

ב"ט  
Chanukah 5779

## Laws of Chanukah

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### 1) What is the proper time to light the Chanukah lights?

The proper time to light is approximately 25-30 minutes after sundown (sundown is 4:29pm on first night of Chanukah). If that is not possible, one should light while there are still people walking in the street. If that is not possible, one may light as long as there are other members of the household that are still awake. There must be enough oil or wax for the lights to burn for one-half hour. On Friday Night, the Chanukah candles are lit just before Shabbos candles (18 minutes before sundown). The Chanukah candles must be able to burn until approximately 5:30pm (1/2 hour after tzeis hakoachavim).

#### 2) I am going to a family Chanukah party in the late afternoon and I won't get home until very late at night. Should I light before I leave, after I get home, or at the party?

The general rule is that one should light Chanukah candles where he or she will be sleeping. Therefore, if one is attending a Chanukah party/wedding, etc. one should either light before one leaves or after one returns home. If the party is late enough that you can light at the proper time (25-30 min after sunset) and allow the candles to burn for ½ hour, one can then blow the candles out and head to the party. In most circumstances the parties begin earlier in the day. In such a situation one should wait until one returns home to light, even if it will be late at night, as long as there will be someone else awake in the home to see the candles. One may still eat at the party even though one has not yet lit candles, as long as one appoints someone to remind him/her to light later (or set a reminder on one's phone, etc.)

#### 3) I am not going to get home from work until 8:30pm. Should the rest of my family light without me?

Even though technically one's spouse can light for him/her if one is not yet home, it is often preferable for the family to light together. Therefore, if the children are able to wait up, they can wait for the parent(s) to come home and light together as a family. If not, they can light on their own and the parent can light when he/she returns home. One should light immediately upon returning home.

**4) I am going out for the Friday night meal and I don't want to leave my candles unattended. Can I light at the home of my host?**

You should light in your own home. It is important to remember that Chanukah candles only have to last for ½ hr after tzeis hakoachavim (approx. 5:30pm). However, if one is concerned that the candles will still be burning when it is time to leave for dinner and is uncomfortable leaving home with the candles lit, please contact me to discuss an alternative.

**5) My family is staying at someone else's house for Shabbos Chanukah. Should we light at home on Friday or light at our hosts? Should we light at our hosts on Saturday Night or go home and light?**

On Friday, one should light at the home of the host. Alternatively, if it is difficult for one to light at the host's home, one may give the host a small amount of money (i.e. dime or quarter) in order to purchase some of the oil and wicks. Then, when the host lights he will have you in mind. You should make sure to listen to the brachos and respond amen. On Saturday Night, if one is sleeping at home, one should light when one returns home.

**6) I would like to leave the house after lighting the Chanukah candles, but I don't want to leave the candles unattended. May I blow out the candles after lighting them?**

You may blow out the candles one-half-hour after lighting (if it is after 5:30pm).

**7) On Saturday Night, should I recite Havdalah first or light the Chanukah lights first?**

This has been an ongoing debate for many centuries and there is no clear resolution. If you have a specific custom, you should follow your custom. If not, then the general practice is to say Havdalah first and then light Chanukah candles.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact me at [rbk@yiot.org](mailto:rbk@yiot.org) or 201-527-5548.

Wishing everyone a Chag Chanukah Sameach,  
Rabbi Krohn