

Guests Lighting on Chanukah *Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz*

I. Introduction. חנוכה is a time that people traditionally spend with family and friends. It is very common for people to be invited to חנוכה parties or to somebody's house for שבת חנוכה. שבת חנוכה will usually have an "off שבת" on שבת חנוכה to allow the boys an opportunity to spend time with their families. While this is a beautiful aspect of the holiday, many halachik questions are raised by the fact that people spend an unusual amount of time away from their normal residence on חנוכה. In this essay we will try to explore the various halachik sources relating to the most common situations of people being away from their homes at the time of lighting, and we will attempt to provide guidance for one who finds himself in one of these situations.

II. One who is away from home and does not have somebody at home to light for him. The גמרא (שבת דף כג.) records that when ר' זירא was single and learning in an out of town ישיבה he would pay a small sum of money to his host in exchange for a small portion of the wicks and oil used for נר חנוכה. By doing this he would fulfill the מצוה of נר חנוכה through the lighting of his host. It is clear from this גמרא that one who finds himself away from home on חנוכה should discharge his obligation by sharing in the lighting of his host. Indeed, the שולחן ערוך (אורח חיים סימן) states explicitly that "a guest who has nobody lighting for him at home is required to give a small amount of money to his host in order to partake in the oil of the נר חנוכה". There are many qualifications and details about the transfer of oil that are outlined by the פוסקים. We will attempt to clarify these details to ensure that we may be aware of the proper way to observe this הלכה.

1. **Does money actually have to change hands?** The רשב"א (בתשובותיו חלק א' סימן תקמ"ב) points out that the exchange of actual money is not necessary. It is sufficient for the host to give some oil and wicks to the guest through the means of a valid form of קנין. The מג"א (תרע"ז:א), פרי חדש שם:א', שער הציון שם:ט' explain that it is not sufficient to merely say that he is giving some oil to him as a gift, but he must actually perform an act of קנין (e.g. קנין הגבהה, קנין סודר). Some authorities, however, would permit the transaction to take place without a formal act of קנין (עיין נטעי גבריאל פרק י"ב הערה ה' דלצורך מצוה גמר ומשעבד נפשיה אף בלי קנין).

2. **Does extra oil have to be added for the guest?** The ב"ח cites the opinion of the אגודה that when the guest buys the oil from the host, the host must add extra oil in order to help the guest fulfill his מצוה. The ב"ח and the פרי מגדים both explain the opinion of the אגודה that we are required to add the oil so that a passerby not think that the guest did nothing to contribute to the lighting of the נר חנוכה. When the passerby sees the extra oil in the מנורה he will immediately realize that the guest partook in the lighting of the host. Based on this logic, ב"ח suggests, the אגודה would not require one to add a half hour worth of oil for the guest. It is sufficient to add a minimal amount to make it recognizable to those who may pass by that extra oil was used for the guest.

רבה disagrees with the suggestion of the ב"ח that a minimal amount of added oil is sufficient. After all, the רבה אליה points out, a passerby is not likely to notice a small amount of added oil. Furthermore, the amount of oil that people use in their מנורות vary greatly, and there is a high likelihood that the passerby will attribute the extra oil to the whim of the בעל הבית and not to the contribution of the guest. Therefore, רבה אליה suggests, that the אגודה would require that when lighting on behalf of the guest, the host must add enough oil to burn for an extra half hour. This is required because the host is in effect lighting both for himself and for the guest. That being the case he must have enough oil to burn for twice the normal amount of time.

רבה אליה takes issue with the הרב שטרנבוך שליט"א (ספר מועדים וזמנים) understanding of the אגודה's. הרב שטרנבוך שליט"א points out that the reason one is obligated to use enough oil to burn for half an hour is a very practical one. It was in that half hour window of time that people are out in the streets and are able to appreciate the נר חנוכה. To add an extra half hour of oil that would keep the מנורה lit during the time that people are already in their homes. This would serve no practical purpose and would not have any halachik benefit as the time for נר חנוכה has already passed.

Regardless of how much oil must be added, the host should declare explicitly that the extra oil is for the guest (עיין שו"ת בצל החכמה ח"ד סימן נ"ט).

