukah Gelt* to his students.

It is appropriate for children to give *Chanukah Gelt* to each other.

There is no source for giving *Chanukah* gifts other than *Gelt*. [If one nevertheless does so, he should bear in mind that gifts may not be given on *Shabbat* unless they are used on *Shabbat* itself.]

It is customary to play *Dreidel* (*sevivon*). One should not play for money (unless the initial understanding is that all "wins" will be returned).

It goes without saying that gambling or playing-cards is not in the spirit of *Chanukah*, and is in fact a desecration. The *Kedushat Levi* writes that each playing-card contains tremendous impurity of the unmentionable type.

🕊️ EREV SHABBAT CHANUKAH

When possible, public *Menorah* lightings should still be conducted after *Plag Hamincha*, despite the busy hour.

The *Minyan* for *Mincha* is scheduled earlier than usual, to allow for the *Menorah* at home to be lit after *Mincha*. Nevertheless, *Mincha* should be late enough for the *Shul Menorah* to be lit after *Plag Hamincha*.

One should endeavor to *daven Mincha* with a *Minyan* before lighting *Menorah*. [If this is not possible, it is preferable to *daven* with a *Minyan* after lighting the *Menorah* than to *daven* without a *Minyan* before lighting the *Menorah*.]

The *Menorah* at home is lit just before the *Shabbat* candles are lit. The lighting of the *Menorah* should be scheduled so that it does not interfere with the lighting time for the *Shabbat* candles.

Being that the *Menorah* is lit on *Erev Shabbat* earlier than usual, one should ensure that there is enough fuel for the flames to burn for half-hour after *Tzeit Hakochavim*. Similarly, a longer-lasting *Shamash* should be used.

On *Erev Shabbat*, one need not sit next to the flames for half-hour.

The *Menorah* should be situated so that its flames are not fanned or extinguished by the opening or closing of any doors or windows, or by people passing by.

Everything beneath a lit *Menorah* becomes a "*Bassis L'Issur*" on *Shabbat*, and may not be moved. If the place where the *Menorah* is situated needs to be used, one can prevent the chair or table from becoming a *Bassis L'Issur* by placing a *Challah* or bottle of wine on it from sunset until *Tzeit Hakochavim*.

Similarly, one may place the *Menorah* on a tray which is not designated exclusively for use with a candelabra or candlesticks, and place a *Challah* or bottle of wine on the tray from sunset until *Tzeit Hakochavim*.

In both of these situations, the chair or tray – along with all of its contents – may be moved on *Shabbat*, but only **once** the location is **actually** needed. The chair or tray may **not** be moved simply for the sake of protecting the *Menorah*.

The chair or tray should be moved carefully, as the *Menorah* itself cannot be directly handled. Were the *Menorah* to fall whilst being moved, one would not be able to catch it or support it directly with his hands. Furthermore, if the flames are still burning, and they are fueled by oil, one must be careful that the liquid doesn't rise or fall and cause the flame to become bigger or smaller.

Another option: The *Menorah* (as well as the *Bassis* beneath it) may be moved by a non-Jew – but only if one had in mind (and preferably verbalized) at the onset of *Shabbat* that a non-Jew would move it after the flames extinguished.

🕯️ **SHABBAT CHANUKAH**

Shabbat Chanukah this year is also the first day of Rosh Chodesh. Throughout davening, one should remember to recite *Ya'aleh Veyavo*.

If one forgot *Ya'aleh Veyavo* in davening, or is unsure whether he recited it:

- At Maariv, one does not correct his omission.

- At Shacharit and Mincha, if he realized before saying Hashem's name at the end of Hamachazir Shechinato L'tziyon, he goes back. If he remembered between the conclusion of that Brachah and Modim, he recites it at that point, without going back. If he remembers any time after that point, but before he began reciting (the second) *Yih'yu L'ratzon*, he returns to the beginning of Retzei. If he remembered only afterwards, he must repeat the entire Amidah.

- If one forgot *Ya'aleh Veyavo* during Shacharit and only realized after Musaf, he does not repeat Shacharit.

- If one forgot *Ya'aleh Veyavo* during Mincha, and only realized after the Zman Tefillah has passed, he must recite an additional Amidah during Maariv, as compensation. Atah Chonantanu is recited only the first time. If one mistakenly said it only the second time, he must repeat the Amidah a third time without it. However, if one mistakenly said Atah Chonantanu both times, or not at all, he does not need to recite the Amidah a third time.

