

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'kisnin (מסגרת השלחן על קצויע 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 (ג' נחלת צבי י"ד סל רס"ב ס"א), (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 ().

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, פניני הנוכה עמ' קל"ב).
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 hachochavim, 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 Chof Hamoed) (הגר"ש וואזנר, קובץ מבית Chof Hamoed). Others say they are the same melachos as the ones women have a minhag not to do on Rosh Chodesh (הגר"ש קרליץ, נר הנוכה פ"א הע' 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) (הנוכה פט"ז סל ר"ח, תש"ה"נ ח"ג, תש"ה"נ ח"ג, תש"ה"נ ח"ג, תש"ה"נ ח"ג).
27. **Washing the floor.** Women should not do strenuous activities, e.g., washing the floor or doing lots of dishes (הגר"ש א"א, קרליץ). 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 Chassidish 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 (תש"ה"נ ח"א סל שצ"ו) תש"ה"נ 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 (של"ה סוף עניני קדושת לוי דרושים לנוכה 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) (מנהגים לחת"ס פ"ה) Chanukah to fulfill a minhag Yisroel (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 [], 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 ונוהגין) (הגר"ש א"א, פניני הנוכה עמ' קל"א, שורע רבבות אפרים ח"ו סל ת"ט אות ב'). 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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