

ECDP HALACHAGRAM – LAWS OF CHANUKAH

I. The Menorah

A. The Fuel Source -- Olive oil is preferred because it was utilized in the historic miracle. However, any fuel and wick combination that gives a non-smoky and odorless flame is acceptable (like wax candles). No blessing should be recited on electric bulbs.

B. Style -- The candles should be arranged in a straight line and be the same height.

C. The Shamash – Once the *Chanukah* candles are lit, they may not be used. For this reason, there must be another light source in the room. Our custom is to light an additional candle (called the *shamash*) to provide this other light source. The *shamash* should be distinguishable from the other candles by its position (e.g., placing it higher than the other candles).

II. Candle Lighting

A. Placing the menorah – Since the *mitzvah* is accomplished immediately upon the act of lighting, the *menorah* must be in its proper place with the proper amount of fuel before the candles are lit. The *menorah* should be placed in open view to as many people as possible. Thus, if possible, the *menorah* should be placed on a window sill facing the street (but only in a room that is frequented by people living in the home). If this is not possible, the candles should be set up in a position where they will be noticed by members of the family (if one is not lighting by the window, then ideally the *menorah* should be placed at a height of one to three feet from the floor, which indicates that the candles' purpose is not utilitarian, but rather solely to publicize the miracle).

B. Procedure for lighting -- The *menorah* is filled with oil or candles from the right-hand side of the person facing the *menorah*. The cup which is the newest addition is lit first. Thus, the kindling proceeds from left to right. After one lights the *shamash*, all the blessings (on the first night "*lehadlik ner shel Chanukah*," "*sheasah nisim laavoseinu*," and "*shehecheyanu*" (on the remaining nights, just the first two *berachot*) should be recited before lighting the first candle of the evening. After lighting the first candle, one says "*Ha'Neiros Halalu*" while lighting the other candles. After all the candles are lit, "*Ma'oz Tzur*" is recited. Some authorities believe that lights should be turned off in the room where the candles are burning.

C. Time for weekday lighting -- Candles should be lit immediately **after nightfall (approximately 5:00pm)** and should continue lit for at least one-half hour. If one cannot be home at that time, as long as one other member of the household is awake, the *menorah* may be lit with its appropriate blessings. If no one else is awake, according to most authorities, the *menorah* should be lit without its blessings. If the candles blow out, one should relight them (but without a blessing).

D. Lighting on Friday Night – *Chanukah* candles should be lit before the *Shabbos* candles. The candles must have the potential to last until at least one-half hour after nightfall. Therefore, **special (larger) candles or oil** must be used for the Friday night *Chanukah* candles so that the candles will last until approximately 5:30pm. (and even longer according to some authorities).

E. Saturday night lighting – Customs vary as to whether *Chanukah* candles are lit before or after *havdalah*. Either way is acceptable. However, if you are lighting *Chanukah* candles first, don't forget to say *atah chonantanu* or *hamavdil* before lighting.

F. Guests – A **guest at another's home overnight**, according to most opinions, should light a separate *menorah* with a blessing. If this is not possible, the guest may contribute a token amount of money to become a partner in the host's candles. A **guest that is not sleeping over** is required to light in their own home. **Students** who are traveling from their homes back to dorms in the evening may light either at home or in the dorm. **One who is away from home** should preferably light their own *menorah* before candles are lit in their own home. If candles cannot be lit where one is staying, then the traveler may rely on the lighting at home. The order of preference for **those staying at a hotel** is to light in (i) the room where they are sleeping, (ii) the dining room, and (iii) the lobby.

III. Special Prayers – *Al Hanisim* is added. If forgotten, there is no repetition requirement. *Hallel* is recited and there is a special Torah reading.