

B"H

DAY-TO-DAY HALACHIC GUIDE

CHANUKAH 5779

Includes Hei Teves and Tenth of Teves

From the Badatz
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DAY-TO-DAY HALACHIC GUIDE

Detailed instructions on the laws and customs for the days of Chanukah 5779

Includes the Laws and Customs of
Hei Teves and Tenth of Teves

Distilled from a series
of public shiurim delivered by
Horav **Yosef Yeshaya Braun** shlita
member of the Badatz of Crown Heights

Note: The times listed below are for Crown Heights only. Many factors influence the calculation of zmanim (halachic times) and it is not possible to achieve complete precision. It is therefore recommended to begin earlier than the time listed and not wait until the last minute (e.g., for the start of Shabbos), or to wait extra time when that is the appropriate precaution (e.g., the close of Shabbos).

The basic laws and customs presented below are derived from multiple sources. Due to a dearth of space and time they are presented without their references and halachic notes. Primary sources include: *Shulchan Aruch* and commentaries, *Sefer HaMinhagim Chabad*, *Luach Colel Chabad*, *Sichos* and *Igros Kodesh*.

The intention of this summary is to inform you of some of the relevant laws, not to replace each person's obligation to review the Halachos comprehensively. **Please note:** Specific laws are mentioned only the first time that they become relevant, although they may apply to subsequent dates as well.

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This guide incorporates several reminders about laws that will only be applicable during the Era of Redemption, with the hope that Moshiach will come speedily, allowing us to implement these laws in practice. The concept of studying these *halachos* is based on several *sichos*, some of which are quoted below:

“Hashem **begs** the Jewish people,” the Rebbe passionately stated, “to occupy themselves with the study of the laws of the sacrificial orders ... which [as our Sages state] is considered as if we had actually offered the sacrifices. This study will bring about the actual offerings because it brings [to quote the Rambam] ‘King Moshiach [who] will build the Beis Hamikdash ... and restore the laws of the Torah ... so that the Jewish people will again offer the sacrifices ... in accordance with all the *mitzvos* that are stated in the Torah,’ speedily, in our time – literally! [Then, to quote the festival liturgy] ‘We will offer before You there the offerings of our obligations ... in accordance with the commandments of Your will.’”¹

“We must experience greater longing and yearning for the Redemption,” the Rebbe demanded. “One of the ways this is accomplished is through studying

1) Likkutei Sichos, vol. 18, p. 341 – Emphasis in original

more Torah on the subjects of the Redemption and the Beis Hamikdash. Studying these topics greatly hastens their actual realization, to the extent that we will go directly from studying these subjects to greet our righteous Moshiach. We will inform him, ‘We have just completed studying the laws associated with your coming!’ An additional motivation to study these laws is that we must expect Moshiach’s arrival each and every day. In that case, these laws [concerning the Redemption and the Beis Hamikdash] are matters that every Jew—men and women alike—must know in order to put them into practical use on a daily basis, such as many of the laws of the offerings.”²

2) from a *sichah* addressed to N’shei uB’nos Chabad – Sefer HaSichos 5750, vol. 2, p. 485

FRIDAY, KISLEV 22

Shulchan Aruch states that although a person hears the entire Torah read in Shul on Shabbos morning, he also needs to read it himself every week. We recite *shnayim mikra ve'echad targum*, i.e. we read twice each verse and once the commentary of Onkelos. It is customary to do this Friday after chatzos, midday. The best way to fulfill this *mitzvah* is to ensure that the reading has been completed before starting the Shabbos morning meal, and preferably even before the start of Shacharis.

One is obligated to check his pockets on *erev* Shabbos before the onset of Shabbos. This is especially important if he wore the same Shabbos / Yom Tov clothing this week in honor of *Yud Tes - Chof* Kislev.

SHABBOS PARASHAS VAYESHEV, KISLEV 23, SHABBOS MEVORCHIM TEVES

Early on Shabbos morning, the entire book of Tehillim is read. Today is a day to *farbreng*.

The blessing over the coming month of Teves is recited. This month, the *molad* will occur on next Friday night, at 10:29 pm, plus 13 (out of eighteen) *chalakim*. Rosh Chodesh Teves will be on Shabbos and Sunday.

Avha-rachamim is not recited before Musaf, however *tzidkasecha tzedek* is recited during Minchah, as on an ordinary Shabbos.

CHANUKAH PREPARATIONS

The best way to perform the *mitzvah* of kindling the Chanukah lights is to obtain olive oil because it produces a pure, clear and steady flame; it is easily drawn by the wick; and it was the fuel with which the miracle of the Chanukah originally occurred.

All other types of oil are also fine to use in a Chanukah menorah, except on Shabbos Chanukah (there are conflicting opinions about the kinds of oil permitted on Shabbos). Nevertheless, it is a greater mitzvah to use oils that offer pure, clean lights.

Buyers beware! Fake olive oil is currently being sold in stores. The bogus oil is more yellow, less bitter and runnier than actual olive oil, but gives off an unpleasant smell when lit. When heated, olive oil will emit a strong olive smell, but will not bubble or foam when used for frying and does not smoke. It is easy to tell a fake by placing a sample in the fridge alongside a sample of genuine olive oil. The olive oil will become thicker and stickier than the fake. It is better not to rely on this experimental evidence, but to purchase oil that is verified as 100% olive oil by a reputable certification agency.

Other *hiddurim* (enhancements) relating to the olive oil include using a product that is extra virgin —and not labeled “pomace,” which includes pulp, food-grade (although be aware that oil may be marked “for lighting” so as not to be subjected to a food tax) and liquid (not congealed or frozen).

The best way to perform the mitzvah is to obtain cotton wool or linen thread for wicks. Some have the *hiddur* of using only untreated wicks, so that the first light should be from the burning oil and not the wax that coats the wicks. Any other type of material is also fine. (Some coat their wicks in oil or singe them in preparation for lighting. The thickness and placement of the wicks should be carefully considered, so that the light continues to burn for the appropriate amount of time.)

According to Halachah, a wax candle is considered to be a wick in a wax container. Technically, there is no need to insert the candle into a holder—a menorah. Nevertheless, Chazal instructed that mitzvos be performed in a beautiful manner, in the spirit of *Zeh*

Keili ve-anveihu (“This is my G-d and I will glorify Him”) and this instruction extends to the rabbinic mitzvah of Chanukah. It is therefore important to obtain a beautiful menorah, ideally made of metal. Those who can afford it should obtain a menorah made of precious metal such as silver, all for the greater splendor of the mitzvah. (Some extend this *hiddur* and do not use glass cups in their menorah so that the lights are contained within the silver vessel itself.)

It is the Chabad custom to use a beeswax candle for the *shamash*.

In *Likkutei Sichos*, the Rebbe states, “There is basis for suggesting that menorahs that are designed for use on Chanukah should be fashioned with straight, diagonal branches...why change the true design of the original menorah, whose branches were diagonal and not curved?”¹

The Rambam writes: “The Chanukah lights are an extremely precious mitzvah. Be extra careful in observing this mitzvah, in order to publicize the miracle and to praise G-d and thank Him for the miracles that He performed for us.”

Men and women are equally obligated in the mitzvah of kindling the Chanukah lights. Even a pauper who survives on *tzedakah* is expected to sell their garment if needed to purchase oil for his menorah.

A household member may fulfill their obligation through the menorah that is lit by the head of his household. In that case, listen to the blessing and respond *amen*, but do not respond *baruch hu u-varuch shemo*.

Note: While it seems logical that someone who does not have a home is not obligated to purchase or rent a home for the sake of observing this mitzvah,

1) vol. 21, p. 169, note 44

nevertheless, it is equally obvious that due to the preciousness of the mitzvah, we should not cause it to be neglected deliberately. Therefore, **if you intend to travel, organize your schedule in advance so that you will be able to personally light the menorah at its proper time in your own living quarters.** It is a far greater mitzvah to personally light the menorah rather than delegate it to an emissary.

A guest should light the menorah wherever they are staying. However, if that location will no longer be considered their place during the halachic time for lighting—for example, if someone permanently leaves one temporary location immediately after lighting, and now travels elsewhere—there is grave doubt as to whether they have fulfilled their obligation.

(There is actually a halachic debate regarding the need to buy or rent a home for the sake of this mitzvah. Some have pointed to the words of Rambam: “There are positive commandments for which one is obligated to try to fulfill and actively pursue them ... these are referred to as *chovah*, because one is obligated to find a way to fulfill them, one way or another. Then there are mitzvos that are not obligatory and are comparable to *reshus*, optional instructions. Take, for example, the mitzvos of mezuzah and *ma’akeh* [fencing an open rooftop]. One is not obligated to live in a house that meets the requirements for a mezuzah just in order to put up a mezuzah. If he wishes, he may spend his entire life living in a tent or on a ship. Nor must he build a home just in order to erect a fence along its roof ... Then there are [non-biblical] mitzvos that are obligatory according to Rabbinical decree, such as kindling the Chanukah lights.” A similar deduction can be made from the words of Tosefos.²)

2) Sukkah 46a, s.v. *ha-ro'eh sukkah*

Those organizing Chanukah parties for friends or relatives should time and host these events at a location and hour that will allow the participants to light their own menorahs at the correct time **in their own homes**. It is therefore best to avoid arranging parties in the early hours of the evening, from a half hour before sunset until after nightfall; since the participants are not actually staying at the location in which the party is held, they cannot fulfill their obligation by lighting the *menorah* at that location. It is also forbidden to sit down to a meal during the half hour prior to kindling time.