3. **Are there any circumstances that no formal קנין must be done?** suggests that in most instances the obligation of the guest to purchase some oil would not apply. The and שו"ע הרב (או"ח רס"ג:ט), כף החיים (תרע"ז:ג), all claim that one must only pay for the oil if he also pays for all of the food that he eats and all of his other necessities that are taken care of by the host. If, however, one is provided with room and board free of charge, we may assume that the host intends to help the guest fulfill the מצוה of נר חנוכה without any transaction taking place.
4. **Is it preferable for the guest to light his own מנורה?** The משנה ברורה (תרע"ז:ג) suggests that the guest try to light his own מנורה instead of trying to fulfill the מצוה through the lighting of the host. The logic for this stringency is that nowadays the prevalent custom is for everybody in the house to light their own מנורה (and not to be יוצא with the הבית). Therefore, if one were to pass by and see that there is no additional מנורה for the guest they will assume that the guest did not light at all.

that הרב יוסף דוב הלוי סלויצ'יק זצ"ל quotes from מו"ר הגר"צ שכטר שליט"א that perhaps one can argue that one should not light his own candle when he is a guest at somebody else's house. The logic for such a ruling is that the obligation to light נר חנוכה is one that each person is obligated to do in his own home. When a guest contributes to the lighting of the host, he becomes part of the household of the host. If the guest lights his own candle he is not fulfilling the obligation to light in his own house. (להבין הענין היטב, עיין בספר כבוד הרב ובספר בעקבי הצאן בענין מקום הדלקת נרות חנוכה).

III. Guests who have somebody lighting at home for them. The records that after זירא ר' got married he would no longer join in the lighting of his host when he was away for חנוכה. Rather, he would fulfill his obligation through his wife lighting for him at home. We will now, בע"ה, outline many of the details of this הלכה.

- 1. *May one who is on the road (and whose wife is lighting for him at home) light his own מגורה with a ברכה?*** The שו"ע states that only somebody who does not have someone lighting at home for him may recite the ברכה of שעשה נר הנוכה upon seeing נר הנוכה. This seems to imply that one who does have somebody lighting for them at home should not make the ברכה. However, the שו"ע סימן תרע"ז סעיף ג' states explicitly that some say even one who has somebody lighting for him at home should light with the ברכות because he is also obligated to see the נר הנוכה. The משנה ברורה recommends that one who chooses to light on his own should either be sure to light before his wife lights at home or have specific intention not to fulfill his obligation with his wife's lighting at home.
- 2. *If one travels to a different time zone may he still fulfill his obligation with the lighting of his wife at home?*** The נר מצוה of נר הנוכה raises a question whether the מצוה (שבת דף כא: ד"ה ת"ר) is an obligation incumbent upon each household (and one who does not have candles lit in his household must light wherever he is), or is an obligation upon each individual (and all of the individuals in the home can fulfill the מצוה through the lighting of the בית). It would seem that if one were to assume that the obligation is incumbent upon the household, it is sufficient to have someone light for him at home. This may be done even though it is not currently the time for lighting at his present location. If, however, the obligation is upon the individual, and those lighting for him at home are acting as his שליח, he may not appoint a שליח to do something that he himself is not able or obligated to do. He may therefore not rely on the lighting done for him at home. Furthermore, if we view it as an obligation of the individual, since at the time that people are lighting for him he is not obligated to light, their lighting does not relate to him.

The מנחת יצחק (חלק ז' סימן מ"ו) writes that one can argue that the logic presented above is flawed. It is possible that even if the person lighting for him at home is serving as a שליח, he may still light for somebody in a different time zone. This can be explained as follows: The reason that the proper time for lighting is at night is that there would be no פרסומי ניסא if one were to light during the day because candles are not easily

recognizable in broad day light (טור סימן תרע"ב). That being the case, if the lighting occurs at a time when there is פרסומי ניסא in the place of the lighting, the fact that the בעל הבית is currently in a place that it is daytime would not prevent him from fulfilling the מצוה. However, the מנחת יצחק points out, if the husband is currently in a location where it is a different day than his home he cannot fulfill the obligation with the lighting of his wife because his current obligation is to light for today not for the day that it is in the place of his home. This is comparable to one asking a שליח to do a specific task for him, and the שליח does something else for him.

