

My uncle is making a Chanukah party in Monsey on the second night for the whole extended family. I really want to light there. We'll have so much more time together and won't it be nice with all the menorahs... do we really need to light at home?



A guest must kindle the Chanukah lights at his own house and then go to his friend's house for the festive meal.

(משנה ברורה תרעז:יב זח תרעז:ב)

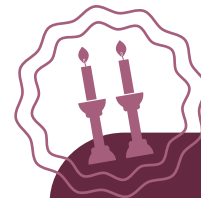
My brother says we have to sing by the seuda on Chanukah. Is supper on Chanukah even considered a seuda? And didn't we just sing ברוך ה' אלהינו by the light?



Although it is not a mitzvah to eat a meal on Chanukah, if one sings zemiros (such as pesukim from Hallel) it can be considered a seudas mitzvah. Speaking Divrei Torah also elevates it to a seudas mitzvah.

(קיצור שולחן ערוך קל"ט:א)

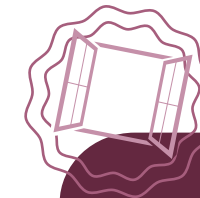
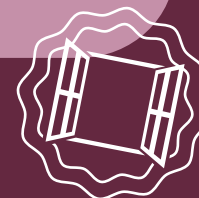
We're going away for Shabbos Chanukah. I'm a little disappointed that we're not staying for Sunday. I hope we can stay for the party on motzei Shabbos. But wait, do we need to light menorah at home?



If one spends Shabbos at someone's house, he may kindle the menorah there on Motzei Shabbos.

(תשובות והנהגות א:רצא)

I can't believe it, she just doesn't think! My little sister opened the window near the Chanukah light and they blew out! What are we supposed to do now? Do we have to light again and sit for another half hour?



If at the time of lighting the window or door was closed, then min hadin there is no requirement to kindle. The minhag, however, is to rekindle without a brochah, especially if the accident occurred within the requisite half hour after הכובים, but there is no requirement to sit another half hour.

(קיצור שולחן ערוך סימן קל"ט סעיף י"ג)

My brother used my father's licht to light his shamesh and then said oops! What did he do wrong?



He should have used my father's shamesh or matches, not the other neiros.

(קיצור שולחן ערוך קלטי:ד)

My brother davened maariv in a different minyan than my father. While we were waiting for my father to come home to light, my brother sat down to learn. My other brother made him stop, saying that you're not supposed to learn before lighting. What?!



One may not do anything prior to lighting – except daven maariv. He may not even learn! Learning, if proper, can draw a person in and he may lose track of the time. This is most relevant when one is alone. Your brother can learn, however, if he asks you to call him when it is time to light.

(קיצור שולחן ערוך קלטי:ט)

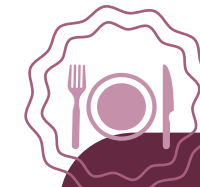
Exhausted from a few nights of Chanukah parties, my family – even my parents – went to sleep early. Then, my oldest sister came home... and woke me up! She said she wasn't allowed to make the bracha on menorah unless someone is up. Is that really true?



You may (gently) tell your sister that although the שולחן ערוך states: אבל לאחר שבני ביתו ישנים, תו" – "ליכא פרסומי נסא וידליק בלא ברכה" – if the household members are asleep, there is no 'publicizing of the nes' and he should light without a bracha - The accepted practice is that unless it is past חצות, candles may be and must be lit even later – even if one is alone. No need to wake anyone up.

(תשובות והנהגות א:שצא)

I came home from school really hungry. I was in middle of making myself a delicious grilled cheese when my brother walked in and said "don't you know you can't eat before candle-lighting?" That can't possibly be true...



One may not begin a meal within the half hour before the zman, even if there is one to remind him. A snack, however, is permitted. (Maharshal and other poskim) If it is clear that you will not get to light until later in the night and you want to eat supper, ask your Rov.

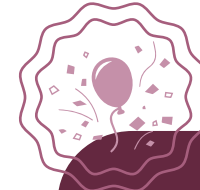
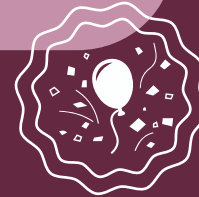
(מהרש"ל)

My aunt in Lakewood is hosting the Chanukah party tomorrow night. They light by the earliest zman but we light by Rabbeinu Tam zman, sit for a half hour, drive there... and get to the party long after it's already started... do we really have to sit by the light for a full half hour before we leave?



The halachah is that the candles need to be able to be seen and be suitable to last for half an hour. Sitting and watching the light is in fact a minhag, praiseworthy but not in itself a requirement.

My mother said she can't join our Chanukah parties this year because she's in aveilus. It's hard enough that Zeide was niftar, do we also need to miss our Chanukah parties?



One who is within the 12-month mourning period for the death of a parent is not permitted to attend a Chanukah party. Ask your Rav if and how you can have a family gathering in a way which is permissible.

(אגרות משה יורה דעה ג.קפא)

Latkes taste best fresh. My mother already prepared the batter – and I'm hungry! Do I really have to wait for the light to extinguish in order to fry some latkes for myself?



While melacha is permissible on Chanukah, women customarily do not do any melacha for the first half hour after tzeis (or after lighting). If the candles burn longer than that, the issur melachah for ladies is not applicable.

(קצור שולחן ערוך)

My father has to take shift in the hospital with my Zeide tonight, can we light earlier than צאת הכוכבים so he can still be on time for his shift?



If a person will not have time to light at night, it is permissible to light as early as plag mincha. He must be careful to put enough oil to burn until half hour after tzeis hakochovim.

(קיצור שולחן ערוך קלט:)

I wanted to make a delicious salad for our Chanukah party, but I didn't realize that we were out of olive oil. May I use the olive oil we bought for lighting the menorah?



The halachah is that the candles need to be able to be seen and be suitable to last for half an hour. Sitting and watching the light is in fact a minhag, praiseworthy but not in itself a requirement.

(באור הלכה תרע"ד)