- When repeating the Amidah, one should wait the span of time to walk four Amot (approx. two meters), and preferably, one should recite words of supplication between them.

During Birchat Hamazon, one should remember to recite *V'al Hanissim*, Retzei and *Ya'aleh Veyavo*. One should recite both the Harachaman for Shabbat as well as for Rosh Chodesh.

If one forgot Retzei or *Ya'aleh Veyavo* in Birchat Hamazon:

- If he remembered before saying Hashem's name at Bonei Yerushalayim, he goes back.

- If he remembered after that, but before beginning the next Brachah, he recites the extra Brachah as printed in some Bentchers.

- If one already began even the first word (Baruch) of the next Brachah, one must bentsch again for omitting Retzei, but not for omitting *Ya'aleh Veyavo*.

- When one forgot Retzei and bentsches again, he need not repeat *V'al Hanissim* if he already recited it the first time, but he should still repeat *Ya'aleh Veyavo*.

Three Sifrei Torah are taken out for Kriat Hatorah. The Chanukah Haftorah is read, some add the first and last Passuk of the Rosh Chodesh Haftorah, followed by the first and last Passuk of the Machar Chodesh Haftorah.

Av Harachamim and Tzidkatecha are not recited.

For Musaf, one davens Atah Yatzarta. [If one neglected to do so, but remembered before he began reciting (the second) *Yih'yu L'ratzon* at

the end of the Amidah, he returns to Atah Yatzarta. If he remembered only afterwards, he must repeat the entire Amidah.]

It is customary to eat something special in honor of Rosh Chodesh, distinct from the special foods that one eats in honor of Shabbat and Chanukah.

🕯️ **MOTZEI SHABBAT AND SUNDAY**

Maariv should be davened promptly.

Motzei Shabbat and Sunday is the second day of Rosh Chodesh. Throughout davening, one should recite *Ya'aleh Veyavo*. During Birchat Hamazon, one should recite *Ya'aleh Veyavo*, as well as the Harachaman for Rosh Chodesh.

[See previous section for one who forgot, or is unsure, whether he recited *Ya'aleh Veyavo* in davening or bentsching. If one forgot *Ya'aleh Veyavo* during Mincha on the second day of Rosh Chodesh, and only realized after the Zman Tefillah has passed, he recites the Amidah twice during Maariv, but does not recite *Ya'aleh Veyavo* in either.]

The *Shul Menorah* is lit, *Haneirot Halalu* and *Maoz Tzur* are sung right before *Aleinu*. [See section entitled "*Shul Menorah*" for more details.] As usual, *Havdallah* in *Shul* is not recited until Maariv is completely finished. In communities where they say *V'Yiten Lechah* in *Shul* before *Aleinu*, they should light before *V'Yiten Lechah*.

One should go home quickly, in order to light the *Menorah* as soon as possible.

At home, most make *Havdallah* first, followed by *Menorah* lighting, *Haneirot Halalu*, *Maoz Tzur* and *V'Yiten Lechah*, some make *Havdallah* after *Menorah* lighting, and some make *Havdallah* and say *V'Yiten Lechah* prior to *Menorah* lighting

Although one normally recites half-Hallel on Rosh Chodesh, full Hallel is recited when it falls on Chanukah.

Two Sifrei Torah are taken out for Kriat Hatorah, with the first three Aliyot for Rosh Chodesh, and the fourth for Chanukah.

It is customary to eat something special in honor of Rosh Chodesh, distinct from the foods eaten in honor of Chanukah.

🕯️ **ZOT CHANUKAH (SUNDAY NIGHT / MONDAY)**

The last night and day of Chanukah is known as *Zot Chanukah*.

The wicks and oils remaining from the *Menorah* are gathered together and burned on the last day of Chanukah. [This does not apply to the wicks or oil that were not used at all, such as any oil remaining in the flask.] No benefit should be derived from this fire.

APPROXIMATE ZMANIM FOR JERUSALEM

Night	Plag Hamincha	Shkiah (Sunset)	Tzeit Kochavim
1 st (Sun)	3:30pm	4:40pm	5:14pm
2 nd (Mon)	3:30pm	4:40pm	5:14pm
3 rd (Tue)	3:30pm	4:40pm	5:14pm
4 th (Wed)	3:30pm	4:40pm	5:14pm
5 th (Thu)	3:30pm	4:39pm	5:14pm
6 th (Fri)	3:30pm	4:39pm	5:14pm
7 th (שבת)	Shabbat Ends: 5:15pm		
8 th (Sun)	3:31pm	4:39pm	5:14pm