On the eve of Ches Teves 5747, the Rebbe stated, “As is known, the word *goshnah* (lit., to Goshen) in the phrase ‘*He sent Yehudah ahead of him, to Yosef, to direct him to Goshen*’³ is comprised of the four letters that appear on the *dreidel*, which form the acronym of *neis gadol hayah sham* (A great miracle happened there). It has been observed that the Rebbeim also used *dreidels* in their homes. As is known, there are numerous allusions contained in the *dreidel* and all of its details, as described in the books that elucidate the reasons behind Jewish customs (and: ‘Jewish customs are Torah’).” This concept is also explained in *Sefer HaSichos* 5748.⁴ Also see *Likkutei Sichos* and *Igros Kodesh*.⁵

MENORAH LIGHTING TIMES FOR BROOKLYN, NY

Plag Hamincha (lit., half of Mincha) is the earliest possible time to light candles for public lightings (and for individuals in extenuating circumstances). The best time to light is after *shkiah* (sunset), between Mincha and Maariv, except Friday, when Chanukah candles are lit immediately prior to lighting Shabbos

3) Bereishis 46:28

4) p. 260, fn. 32

5) Likkutei Sichos vol. 12, notes at foot of p. 33; Igros Kodesh vol. 9, p. 66

candles and *motzoei Shabbos*, when candles are lit after havdallah. If unable to light at that time, it is okay to light until *chatzos* (halachic midnight), as long as the family has not gone to sleep. *B'dieved* (with no other recourse), candles may be lit anytime at night, if family members are awake.

Note: The times for *shkiah* listed below are the times that appear in the calendars (sunset at sea level). For purposes of menorah lighting, add several minutes. In this context, several minutes should also be added to the times for *plag haminchah*.

Sunday, Kislev 24 (December 2), First Night of Chanukah

Plag Haminchah - 3:30 pm

Shkiah - 4:28 pm

Chatzos - 11:45 pm

Monday, Kislev 25 (December 3), Second Night of Chanukah

Plag Haminchah - 3:30 pm

Shkiah - 4:28 pm

Chatzos - 11:45 pm

Tuesday, Kislev 26 (December 4), Third Night of Chanukah

Plag Haminchah - 3:30 pm

Shkiah - 4:28 pm

Chatzos - 11:46 pm

Wednesday, Kislev 27 (December 5), Fourth Night of Chanukah

Plag Haminchah - 3:30 pm

Shkiah - 4:28 pm

Chatzos - 11:46 pm

Thursday, Kislev 28 (December 6), Fifth Night of Chanukah

Plag Haminchah - 3:30 pm

Shkiah - 4:28 pm

Chatzos - 11:47 pm

Friday, Kislev 29 (December 7), Sixth Night of Chanukah

Plag Haminchah – 3:30 pm

Shabbos Candles – 4:10 pm (18 minutes before sunset)

Motzoei Shabbos, Eve of Teves 1 (December 8), Seventh Night of Chanukah

Shabbos Ends – 5:14 pm

Chatzos – 11:48 pm

Sunday, Teves 1 (December 9), Eighth Night of Chanukah

Plag Haminchah – 3:30 pm

Shkiah – 4:28 pm

Chatzos – 11:48 pm

SUNDAY, KISLEV 24, EREV CHANUKAH

Tachnun is not recited during Mincha.

In order to further publicize the miracle, we light a menorah in shul and recite the appropriate blessings. Since this lighting is for publicity's sake, there must be at least a *minyan* present while the candles burn—preferably at the time that the blessings are recited.

The shul's menorah should be on the southern wall, its lamps stretching from east to west. It should be placed on a platform to make it visible (higher than ten *tefachim* from the floor, in contrast to the home menorah which should be lower). In 770, it is customary for the one lighting the *menorah* to stand facing south.

It is best to prepare the *menorah* before (not during) Mincha, to avoid distracting those who are praying.

It is the Chabad custom to light the shul menorah towards the conclusion of Minchah before reciting *aleinu*. There is no need to wait until *shkiah* (sunset); it can be kindled any time after *plag haminchah*. The

chazzan recites three blessings; since it is the first time, *shehechyanu* is recited. A mourner should not light the shul menorah on the first night of Chanukah for this reason.

The lamps of the menorah should not be kindled until all the blessings are fully concluded.

On the first night of Chanukah, the first right-hand lamp of the menorah is kindled.

Attending a menorah lighting in Shul or at an outdoor public event does not dispense with each person's obligation to kindle a menorah at home. Even the *chazzan* who lit the Shul menorah must light again upon returning home and he must repeat all the blessings. If there is no one at the *chazzan's* home observing and fulfilling their obligation through his private menorah lighting, he should only repeat the first two blessings—not the blessing of *shehechyanu*.

SUNDAY NIGHT, EVE OF KISLEV 25, FIRST NIGHT OF CHANUKAH

The time and place for the menorah lighting were originally established for maximum public exposure. Although it has become customary to light the menorah indoors and not in an entrance facing the street (in view of pedestrians), it is nevertheless appropriate to light at the correct time.

According to Chabad custom, we light the menorah at home immediately after the true moment of *shkiah*, between Minchah and Maariv on each night of Chanukah except for *erev Shabbos* (which requires an earlier lighting) and *motzoei Shabbos* (which requires a delayed lighting).

It is the Chabad custom to fill the menorah with sufficient fuel to burn for at least fifty minutes, so that it remains lit for half an hour after nightfall.

It is forbidden to begin a *melachah* (time-consuming work) or a meal within a half-hour of the proper kindling time. Snacking is permitted, if necessary, on less than the meal-appropriate amount of hamotzi or mezonos—or on fruit and other non-mezonos foods, even in larger quantities. If you began a prohibited activity you must stop. Some opinions maintain that studying Torah is only prohibited once the proper time of kindling has arrived. It is recommended to appoint someone who will remind you to light the menorah.

If you did not light the menorah at the appropriate time, you may do so later, provided that there is still pedestrian traffic outside, established as a half-hour after the appropriate time. If this time has elapsed, you must at least attempt to light the menorah before halachic midnight. If this is not an option, you may light the menorah during the night, any time before dawn, provided that other members of the household are awake to observe the lighting. It is worth rousing them from their sleep so that you can recite the blessings. If they are asleep, you may light the menorah without the blessings.

If you know in advance that you will be unable to light the menorah on time, it is possible to light it earlier—any time after *plag haminchah*. In that case, make certain that the menorah holds sufficient fuel to continue burning until a half-hour after nightfall. However, there are varying opinions regarding reciting the blessings at this early hour. Some authorities prefer that you appoint a representative to light the menorah at the proper time on your behalf rather than light early. In the final analysis, it is far better to personally light the menorah and to recite the blessings—even if it can be done only later at night—than to appoint a representative or to light earlier in the day without the blessings.

It is not Chabad custom to wear Shabbos clothing

when lighting the menorah, however a *gartel* is worn.

If you are unable to light the menorah before the time for Maariv, you should first recite Maariv and only then light your menorah.

It is the custom of the Chabad Rebbeim to position the menorah in a doorway to a room in the home, and not to place it on a windowsill facing the outside.

Light the menorah in the room in which meals are consumed on a regular basis, if there is a choice of multiple rooms or even homes. When visiting a friend, even for a meal, return home to light the menorah.

Children are trained to personally light their own menorahs. They should begin from the earliest possible age. It is preferable for each child to light at the doorway to his own bedroom. Naturally, all safety measures should be in place for this event. See the excerpt from the Rebbe, below.

The Rebbe instructs, “In addition to explaining the significance of lighting the Chanukah menorah to children, it is advisable for children to have a menorah situated at the entrance to their rooms. The lighting should take place there as well. Children are impressed by the Chanukah lighting experience to a far greater degree when it is held at the entrances to their own rooms. The menorah’s message enters deeper into their souls and their *chinuch* (Jewish education) is thereby advanced. The *chinuch* (alt. meaning: inauguration) of their bedrooms is also advanced, for every child’s room should serve as a *mikdash me’at* (a miniature Beis Hamikdash). This experience reflects and alludes to the *chinuch* of the Beis Hamikdash (the re-inauguration of the Second Temple by the Maccabees) that is

commemorated with the festival of Chanukah.”⁶

In answer to questions whether girls are included in the above directive, the Rebbe suggests that parents’ overriding principle in making educational decisions should be the effect any given experience will have on their particular child: will implementing the practice indeed advance his or her *chinuch*?⁷

Yeshivah *bachurim* should light the menorah at the entrance to their dorm rooms. Needless to say, they should observe all fire safety procedures.

Women are equally obligated in this mitzvah. The custom in the homes of the Chabad Rebbeim is that women do not light their own menorahs, but fulfill their obligation through their fathers lighting. Married women fulfill their obligation via their husbands. A lady who is unmarried or whose husband will not be lighting in their home must kindle the flames personally or via a representative.

Girls studying in seminaries away from home must therefore fulfill the mitzvah where they presently live. However, one girl may be appointed as a representative to light a menorah on behalf of them all.

The *Taz* states, “In the case of one who lives in town and happens to leave his home to eat in a friend’s home, it is obvious that he should not abandon [lighting the menorah at] his home by [instead] lighting the menorah in his friend’s home, at which he eats on a one-time basis. Rather, he should return to his own home to light the *menorah* there ... It makes no sense to light in the location where he spends an hour or two over a meal instead of at his own home. It is as if he happened to be standing in the street when the time for lighting arrived – it is clearly inappropriate

6) Sefer HaSichos 5748, p. 162

7) Hisva’aduyos 5748, vol. 2, p. 91. For further elaboration, see p. 133.

for him to light in the street! True, we observe a few people who eat at the home of others and then send someone to fetch their menorahs for them so that they can light there [at their friend's home]... but they are making an error and fail to understand what is expected from them.”⁸

The Rebbe states: “The [Frierdiker] Rebbe related that when his father the Rebbe [Rashab] had to leave home before Chanukah, he instructed his wife, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, to personally light her own menorah, although she would listen to the blessings recited by one of the men.”⁹

For the sake of lending the greatest possible publicity to the miracle, gather the entire household to attend the menorah lighting. It is worth lighting close to suppertime, when the family naturally gathers. If no one is home at the time for lighting, it is permitted to wait until the household members arrive. Ideally, everyone should be present, but the lighting may take place even if one or more members are missing.

It is a mitzvah to place the menorah within a *tefach* (handbreadth) of the left doorpost. If there is no mezuzah on the right doorpost, the menorah should be placed on the right, whether the doorway does not require a mezuzah, or it does but is nevertheless lacking one.