As a practical matter, it is probably best for the husband to intend not to fulfill his obligation through the lighting of his wife, and to light in his current location.

3. **Can one who is traveling have his children light for him, or must he be careful to specifically have his wife light for him?** Many פוסקים (אליה רבה הו"ד במ"ב) explain that even though our custom is to have every person in the house light a separate מנורה, a married woman should not light for herself because she is considered to be a single unit with her husband (אשתו כגופו). That being the case, it is possible to suggest that חז"ל only permitted a traveler to fulfill the מצוה through the lighting of his wife, but not through the lighting of other members of his household who are not considered to be one with him. Indeed, the מסגרת השלחן (סימן קל"ט סקי"ז) points out that if one's wife is lighting for him she need not have specific intention of including her husband in the lighting, but if another member of the house is lighting for him they must explicitly intend to include the בעל הבית in the lighting.

Parenthetically, I once heard my rebbe, Harav Herschel Schachter הרב יוסף דוב הלוי שליט"א say in the name of his rebbe אשתו סלוויצ'יק זצ"ל that the entire application of the principle of אשתו כגופו is very difficult. We never find this principle being used in connection with doing מצוות. After all we never find that a woman can fulfill the מצוה of קידוש if she is in an entirely different place than where the קידוש is being recited. Why then should she fulfill the מצוה of נר הנוכה when she doesn't light and doesn't even see or hear her husband light?

For this reason, רב סלויצ'ק זצ"ל had no objections to married women lighting to fulfill the מהדרין מן המהדרין.

IV. Somebody who is eating out of his house on one of the nights of חנוכה.

1. **Where should one light when he goes with his entire family to his parent's or in law's house for the night?** פרי both say חיי אדם (כלל קנ"ד סל"ב) and חדש (תרע"ז הו"ד בביאור הלכה ד"ה במקום) that when someone goes with his entire family to somebody else's home, even if he returns to his home during חנוכה for short periods of time, he should light where he is eating and sleeping. Even though the obligation to light is limited to one's own home, we view the place that he plans on staying for all of the days of חנוכה as his home (ועיין בספר כבוד הרב עמוד 280). Furthermore, even one who goes away for one day of חנוכה should light that night in the place he eats and sleeps (עיין נטעי גבריאל פי"א הערה ב' שכתב דאף שנקטו הפר"ח והחיי"א הלשון שהולך לכל ח' ימי חנוכה, מ"מ גם ליום אחד דינא הכי, שכל שהולך לאותו הלילה יכול להדליק שם שנקרא שם ביתו, וכן מורין בבי מדרשא עכ"ד. אמנם מדברי מו"ר שליט"א בס' בעקבי הצאן עמוד קכ"ו - קכ"ז נראה דדוקא אם הלך לכל ח' ימי חנוכה דקבע דירתו שם לכל זמן המצוה, וצ"ע).
2. **Where should somebody light when he goes to visit friends or family for the evening but plans on sleeping at home?** writes that הרב משה פיינשטיין זצ"ל (שו"ת אגרו"מ יו"ד ח"ג סימן י"ד אות ה') somebody who goes with his entire family to eat at another person's house should either return home to light, or light before he goes anywhere. If, however, it is extremely difficult for him to get back home for lighting or to light before he leaves, he may light in the place that he eats (ספר נטעי גבריאל י"א:ה').
3. **Where should one light on מוצאי שבת when he goes away for שבת but plans on coming home on שבת?** Although it is clearly best for one to leave soon after שבת and light at home (עיין פוסקים many permit him to light in the place that he was for שבת because as long as he has not yet left, it is still considered to be his current residence (ועיין נטעי גבריאל פרק י"א הערה ד' דכן דעת גדולי הוראה).
4. **Where should somebody living in a ישיבה dormitory light?** The רמ"א paskens that one who sleeps in one place and eats somewhere else should light in the place that he eats. The משנה

(הרב שכטר שליט"א בספר כבוד הרב עמוד 274 as explained clearly by ברורה) says that this is only true of one who eats and sleeps in completely different buildings but not somebody who eats in one room and sleeps in another. It would therefore seem that ישיבה boys who eat all of their meals in a cafeteria should have a special place set aside to light in the cafeteria.