It is the Chabad custom to position the menorah within the actual space of the doorway, alongside the width of its doorposts, and to place it on a somewhat lower object such as chair, without concern for the direction of the branches—whether they stretch from east to west or north to south.

8) This topic is elaborated in the Day-by-Day Halachic Guide (Hebrew) Chanukah 5776, quoting the views of *Bach*, *Magen Avraham* and *Admor Hazaken*, and we also reported on the practice of the Rebbe Rashab.

9) Likkutei Sichos, vol. 30, p. 312

The lights of the menorah must be situated at least three *tefachim* (approximately 10 inches) from the floor but no higher than ten *tefachim* (approximately 31 inches). It is not the Chabad custom to specifically position them between seven and ten *tefachim*, or, alternatively, close to three. In the event that one did light the menorah above ten *tefachim* he has fulfilled his obligation, but at twenty *amos* (approximately 30 feet) or higher it must be relit.

When more than one menorah is placed in an identical location, they should have a *heker* (distinguishing feature) such as individual menorahs, spaced in a way that allows the viewer to easily observe how many lights each menorah contains. It should not appear as one single menorah.

If a number of people are lighting menorahs in different locations in a house, each *menorah* must have its own *shamash* light. This applies even if there is already a candle [for general illumination] on the table. There are numerous reasons, including mystical ones, for lighting a *shamash*. Likewise, there are sources that refer to a total of forty-four lights over the course of Chanukah, a number that includes using a *shamash* each day]. Therefore, there is room to be *mehader* that even if numerous people light at the identical location with a *heker*, each person should light a separate *shamash*.)

On the first night of Chanukah, one lamp is lit to the extreme right of the menorah.

Law of the Redemption: In the current era, Halachah follows Beis Hillel, who holds that the fewest number of lights are lit on the first night of Chanukah and that the number of lights steadily *increases* on each subsequent night. The opinion of Beis Shamai is that the greatest number of lights is lit on the first night of Chanukah and that they steadily *diminish* on each subsequent night. As a result, eight lights are lit on the first

night (instead of just one), seven on the second night, six on the third, and so on.

The Rebbe asks: “This requires further illumination: In the era of the Redemption, Halachah will follow the opinion of Beis Shamai—when Moshiach first arrives, will the halachah immediately switch to the views of Beis Shamai? If so, then this year, we will need to light eight candles on the first night of Chanukah. Accordingly, our Chanukah preparations will have to reflect this.”¹⁰

According to the Rebbe’s explanation in *Sichas Simchas Torah* 5752, in the initial stage of the Redemption, the law will follow the view of Beis Shamai, whereas in the advanced stage of Redemption, the law will follow both Beis Hillel as well as Beis Shamai. At that time, the physical world will be the recipient of the revelation of *Atzmus*, Hashem’s Essence. He is able to tolerate impossibilities, and He considers opposing views of our Sages as equally valid divine disclosures. The impossibility of following both views will then become possible, and that will become the practical law.¹¹

10) *Sichas Erev Chanukah* 5750. See, however, *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach* 5752, that “at that time, we will experience the perfection of the concept of steadily increasing from one day to the next.”

11) Note that according to one version of our Sages’ teaching, “All the festivals will be nullified in the future era, except for Chanukah and Purim,” as quoted in *Igeres HaTi’ul*, *Derush Ois Mem*, and in *Sefer HaChayim* (vol. 3, beginning of ch. 7)– also see *Likkutei Sichos* (vol. 5, p. 172, fn. 4). See *Ateres Zahav* (676), that the term used in the blessing over the *menorah* – *le-hadlik*, “to kindle,” refers to the kindling of the Chanukah lights in the future era. On the other hand, *Maggid Meisharim*, *Parashas Vayakhel*, seems to imply that in the future era only the verbal recounting of the miracle will be observed. See *Ben Ish Chayil* (vol. 2, *Derush Alef LeShabbos Shuvah*). It is also necessary to clarify the concept of lighting candles at night in the future era. According to *Shemos Rabbah* (ch. 18, 11), “In the future era, night will become day, as it is stated, ‘The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun.’” Note the statement in *Sha’alos*

The *shamash* must be lit before reciting the blessings, so that it is available for kindling the lamps immediately upon concluding the blessings.

The three blessings are: (1) *le-hadlik neir Chanukah* (2) *she-asa nissim la-avoseinu* and (3) *shehechiyanu*. The menorah is kindled only after reciting the blessings. The *shamash* must be held beside the wick until the majority of the tip is aflame. After the kindling is completed, *Haneiros halalu* is recited.

Someone who recited the blessings previously (as the *chazzan* in Shul, for example, or while doing *mivtzaim*) must repeat them when lighting his own menorah at home. He should not repeat the third blessing (*shehechiyanu*) unless others fulfill their obligation through him.

Safety Alert: The Torah insists that protecting lives should be taken even more seriously than religious observance: Children must not be permitted uncontrolled access to a lit menorah or to matches and the like. Nor should a lit menorah be left unattended without adequate safety precautions.

It is customary to remain beside the menorah for the first half-hour after its kindling. However, if you are not able to remain, you should still light on time rather than postpone it. Nevertheless, make an effort to at least linger briefly before abandoning a newly-lit menorah. The best option when forced to leave is to appoint someone else to continue watching the menorah until end of the thirty minutes.

If a light has extinguished during the fifty minutes (required according to Chabad custom) it should be relit without a blessing. If the menorah remains lit beyond this minimum time, it may be moved. Candles that remain lit may also be extinguished after fifty minutes, if necessary.¹²

u'Teshuvos Be'eir Moshe (vol. 8, 17).

12) Some are stringent not to extinguish the candles at all.

It is forbidden to make use of the illumination provided by the Chanukah lights.¹³ The flames may not be used even to light a *shamash*. Even after the allotted time has passed, do not make use of the light provided by the Chanukah lights.

It is customary for women to refrain from chores for fifty minutes after kindling. (According to some authorities, this applies to men as well.) After fifty minutes, women may work as they wish—provided they do not perform activities in front of the menorah. According to custom, only sewing, knitting, laundering, ironing and the like must be avoided. Other activities, such as sweeping and cleaning the house or cooking and baking may be performed. Take note of the following statement of the Rebbe:

The significance of women customarily refraining from chores while the candles remain lit is that women internalize the concept and message of the burning Chanukah lights to the degree that they shed any association with mundane chores.¹⁴

The Rebbe Rashab would sit in proximity to the Chanukah lights and study Torah. Naturally, he avoided making use of the lights themselves. As mentioned in numerous *sichos*, the Rebbe saw in this a directive to increase in Torah study during Chanukah.

For directives regarding Chanukah *gelt*, see the entries below for the fifth night of Chanukah. There, the directive to give Chanukah *gelt* on each night of Chanukah is discussed.

13) According to a number of opinions, this includes the light of the *shamash*. Another candle or electric light must be present in the vicinity of the menorah in order to provide general illumination.

14) *Michtav Leil Chanukah*, published in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 25, p. 512. See *Tur Barekes*, *Orach Chaim*, 670; *Sefer HaMitzvos* (Tzemach Tzedek), *Mitzvas Neir Chanukah* beg. ch. 3 (*Derech Mitzvosecha* 74a).

It is customary to give additional *tzedakah* during Chanukah.

During Maariv, *V'al hanissim* is inserted into the Amidah.

The gabbai should **not** interject between the blessing of *hashkiveinu* and the start of the Amidah in order to announce “*V'al hanissim!*” for the benefit of the congregation.

If you forgot to recite *V'al hanissim* during the Amidah, see footnote.¹⁵

Mivtza Chanukah: Every effort should be expended to ensure that a Chanukah menorah is lit in each Jewish household, and that all men including very young children should personally light a menorah.

Menorahs should be lit in the most public and central locations to further publicize the miracle of Chanukah. Such public events should be utilized to urge all participants to light their own menorahs at home. It is best to clearly announce that no one fulfills their obligation with a public lighting—they must also light at home.

A working man who lights a public menorah at his office for the sake of publicizing the miracle should not recite the blessings unless it is positioned where at least ten Jews will view it within a half-hour.

Rambam states that the days of Chanukah are days of joy. The Rema qualifies that “it is partially a mitzvah to increase in meals” during Chanukah. The prevailing custom is to add in festive meals during

15) If you forgot to recite *V'al hanissim* during the Amidah but recall the omission before pronouncing Hashem's name in the blessing of *ha-tov shimcha*, you should return to the correct place for *V'al hanissim* and continue from there. If you already said Hashem's name, you should not return at all. (In that case, some say to insert it before reciting the second *yihyu le-ratzon*, by saying: *ha-rachaman hu ya-aseh lanu nissim, kemo she-asah la-avoseinu, ba-yamim ha-heim bi-zman ha-zeh, bimei Matisyahu...leshimcha ha-gadol.*)

Chanukah. It is best to sing and recount Hashem's praises for the miracles that He made for our ancestors during these meals, which will guarantee that the meals are considered *seudos mitzvah* according to all opinions.

In numerous *sichos*, the Rebbe discusses the requirement to rejoice on Chanukah. Despite the halachic dispute as to whether rejoicing is actually required or not, the Rebbe encourages an all-out observance of the custom—*mehadrin min hamehadrin*. Included in this, the Rebbe explains, is holding *farbrengens* with fellow Chassidim, family or friends, and reaching positive resolutions for the future.

It is customary to serve cheese and milk products during Chanukah.

It is customary to serve foods that are prepared with oil in order to recall the miracle of the oil. In *Sefer Hasichos* 5752, the Rebbe explains this custom at length.¹⁶

In *birchas hamazon*, the *V'al hanissim* prayer is inserted into the blessing of *nodeh lecha*. If you forgot to recite *V'al hanissim* in *birchas ha-mazon*, see footnote¹⁷.

On Shabbos *Parashas Vayeishev* 5752, the Rebbe stated, "Seeing that we have already accomplished all that was required and nevertheless the

16) p. 196

17) If you forgot to recite *V'al hanissim* but realized the omission before pronouncing Hashem's name at the conclusion of the following blessing (*al ha-aretz ve-al ha-mazon*), return to the correct place for reciting *V'al hanissim* and continue from there. If you realized after pronouncing Hashem's name, do not return at all, because there is no binding obligation to recite *V'al hanissim* in *birchas ha-mazon*. If you wish—and this is the appropriate procedure to follow—upon reaching the section for adding a *ha-rachaman* (right before *ha-rachaman hu ye-zakeinu*), recite: *ha-rachaman hu ya-aseh lanu nissim, kemo she-asah la-avoseinu, ba-yamim ha-heim bi-zman ha-zeh, bimei Matisyahu...leshimcha ha-gadol*.

Redemption has not yet arrived, it is extremely appropriate to ‘publicize the miracle,’ meaning that we should publicize the miracles that Hashem performs for us, broadcasting this awareness to ourselves and to others in every location. We should do so with the understanding that publicizing Hashem’s miracles brings the true and complete Redemption. This effort should be stepped up during Chanukah—a festival whose entire purpose is to publicize Hashem’s miracles.

“In addition to all of our other activities, including *mitvza* Chanukah, we should hold *chassidishe farbrengens* on each day of Chanukah. Naturally, these events may be renamed to fit the location and the audience—‘When you visit a city, follow its local customs.’ At these *farbrengens*, we should discuss words of Torah, both *nigleh* and *pnimius* and make positive resolutions in all matters of Torah and *mitzvos*, so that there is a steady increase—in a manner reflecting the steadily increasing lights of the menorah. Above all, we must use these events to discuss and publicize miracles that occur nowadays—in the spirit of the Chanukah blessing, *ba-yamim ha-heim bizman ha-zeh*, ‘In those days [of yore as well as] in the current era.’”¹⁸

MONDAY, KISLEV 25, FIRST DAY OF CHANUKAH

In the morning, it is customary to kindle the shul menorah without a blessing and to keep it alight for the duration of Shacharis. Use a shamash for this lighting.

In 5750, the Rebbe instructed, “To further increase the impact of the Chanukah lights, it is appropriate to keep the menorah that is lit in shul (where everyone

18) *Sefer HaSichos*

gathers) burning around the clock, provided that there is no concern of children playing with fire.”

Do not skip V'al hanissim in order to complete the Amidah in time to respond to kedushah or modim together with the congregation.

The complete Hallel is recited on each day of Chanukah, followed by chatzi kaddish and a Torah reading comprised of three aliyos from the Parashas Naso.

The Sages instituted the recital of Hallel during Chanukah as a binding obligation. It is therefore recited even in a house of mourning, because the mourner himself must also recite this hallel.

Do not verbally interrupt the recitation of Hallel to speak of other matters, except for those matter for which it is permitted to interrupt the blessing preceding the recitation of the shema.

An avel (within his period of mourning) may lead the congregation throughout Chanukah, with the exception of Hallel, for which someone else must take over. The avel resumes his position as chazzan immediately, and he recites the chatzi kaddish that follows Hallel.

It is forbidden to fast or to deliver a eulogy during Chanukah. The only exception is a ta'anis chalom (a fast for a deeply unsettling dream). Unlike Chol Hamoed, all forms of work may be performed during Chanukah.

A law that will become relevant with the Redemption: The following statement is recorded in Sha'alos u'Teshuvos Tzafnas Panei'ach HaChadashos (vol. 1, 45): “...May we speedily merit the coming of our righteous Moshiach and the true Redemption! Then will be revealed to us the megillah that the elders of Beis Shamai

and Beis Hillel inscribed regarding the events of Chanukah, which occurred in their own times. It is only because there were no prophets that they were unable to create an official megillah [to be read by all Jews, and although they personally recorded the events], it was not given over to be written [for public use], as explained in Yoma 29a. G-d willing, in the future era, soon, the prophets will be revealed to us and this megillah will be revealed to us!”¹⁹

MONDAY NIGHT, EVE OF KISLEV 26, SECOND NIGHT OF CHANUKAH

The Alter Rebbe returned from his incarceration in Petersburg to his home in Vitebsk on the second night of Chanukah, following his original liberation in 5559 (1798). He remained in Vitebsk for the remainder of Chanukah.

Sefer HaMinhagim Chabad records that “it is customary to use fresh wicks on each night of Chanukah. Other opinions differ, insisting that there is no need for fresh wicks and that used wicks are easier to light. So far, I have been unable to clarify the [Previous] Rebbe’s custom.”

Nevertheless, in a *sichah* of Shabbos *Parashas Vayeishev* 5716, the Rebbe states that the Previous Rebbe reused his wicks and he derives a lesson from this.²⁰

The third blessing of *shehechiyanu* is only recited the first night of Chanukah; on the second night only the first two blessings are said. However, someone who has not yet kindled a menorah this Chanukah must recite *shehechiyanu* whenever he first lights a menorah. (This is typically the case

19) See *Halachos Gedolos*, *Hilchos Soferim*, 75; *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 15, p. 368, fn. 17; and *Sichas Shabbos Parashas Vayeishev* 5750 (in *Sefer HaSichos*).

20) See also *Kuntres BaKodesh Penimah*, p. 24

when introducing a Jew to Chanukah on *mivtzaim*.)

When preparing the menorah on the second night of Chanukah, a new lamp is added to the left of the previous night's lamp. Begin kindling the menorah with the newest lamp. It is customary to be stringent and to avoid lighting one Chanukah lamp from another.

After concluding to kindle **all** the lamps, *Haneiros halalu* is recited.

TUESDAY, KISLEV 26, SECOND DAY OF CHANUKAH

The prayers of today and the remaining days of Chanukah (except Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh) are the same as yesterday's. The order of Torah reading for each day of Chanukah is recorded in the *Siddur*.

TUESDAY NIGHT, EVE OF KISLEV 27, THIRD NIGHT OF CHANUKAH

Tonight marks sixty days since the onset of the Tishrei *tekufah* (autumn season), and therefore, outside Eretz Yisroel, the winter prayer of *v'sein tal u'matar li'verachah* is said in the Amidah in the blessing of *bareich aleinu*. This phrase replaces *v'sein berachah*, which is recited throughout the summer months. The winter phrase will continue to be recited on all weekdays until (and including) the *Minchah* service of *erev* Pesach.

The *gabbai* should **not** make an announcement between the blessing of *hashkiveinu* and the start of the Amidah reminding the congregation to say *tal u'matar*.

There are a number of laws that apply in case *v'sein tal u'matar* (or even just the word *u'matar*) was not said:

1) If we realized the error before pronouncing Hashem's name at the end of the blessing of *mevareich ha'shanim*, we go back to the words *v'sein tal u'matar*.

2) If we have already recited Hashem's name in *mevareich ha'shanim*, we add the words *v'sein tal u'matar li'verachah* immediately after *mevareich ha'shanim*, before beginning the following blessing of *tekah be'shofar*.

3) If we began *tekah be'shofar*, we add the words *v'sein tal u'matar li'verachah* in the blessing of *shema koleinu* immediately after the words *reikam al teshiveinu*, then we continue *ki ata shomei'a* etc.

4) If we already pronounced Hashem's name at the conclusion of *shema koleinu*, we add the words *v'sein tal u'matar li'verachah* immediately after that blessing (after the words *shomei'a tefillah*), before beginning *retzei*.

5) If we already began *retzei*, then as long as we have not taken three steps back at the conclusion of the Amidah, we return to *bareich aleinu* and continue from there.

6) If we concluded the Amidah by taking three steps back, or even if we recited the second *yihyu le'ratzon* (which is considered the conclusion of the Amidah), we must repeat the entire Amidah.

7) If we realized our error only at the time of the next prayer service, we recite the Amidah of that service twice-the first time for the current service and the second time as a way to make up for the invalid Amidah of the previous service. However, if we omitted *v'sein tal u'matar* in the *Minchah* service of *erev Shabbos*, we do not recite the Shabbos Amidah of *Maariv* twice. The same law applies if we omitted *v'sein tal u'matar* in the *Minchah* service of *erev Pesach*.

The calculation of sixty days from the onset of the Tishrei season is not measured down to the exact hour. We begin reciting the prayer for rain, *v'sein tal u'matar*, at the very first prayer of the sixtieth day, even though sixty full days haven't yet completed. The halachic authorities are uncertain in the case of one who omitted *v'sein tal u'matar* before the precise hour at which the sixty days expires has arrived - meaning, during Maariv tonight. In such a case, we repeat the entire Amidah on condition that if we are not technically required to do so by halachah it should be considered a *nedavah* (voluntary) and not a *chovah* (obligatory).

The following is a general principle in halachah: For thirty days after a seasonal change in a prayer, if we are in doubt whether we said the correct version, we must assume that we said the previous, incorrect one. However, after thirty days have elapsed (this year, beginning from Maariv on the eve of Teves 27 (Jan. 4), we can assume that we have grown accustomed to the new version, i.e. reciting *v'sein tal u'matar* and did so in this instance as well²¹.

WEDNESDAY, KISLEV 27, THIRD DAY OF CHANUKAH

Today is the anniversary of the Alter Rebbe's release from his second incarceration, in the year 5561 (1800).

THURSDAY, KISLEV 28, FOURTH DAY OF CHANUKAH

On this date, King Yehoyakim burned the original *megillas eichah* that Yirmiyahu haNavi had dictated to his disciple, the prophet

21) See at length in the letter from the Secretariat of the Badatz, dated Friday *Parashas Vayechi* 5775, which appeared then in the Badatz bulletin board in 770

Baruch, foretelling the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash.²²

THURSDAY NIGHT, EVE OF KISLEV 29, FIFTH NIGHT OF CHANUKAH

It is customary among Chassidim to celebrate the fifth night of Chanukah, because one account of the Alter Rebbe's liberation from his second incarceration in 5561 (1800) sets the fifth night of Chanukah as the date of his release. The Rebbe suggests that various stages in his liberation occurred on the third and the fifth night of Chanukah.

The Rebbe Rashab would distribute Chanukah *gelt* on the fourth or fifth night of Chanukah. In 5748, the Rebbe instructed that Chanukah *gelt* be given on each night of Chanukah with the exception of Shabbos, and that additional *gelt* be given on the fourth and fifth nights.

In a number of *sichos*, the Rebbe encourages making the greatest fuss out of the Chanukah *gelt*. It should be given with great fanfare and excitement, in generous amounts, and in increasing amounts. The distribution of Chanukah *gelt* should be designed to make the children happy and excited to receive it. Although the entire Chanukah is a time of rejoicing and celebration, the children's delight at receiving Chanukah *gelt* should bring about extra *simcha*, to the point that children who have not yet received Chanukah *gelt* should be deeply impressed simply by hearing about the experiences of their friends who already received the *gelt* (or who were at least promised it). The Rebbe notes that it is customary for children to receive *gelt* from as many people as possible—in addition to a child's father, the other

22) Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim, 580. The commentaries point out that there are various versions as to the precise date of this event.

members of his family should give Chanukah *gelt* as well. Explain to the children that they are receiving Chanukah *gelt* so that they will further increase their Torah study and to enable them to give more *tzedakah*. “After all,” the Rebbe concludes, “What else is a Jewish child expected to do with money?”

The Rebbe often mentions giving coins or bills as Chanukah *gelt*.²³ However, there is a superiority in giving coins rather than bills from a *halachic* perspective, as the Rebbe explained during a Tzivos Hashem rally²⁴.

It has become customary in many communities for school children to deliver Chanukah *gelt* and other gifts to the teachers who teach them Torah.

FRIDAY, KISLEV 29, FIFTH DAY OF CHANUKAH, EREV SHABBOS, EREV ROSH CHODESH

Erev Rosh Chodesh is observed by many as *Yom Kippur katan*, a day of fasting and Selichos. Today, however, we are not permitted to fast or even recite Tachanun due to the joyous festival of Chanukah. In *Likkutei Sichos*, the Rebbe explains the association of this day to *teshuvah ila'ah*, the higher form of *teshuvah* that is beyond repentance for sins.²⁵

In today's reading of *shnayim mikra v'echad targum*,²⁶ the custom is to say all *Haftorahs* relevant to Shabbos. In accordance with the custom of the Chabad Rebbeim, the *Haftorah* of Mikeitz is read after completing *shnayim mikra ve-echad targum* on *erev* Shabbos, while the Torah portion from

23) For example, see the second *sichah* of *Yom Daled d'Chanukah* 5750 – addressed to Tzivos Hashem.

24) see *Sichas Neir Ches d'Chanukah* 5748

25) vol. 15, p. 545

26) The requirement to review the weekly Parashah, primarily on *erev* Shabbos, by reciting the Torah text twice and the (Onkelos) translation in Aramaic once.

shevi'i until the conclusion is read once again (in the manner of *shnayim mikra ve-echad targum*) on Shabbos morning, but this time it is followed by the *Haftorahs* of Shabbos Chanukah, Shabbos Rosh Chodesh, as well as *machar chodesh*.

Minchah is recited earlier than usual, because it precedes the lighting of the menorah. If there is no early *minyan* available, you should first light the menorah and then join the regular *minyan* for Minchah. The shul menorah is lit after Minchah — any time after *plag haminchah* (3:30 pm).

It is appropriate to complete all Shabbos preparations before lighting the menorah, so that the entire family can attend the lighting together. The menorah must be lit before the Shabbos candles and is therefore lit earlier than any other day of Chanukah. (Shabbos candle lighting time, eighteen minutes before *shkiah*, is at 4:10 pm). Chanukah candles can be lit any time after *plag haminchah*, although it is best to light it as close as possible to Shabbos candle lighting time.

Unlike all other days of Chanukah, it is not customary to linger beside the newly lit menorah for a half-hour.

An extra-large quantity of oil should be used today, so that the menorah continues to burn for at least fifty minutes after sunset. According to many opinions, someone who failed to use the appropriate amount of fuel, resulting in the lights being extinguished before the proper time, has not fulfilled his obligation.

If you realized after kindling the menorah that there is not sufficient oil, immediately extinguish the flame, add more fuel, and then rekindle the lamp without a blessing. If you realized the error only after personally accepting Shabbos—but it is still before *shkiah*—ask someone who has not yet accepted Shabbos to add the fuel. Similarly, if the menorah goes out before the onset of Shabbos, either rekindle

it yourself or ask someone else to do so if you already accepted Shabbos.

Before Shabbos, it is appropriate to place an object that is worth more than the flames of the menorah (such as a *challah*) on the tray upon which the menorah stands. This makes it permissible to move the tray during Shabbos. (Some authorities are more stringent and do not allow the tray to be moved; this would require that the object be placed on the chair or table upon which the tray rests, as will be explained below).

We do not give “Chanukah Gelt” on Shabbos; not even using a permissible object²⁷. Chanukah gelt for Shabbos should be given Friday or Sunday.²⁸

FRIDAY NIGHT, SIXTH NIGHT OF CHANUKAH, SHABBOS ROSH CHODESH

Kabbalas Shabbos is recited as usual. In addition to *V'al hanissim*, *ya'aleh ve-yavo* is added during Maariv. If you forgot *ya'aleh ve-yavo* tonight, do not repeat the Amidah.

V'al hanissim is added to *birchas hamazon*, as well as *Retzei* followed by *ya'aleh ve-yavo*.

Take care to avoid rushing past or opening a door directly opposite a lit menorah on Shabbos, so as to avoid extinguishing its flames.

On Shabbos, it is forbidden to directly touch the menorah, its tray, and the chair on which the tray is placed—even after the flames have gone out. Even if the menorah is no longer on the tray or chair, the

27) Sichas Shabbos Parashas Vayeishev 5750, Sefer Hasichos 5750, I:194

28) Sichas Shabbos Parashas Vayeshev 5748, Sefer Hasichos 5748, I:163. See also Address to Tzivos Hashem on 28th of Kislev 5750, Sefer Hasichos 5750, I:199, “Also on Friday before the onset of Shabbos.” See also Yechidus on 24th of Kislev 5748.

tray and chair may not be moved. However, once the menorah has gone out, you may move these objects in an indirect way, such as using your body, foot, elbow, the back of a hand and the like. Similarly, if you need to use the place in which the menorah is located, you may ask a non-Jew to move it.

If you placed a *challah* (or another object that is worth more than the flames of the menorah) on the tray before the onset of Shabbos, then once the flames have gone out, the tray—even with the menorah on top—may be moved directly on Shabbos.

According to alternative opinions, the tray has been designated for the use of the menorah and it does not help to place a *challah* on it before Shabbos. Rather, the object must be placed on the chair (or table) on which the tray rests. Then you may then move the chair—with all that is placed on it—during Shabbos. Nevertheless, this solution works only if you need to move the chair in order to provide space to pass by, or in order to use the place in which the chair stands. The chair may not be moved in order to protect the menorah.

(There is an opinion that the *heter* of placing a permissible object does not apply to the menorah during Chanukah. Without getting into myriad details, be aware of this stringency and if possible utilize a non-Jew or indirect handling.)

The *dreidel* should not be played on Shabbos. According to some authorities, a *dreidel* is possibly considered a *keli shemelachto l'issur* (object whose primary use is prohibited on Shabbos).

Chanukah gifts should not be given during Shabbos, unless they are articles that are necessary for Shabbos itself.

Doughnuts and other solid foods may be squeezed on Shabbos to remove the excess oil, if the oil is

discarded.

Haneiros halalu is not sung during Shabbos.²⁹

SHABBOS PARASHAS MIKETZ, KISLEV 30, SIXTH DAY OF CHANUKAH, SHABBOS ROSH CHODESH TEVES

Add *Ya'aleh veyavo* and *V'al hanissim* in Shacharis. If you forgot to recite *ya'aleh veyavo*, see footnote.³⁰

During Shacharis, the complete Hallel is followed by *V'avraham zaken*, *kaddish tiskabel*, *shir shel yom* (*mizmor shir l'yom ha-shabbos*), *hoshi'einu*, *Barchi nafshi*, and *kaddish yasom*.

Three *sifrei torah* are used today. *Parshas Mikeitz* is read from the first (in six *aliyos*), after which the second *sefer torah* is placed on the *bimah* alongside the first. We may not remove the first *sefer torah* until the second *sefer torah* is placed on the *bimah*, so that the *bimah* should not be vacant from a mitzvah. *Hagbah* (lifting the Torah) and *gelilah* (wrapping the Torah) are performed on the first Torah. The seventh *aliyah* is read from the second *sefer torah*. It is the reading for Rosh Chodesh (*uv'yom hashabbos .. u'verashei chadsheichem*). Then the third *torah* is

29) *Shabbos Chanukah* 5742

30) Someone who forgets to recite *ya'aleh veyavo* in Shacharis should do as follows:

1) If you realized that you omitted *ya'aleh veyavo* before pronouncing Hashem's name in the blessing *ha-machazir*, return to *ya'aleh veyavo* and continue from there.

2) If you concluded the blessing of *ha-machazir* but did not begin *modim*, recite *ya'aleh veyavo* immediately and then continue with *modim*.

3) If you passed *modim* but realized before reciting the second *yihyu le-ratzon* at the conclusion of the Amidah, return to *retzei*.

4) If you passed the second *yihyu le-ratzon* at the conclusion of the Amidah, you must restart the entire Amidah.

5) If you realized only after praying Musaf, you should not repeat the Amidah of Shacharis.

placed on the *bimah* alongside the second. *Chatzi kaddish* is recited, and the second *torah* is raised and wrapped.

Maftir is read from the third *sefer torah*. It is the offerings of the *nassi* to the tribe of Gad (*ba-yom ha-shishi*). The third *torah* is then raised and wrapped.

The *haftorah* begins *rani ve-simchi* and describes the lights of the golden *menorah* as seen by Zechariah. Upon its conclusion, the following are added this year: 1) The first and last verses from the *haftorah* of Shabbos Rosh Chodesh. These are: *Koyamar Hashem ha-shamayim kisi... Ve-hayah midei chodesh... Va-yatze'u u-ra'u... Ve-hayah midei chodesh....* 2) The first and last verses from the *haftorah* of *machar chodesh* are added. These are: *Va-yomeir lo Yonasan machar chodesh... Va-yomeir lo Yonasan le-Dovid leich le-shalom*³¹....

Av ha-rachamim is not recited before Musaf.

During Musaf, the section for Shabbos Rosh Chodesh is read instead. It begins *ata yatzarta* and ends *mekadeish ha-shabbos ve-Yisrael ve-roshei chadashim*.

One who inadvertently concluded the blessing with the regular phrase, *mekadeish ha-shabbos*, has fulfilled his obligation. If one made other mistakes in Musaf, see footnote³².

31) See at length, *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 35, p. 187 ff.

32) One who mistakenly recited the ordinary Shabbos Musaf (*tikanta shabbos*) but realizes his error before reciting the concluding blessing must return to *ata yatzarta*. However, if he already pronounced Hashem's name at the conclusion of the blessing, he should now conclude with the correct wording of *mekadeish ha-shabbos ve-Yisrael ve-roshei chadashim* and then add *ve-na'aseh lefanecha be-temidei ha-yom u've-korban musaf rosh chodesh hartzeh*, then continue with *retzei* as usual.

1) If he realizes his error only after beginning *retzei*, he should add *ve-na'aseh* etc. as above, after the words *ve-hasheiv ha-avodah lid'vir beisecha*. The same applies if he realizes his error after completing *retzei* but before reciting *modim*.

V'al hanissim is inserted into the Amidah of Musaf.

Law of the Redemption: We offer the following *korban musaf* in the Beis Hamikdash in honor of Rosh Chodesh: two bulls, one ram, seven lambs as burnt-offerings, and one goat for a sin-offering.

"It is an ancient custom, on each Rosh Chodesh, to study one verse of the chapter of Tehillim that corresponds with the current years of a person's life. The verse should be studied with the commentary of Rashi, and additional commentaries may be added as well. If the current chapter contains less than twelve verses, or in a leap year, when there are more than twelve months, verses that have been studied on a previous Rosh Chodesh should be studied a second time. Similarly, if the current chapter contains many verses, then two or three verses should be studied at once on each Rosh Chodesh of the year."

Tzidkascha is not recited during Minchah.

As mentioned earlier, we may not eat a meal before lighting the *menorah* once the time has arrived for doing so. If someone began eating earlier, when it was permissible (they washed hands for bread before sunset), they are not required to end the Shabbos meal in order to light the *menorah* (especially since the *menorah* lighting is *mid'rabanan*). Nevertheless, it would be prudent to plan ahead to avoid delaying

2) If he already began *modim*, he must return to *ata yatzarta*. This applies even if he had included *ya'aleh ve-yavo* for Rosh Chodesh in his mistaken prayers.

3) If he realizes his error after pronouncing Hashem's name in either the blessing *ha-tov shim'chah* or *ha-mevarreich es amo Yisrael* – he should recite the two words *lam'deini chukecha* before returning to *ata yatzarta*.

4) If he realizes only after reciting the second *yiyu le-ratzon*, he must repeat the entire *amidah*. (See references in the Hebrew section).

One who concluded the *amidah* but is uncertain as to whether he recited *ata yatzarta* instead of the ordinary Shabbos Musaf must repeat the entire Musaf correctly.

this *mitzvah*, especially when attending a *farbrengen* which often involves drinking alcoholic beverages. Nonetheless, the common custom in Chassidic communities is to follow their standard practice of extending the *se'udah shlishis* beyond the official conclusion of Shabbos, as is done usually. In fact, this exact scenario occurred at the Rebbe's *farbrengen*.³³

MOTZOEI SHABBOS, EVE OF TEVES 1, SEVENTH NIGHT OF CHANUKAH, ROSH CHODESH TEVES

Shabbos ends at 5:14 pm.

Recite *Ata chonantanu*, *Ya'aleh veyavo* and *V'al Hanisim* in Maariv. *Vihi no'am* is recited as usual at the conclusion.

In shul, the menorah is lit before reciting *Aleinu*. It is followed by *Haneiros Halelu*, *Aleinu*, etc., and then *havdalah* by the *chazzan*. It is necessary to verify that the one kindling the shul menorah did not forget to recite *Ata chonantanu* in the Amidah. If he did, he must recite *Baruch ha-mavdil bein kodesh le-chol* before kindling the menorah.

Needless to say, the menorah is lit only at the conclusion of Shabbos (5:14 pm). Hurry home from shul in order to avoid delaying the menorah lighting more than absolutely necessary.

At home, first recite *havdalah*, then light the menorah, and only then recite *Veyiten lecha*.

It seems that Chabad custom is to ensure that the *menorah's* lights remain burning for at least 50 minutes on *motzoei Shabbos* as well, even though they are lit after nightfall.

There are some people here who are careful to

33) Shabbos Chanukah, Parashas Miketz 5744

avoid dealing with money on *motzoei Shabbos*.³⁴ In a *yechidus kelalis*, the Rebbe explains that this concern should not apply to Chanukah gelt because it is associated with a mitzvah and is used as a tool to advance children's education. The Rebbe noted that the it could be discussed on *motzoei Shabbos* that money be spent only the following morning.³⁵ The following year (5749), the Rebbe took an alternative approach and concluded that it is appropriate to refrain from actually giving the gelt on *motzoei Shabbos*.³⁶

SUNDAY, TEVES 1, SEVENTH DAY OF CHANUKAH, ROSH CHODESH TEVES

Ya'aleh veyavo and *V'al hanissim* are inserted into the Amidah. If you forgot to recite *ya'aleh veyavo*, see yesterday's entry for the Amidah on Shabbos morning.

The complete Hallel is followed by *V'avraham zaken, kaddish tiskabel, shir shel yom* (*rishon ba-Shabbos*), *Hoshi'einu, Barchi nafshi*, and *kaddish yasom*.

Two *sifrei Torah* are read during Shacharis. The first is used for the Rosh Chodesh reading and requires three *aliyos*. (Kohen until *revi'is ha-hin*, Levi until *ve-niska*, and Yisrael—*Uv'roshei chadsheichem* until *ve-nisko*.) The second Torah is then placed on the *bimah* beside the first.

After *hagbah* on the first Torah, one *aliyah* is read from the second Torah, from *Parashas Naso* (*Ba-yom ha-shvi'i* etc., but no further).

The Torah reading is followed by *chatzi kaddish*,

34) see *Sichas Ohr L'yud Gimmel Nissan* 5743 (and numerous other *sichos*).

35) Kislev 24, 5748

36) *Sichah* on the eve of 23 Kislev, 5749

Ashrei, Uva le-tziyon, Yehalelu, tefillin d'Rabbeinu Tam, chatzi kaddish, and Musaf (V'al hanissim).

On Rosh Chodesh, it is customary not to cut hair, as per the *tzavaah* of Rabbi Yehudah Hachasid. (Note that the *tzavaah* mentions not cutting nails too. This requires further elaboration.)

Law of the Redemption: Specific families merited to donate wood annually for use on the altar, as described in *Ta'anis* 4:5. On the first of Teves, the family of Parosh donated wood. They actually had an earlier date in the year as well, on the fifth of Menachem-Av.³⁷

SUNDAY NIGHT, EVE OF TEVES 2, EIGHTH NIGHT OF CHANUKAH, "ZOS CHANUKAH"

In *Sichos Kodesh*, the Rebbe urges each person to utilize the remaining hours of the eve of *Zos Chanukah* for *mitvza Chanukah*. See more details below in entries for the day of *Zos Chanukah*.

Oil and wicks that remain in the menorah after the conclusion of Chanukah should be burned, since they had been designated for a mitzvah.

Oil that remains in its container and has not been poured into the menorah may be used in any manner—it has not acquired sanctity at all.

MONDAY, TEVES 2, EIGHTH DAY OF CHANUKAH, "ZOS CHANUKAH"

For today's Torah reading, the Kohen's *aliyah* is from *Ba-yom ha-shemini* until *melei'ah ketores*. Levi is from *Par echad* until *ben pedatzhur*. Yisrael is from

37) See *Tosefos Yom Tov* to the Mishnah, and *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, p. 1105, fn. 9. However, note Rashi's comment in *Eiruvin* 41a, s.v., *mib'nei sanav*, which implies that the donation was arranged through lottery.

Ba-yom ha-tshi'i until kein asa es ha-menorah.

In *Sichos Kodesh*, the Rebbe instructs each person to use this special day—when all eight flames of the menorah shine forth—to bring *mivtza Chanukah* to its climax. The Rebbe urges whoever has not yet observed the custom of giving Chanukah *gelt* to “grab the opportunity” now, in the final hours and minutes of Chanukah. Failing that, he should make it up on the night following Chanukah, or in the coming days—the sooner the better. Even those who have already given *gelt* should use the final day of Chanukah to give even more, because there is basis to question whether they have indeed given enough, especially in light of the great *chassidishe nachas* that they receive from their sons and daughters—the *nachas* that they will receive in the future through increasing their Jewish education from this point onwards.

The Rebbe also instructed that on this final day of Chanukah, we should take stock of our entire Chanukah in a manner that will continue to positively influence our service throughout the year, in actuality. Resolve to advance in all matters of Torah and mitzvos. The ideal way to launch this process is with a *farbrengen*.

The Rebbe once instructed that the Alter Rebbe's *ma'amor* that explains the greatness of Zos Chanukah be studied today.³⁸ The main point, the Rebbe explained, is to live with this *ma'amor*.

On Zos Chanukah 5713, the Rebbe said, “It is stated in the books of the Chassidim of Poland (and although it most likely appears somewhere in Chabad Chassidus, I have not yet located such a teaching) that the eighth day of Chanukah—“Zos Chanukah”—is a day of special blessing for

38) see *Likkutei Torah, Derushim LeShemini Atzeres*

resolving fertility issues.”³⁹

On Zos Chanukah 5734, the Rebbe said: “The [Frierdiker] Rebbe explained in *Sichas Yud-Tes Kislev* 5704, that the concepts of *erev Rosh Hashanah*, the days of *selichos*, the month of Elul, and so on, are also present regarding the Rosh Hashanah of Chassidus, Yud-Tes Kislev. It is also understood that after the *kesivah* (inscribing) that occurs on Yud-Tes Kislev, there follows the concept of *chasimah* (sealing), similar to the *chasimah* of Yom Kippur that comes as a result of the *kesivah* of Rosh Hashanah.

The Rebbe explains further that this *chasimah* [that follows Yud-Tes Kislev] occurs during Chanukah, which is why the Alter Rebbe returned home after his liberation during Chanukah.

He also mentions that this teaching runs parallel to a teaching recorded in *Poilishe sefarim* (works of other Chassidic streams) that Chanukah marks the *gmar chasimah* (final sealing) of the judgments [of Tishrei]. The Rebbe explained that he quotes the works of *Poilishe sefarim* because in this case, the teaching concurs with the teachings of Chabad Chassidus.”⁴⁰

See also *Igros Kodesh*: “It was a common teaching in Poland that ... the *gmar chasimah* occurs in the month of Kislev, during Chanukah.”⁴¹

39) For further explanation, see the original *sichah*.

40) This portion of *Sichas Yud-Tes Kislev* 5734 can be heard in the digital recording of the *farbrengen*, although it does not appear in the printed version of that address.

41) vol. 14, p. 112. See also *Likkutei Torah*, *Derushim LeShemini Atzeres* (p. 88b), explained in *Ba Yom HaShemini* 5746 (in particular, see fn. 33), to the effect that the eighth day of Chanukah is like Shemini Atzeres (the eighth day of Sukkos). See also *Sichas Zos Chanukah* 5738.

TUESDAY, TEVES 3

Today's portion of Chumash in Chitas study ends with the verse, "*And they told him all of Yosef's words ... and the spirit of their father Yaakov was revived*"⁴² as per Chabad custom⁴³.

Law of the Redemption: Some authorities, such as *Minchas Chinuch*,⁴⁴ are of the opinion that in the era of Redemption, when the Jewish people will return to establishing their calendar according to human sightings of new moons, Chanukah will then be observed by distant Jewish communities as a nine-day festival, due to unavailability of real-time updates of the calendar decisions made by the *beis din* in Eretz Yisrael.

In *Sichas Zos Chanukah* 5738, the Rebbe states that even a suggested approach found within Torah sources remains an integral part of the Torah. Since there is some debate over a future nine-day Chanukah, we should continue to apply the themes of *Zos Chanukah* on the following day. The Rebbe even compares the day after *Zos Chanukah* to Simchas Torah that follows the eight days of Sukkos and was established due to the inability of ancient Diaspora communities to obtain real-time updates from the *beis din* in Eretz Yisrael.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, the Rebbe clarifies in *Sichas Simchas Torah* 5749, that in the era of Redemption, uncertainties regarding the true calendar dates will simply not exist. The *beis din* of the future will be able to instantly communicate their decisions to every location, regardless of

42) 45:27

43) See entry for Shabbos Parshas Vayigash

44) *Mitzvah* 301:6

45) See also *Sichas Purim* 5719 regarding the theory of a nine-day Chanukah.

geographic distance. It is only those festivals that in ancient times were allotted an extra day in the Diaspora due to the delay in long distance communications, and that have been observed as two-day festivals by millennia of Jews, that may possibly continue to be observed as two-day festivals even in the era of Redemption.

Law of the Redemption: Once Chanukah has ended, *bikurim* (First Fruit) may no longer be brought to the Beis Hamikdash. Fruit that ripens after Chanukah are considered as belonging to the following year, insofar as the laws of *bikurim* are concerned, and they must be kept until after Shavuot. This is because the Torah specifies that *bikurim* must be “*that which you bring from your land*,” meaning that *bikurim* may be brought only as long as the same species are still found growing across the Land of Israel – “when they are still available for the beast of the field.” After Chanukah, however, fruit is no longer found growing in the fields and orchards.

This raises the question of the *bikurim* season in the future era,⁴⁶ when fruit will indeed be found growing in the field even after Chanukah. For “trees will bring forth fruit every day,”⁴⁷ and “*the ploughman will encounter the reaper*” due to the instant and constant growth of produce.⁴⁸

There is also room to debate the obligation of *bikurim* regarding fruit that grows miraculously.

THURSDAY, TEVES 5, DIDAN NOTZACH!

“Behold, it came to pass in the twelfth year, in the tenth [month], on the fifth [day] of the month of

46) see Yechezkel 44:30, and a similar theme in 20:40

47) *Shabbos* 30b

48) *Amos* 9:14. See *Toras Kohanim*, *Bechukosai* 26:4. See *Sefer HaSichos* 5741, vol. 2 (p. 743, fn. 70 and p. 809, fn. 131)

our exile, that the fugitive from Yerushalayim came to me, saying, ‘The city was struck!’”⁴⁹ Rashbi considered this day on which the news of the tragedy arrived as if it were the day of the event itself.⁵⁰

*Shalshelless HaYachas*⁵¹ states: “In the year 5747 ... on the fifth of Teves, we experienced a *didan natzach* (complete victory) that was revealed for all the nations to see through a federal court ruling regarding [ownership of] the books and manuscripts of our Rebbeim that are housed in the Lubavitch Library.”

Today’s entry in *Luach Colel Chabad* reads: “The date of *Didan Natzach*. In 5747 (1987), the Federal Court vindicated the claim lodged by *Agudas Chassidei Chabad* with regard to the Previous Rebbe’s library. The Rebbe declared the date to be an auspicious day for all generations to come. The Rebbe also called on us to add to and expand the library of *Agudas Chassidei Chabad-Lubavitch*.”

“During these days,” the Rebbe stated, “We must add greater vigor to our Torah study. For the true victory of the books is the increased Torah study that results—especially public Torah classes, in the spirit of the Mishnah’s statement regarding ten who sit and occupy themselves with Torah.

“Our study must lead to action: In *nigleh*, we must study the laws that are necessary for practical application (these are found in Rambam and similar works). In the inner dimension of Torah, we must study *chassidus* that allows us to observe the *mitzvos* with complete love and awe of Hashem.

“The individual home of each and every Jew must

49) Yechezkel 33:21

50) *Rosh Hashanah* 18a. See *Turei Aven* there. The Rebbe explains all this in footnotes to *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 15, p. 555.

51) included in the introduction to *HaYom Yom*

also house the fundamental books of *yiddishkeit* (in addition to a *chitas*), and especially books that record the practical laws relevant to daily life, so that everyone can determine what they must do.”

In the year 5749, the Rebbe marked *Hei Teves* by distributing an additional dollar to all who approached him as his participation in their acquiring new *sefarim* or in the repair of their worn *sefarim*.

The Rebbe repeatedly encouraged booksellers to offer special discounts on all sacred literature to make it feasible for everyone to buy *sefarim*.

For the Rebbe’s *sichos* regarding *Hei Teves* that occurs in a year with an identical calendar sequence to the present, see *Shabbos Vayigash* 5752 (published in *Sefer Hasichos*).

FRIDAY, TEVES 6

Today we recite *shnayim mikra ve’echad targum* for Parashas Vayigash.

One is obligated to check his pockets on *erev Shabbos* before the onset of *Shabbos*. This is especially important if he wore the same *Shabbos* / *Yom Tov* clothing this week in honor of *Hey Te ves*.

SHABBOS PARASHAS VAYIGASH, TEVES 7

The Rebbe states that “according to Jewish custom (which becomes part of the Torah), the third Torah portion ends with the verse ‘*And they told him all of Yosef’s words ... and the spirit of their father Yaakov was revived*’.⁵² (According to alternative custom, this is the end of the fourth portion.)⁵³” The significance of this is explained there at length, and this is indeed

52) 45:27

53) *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 30, p. 224

the practice in 770.

According to Ashkenazi custom, the *chazzan* does not announce an approaching fast during the preceding Shabbos. May the approaching fast be transformed into a Yom Tov!

MOTZOEI SHABBOS, EVE OF TEVES 8

Kiddush Levanah is recited tonight, following Maariv. Kiddush levanah should be recited while dressed in fine, respectable clothing. According to Kabbalah, it should not be recited until seven days have passed from the *molad* (birth of the new moon).⁵⁴

On the eighth of Teves, the Torah was first translated into Greek by order of King Ptolmey. This caused “three days of darkness to descend upon the world.”⁵⁵ That day was “as difficult for the Jews as the day on which the Golden Calf was made.”⁵⁶ The Rebbe explains this concept in *Likkutei Sichos* and *Sefer HaSichos* 5752.⁵⁷

On this day in 5573 (1812), the Alter Rebbe reached the village of Pienna, after fleeing Liadi to escape Napoleon’s advance into Russia. (The Alter Rebbe passed away in Pienna soon after on Chof-Daled Teves.)

Today is the *yahrtzeit* of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, the wife of the Tzemach Tzedek. She passed away in the year 5621 (1860) and is buried in the town of Lubavitch.

54) See *Sefer HaSichos* 5752, vol. 1, p. 68. Regarding the precise calculation of these seven days, see references that appear in the Rebbe Rashab’s notes to *Siddur Torah Ohr*, and references that appear in the Rebbe’s notes to *Sha’ar HaKollel*. Also see *Sichas Vav Adar Rishon* 5746.

55) *Megillas Ta’anis*, quoted in *Shulchan Aruch*

56) *Maseches Sofrim*

57) *Likkutei Sichos*, beginning of vol. 24; *Sefer Hasichos* 5752, Parashas Mikeitz

MONDAY, TEVES 9

Chazal state that the ninth of Teves is one of the dates on which calamities befell our ancestors and it is appropriate to spend the day fasting. They also note, however, that there is no record of what these calamities were.⁵⁸ It has since been explained that Ezra *HaSofer* died on this date. The commentators to *Megillas Taanis* describe additional events. The Rebbe's explanation appears in *Sefer HaSichos* 5749.⁵⁹

MONDAY NIGHT, EVE OF TEVES 10

The Rebbe often mentions that the preparations for Yud Shevat begin thirty days in advance, from the tenth of Teves.

On the eve of the tenth of Teves 5752, the Rebbe explains that although the tenth of Teves begins at night (as is the case with all Jewish dates), the actual fast only begins at dawn. The lack of fasting on the eve of the tenth of Teves symbolizes the power that is granted at that time to reverse the negative events that the fast day commemorates. It is an auspicious time for *teshuvah* that will bring the Redemption and a night of opportunity to forever nullify the fast before it begins. The Rebbe pointed out that the night stretches for a number of hours, which offers ample time for *teshuvah*.

As is the case with any fast that begins in the morning, we are permitted to eat throughout the night until dawn, provided that we had not gone to sleep in between. Dozing off temporarily is not considered going to sleep in this regard. One who stipulates before going to sleep that he intends to awaken before dawn and eat or drink may do so. If he regularly rises from his sleep to drink at night, he

58) *Megillas Ta'anis*, quoted in *Shulchan Aruch*

59) *Vayigash*, Teves 9

may do so tonight without stipulating before going to sleep.

TUESDAY, TEVES 10, FAST OF ASARAH B'TEVES

The fast commemorates the date on which the king of Babylon laid siege to Yerushalayim. All men (from the age of 13 years) and women (from the age of 12 years) should refrain from eating and drinking from daybreak until nightfall. Those who wish to wake up early and eat before daybreak should have in mind to do so before retiring the night before. Pregnant or nursing women who have difficulty fasting, or people feeling ill, are exempt. Consult a Rav if necessary.

Dawn and the start of the fast are at **5:46 am**.

The Torah is read during Shacharis and Minchah, and the *Haftorah* is read during Minchah, as on every fast day.

Law of the Redemption: All of the fast days (except Yom Kippur) will be canceled in the era of Moshiach. In fact, they will become “*yomim tovim* and days of feasting and gladness.” This is further discussed in *Likkutei Sichos*; the Rebbe draws particular relevance to the Fast of Teves.⁶⁰

The Rebbe explains that the events marked by the Fast of Teves were the start and eventual cause of the calamities commemorated by the remaining fasts. Therefore, when the Fast of Teves is transformed into a *yom tov*, all other fast days are consequently transformed along with it into “*yomim tovim* and days of feasting and gladness.”⁶¹

60) Likkutei Sichos, vol. 15, p. 412. For the concept of holding a festive meal in the era of Redemption, see *Magen Avraham, Tisha b'Av*, 552:11 and *Sichas Beis d'Rosh Hashanah* 5752.

61) Likkutei Sichos, vol. 25, p. 449

It is customary to increase in *tzedakah* on fast days. According to custom, a person should estimate the average cost of his daily meals and donate that amount to *tzedakah* on the eve of the fast.

In Shacharis and Minchah, the *chazzan* adds *Aneinu* in the Amidah, between the blessings of *go'eil Yisrael* and *Refa'einu*. If he omitted *aneinu*, see footnote.⁶²

During Shacharis, Selichos are recited.

This is the order for Shacharis: Tachanun, Selichos. *Avinu malkeinu Ha'aruch. Va'anachnu lo nay'da* followed by *chatzi kaddish*. Reading of the Torah. The *aliyos* are read from the section of *Va-yechal Moshe*.

This same reading is repeated for Minchah, with the addition of the *Haftorah* of *dirshu Hashem*.

During Minchah, each individual recites *Aneinu* in *Shema koleinu*. If someone forgot to recite it, see footnote.⁶³

The *chazzan* recites *birchas kohanim* in his repetition of the Amidah (as he usually does during Shacharis).

This is the order for Minchah: *Korbanos. Ashrei* followed by *chatzi kaddish*. The reading of the Torah (*Va-yechal*) and the *Haftorah. Yehalelu* followed by *chatzi kaddish*. Amidah with the addition of *aneinu*. Tachanun, *Avinu malkeinu Ha'aruch. Kaddish*

62) If the *chazzan* omitted *Aneinu* and has not yet pronounced Hashem's name at the conclusion of *Refa'einu*, he should return to recite *Aneinu*. If he already pronounced Hashem's name, he should recite *Aneinu* in the blessing of *Shema koleinu* as each individual does when praying Minchah silently. In that case, he should conclude the blessing with the words: *ha-oneh ba-eitzarah ve-shomei'a tefillah*. If he already passed *Shema koleinu*, he should recite *Aneinu* as a passage for itself after the blessing of *Sim shalom*.

63) If one forgot to recite *Aneinu* in the Amidah of Mincha, but remembered it before stepping back at the end of the Amidah, he should recite it after *Elokai netzor*. If he had already stepped back, he should not recite it at all.

tiskabel. *Aleinu* followed by *kaddish yasom* and then *Al tira* and *Ach tzadikim*. If an *avel* is present, he recites *mishnayos* followed by *kaddish d'rabbanan*.

After Minchah, it is customary to listen to *divrei kivushin*—a speech urging self-improvement and further advancement in the service of Hashem.

The fast ends at 5:01 pm.

FRIDAY NIGHT, TEVES 14

Tonight is the final opportunity to recite *kiddush levanah* this month – as a first recourse.

SHABBOS PARASHAS VAYECHI, TEVES 14, "SHABBOS CHAZAK"

During today's Torah reading, it is customary to rise for the reading of the final verse in the book of Bereishis, after which the entire congregation (men, women, and children) calls out loudly and joyfully—*chazak, chazak, venischazeik!* This shout symbolizes the strength of the Jewish people in all matters of Torah—with the additional strength of a *chazakah*.

The one who is called to the Torah for the seventh *aliyah* should join the rest of the congregation in proclaiming *chazak*. This is not considered an interruption in the reading, because it is considered part of the final verse's reading process.

It is customary for the *gabbaim* to organize a special *farbrengen* on this Shabbos, beyond the ordinary Shabbos *farbrengen*. They should use this opportunity to discuss and encourage strengthening of all aspects of Torah and mitzvos.

On this Shabbos, it is customary to increase in *divrei torah* and to rejoice at having completed an entire *sefer*, and to make resolutions to increase in Torah study and to keep the mitzvos in the best possible

way.

In *Sichas Shabbos Parashas Vayechi* 5750, the Rebbe cautioned: “Strong encouragement is particularly necessary in this *shul* (770). It is necessary to clarify that the participants in the present *farbrengen* have not fulfilled their obligation of holding a special *farbrengen*. I am therefore forced to emphasize and encourage, because I do not want them to depend on me, claiming that due to the present *farbrengen* there will not be a special *farbrengen* held by the *gabboim* in honor of Shabbos Chazak.”

MOTZOEI SHABBOS, EVE OF TEVES 15

“... Starting with the festive meal of *motzoei Shabbos* ... ‘The meal of Dovid, King Moshiach’ ... Certainly, then the *melave malka* should be truly magnificent! Moreover, and this is the most crucial point, we should hold the meal with Dovid King Moshiach at our head!”⁶⁴

SUNDAY, TEVES 15

During these weeks (from when we begin reading the book of *Shemos*), the order of fasting, praying, and extra stringencies known as *shovavim* begins. In leap years, these stringencies are extended and are referred to as *shovavim tat*. To view this practice in the light of Chabad Chassidus, see *Sefer HaSichos* 5749 and other sources.⁶⁵

MONDAY, TEVES 16

Tonight is *nittel*. Make sure to finish Chitas and Rambam before sunset.

The name *nittel* alludes to an absence, a euphemism

64) *Sichas Shabbos Parashas Vayechi* 5752

65) *Sefer Hasichos* 5749, footnotes to p. 185. Also see *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 18, p. 259, and *LeSheima Ozen*, p. 130.

for birth. Some suggest it is related to the word *nitleh* and *taloy*, “the hanged one”, a reference to “that man” (“*oso ha’ish*”), the individual who is the focus of worship in the *notzri* religion. The date officially marks the birth of that man. Accordingly, the term *nittel* can be related to the Latin *natal*, “birth.”

It is an ancient Jewish practice (which thereby becomes a venerated part of Torah) and it is also the Chabad custom, to refrain from studying Torah on *nittel nacht*, from sunset until halachic midnight. The reason is “to avoid adding vitality to the forces of impurity.” Other reasons, offered by great Torah sages, are recorded in the books that explain the reasons for *minhagim*. The Rebbe mentions these in *Igros Kodesh* and *Likkutei Sichos*.⁶⁶ In other sources, it is explained that the phrase “to avoid adding vitality to *kelipos*” is directed at “that man” who was deified by the non-Jews as well as those who presently follow his path. See the above *Igros Kodesh* to understand how it is possible for Torah study to produce negative results.

The timing of *nittel nacht* does not follow the Jewish calendar, but rather, the secular calendar. The date must be determined by the observance of the local non-Jewish population. The Jews of each country observe this custom on the eve of *yom eidam* (lit. the day of their calamity, used as a metonymy for festival) as it is celebrated by the non-Jews of their country. In the United States, this sets the date as December 25th. In a location with variances in the dates for the non-Jewish *yom eidam*, *nittel nacht* is observed on the date that the majority of the local non-Jews celebrate.⁶⁷

The willful avoidance of Torah study is a surprising and unprecedented concept. It must not be extended beyond the strict duration set by Jewish custom just

66) *Igros Kodesh* vol. 14, p. 351; *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 15, p. 554

67) See footnotes to *Sefer HaSichos* 5750, vol. 1, p. 192

one night, until midnight.

Regarding the conduct of the Rebbe Rashab on *nittel nacht* and the implied directive, see *Sichas Shabbos Parashas Vayeishev* 5750: “From this we derive a directive as well as an infusion of ability to utilize the duration of *nittel*, not to waste our time, G-d forbid (simply in order to avoid adding vitality to *kelipos*), but rather for a practical benefit. It is especially appropriate to use this time for matters that lead to increased wisdom ... or to increase in acts of *tzedakah* and *chessed*, or to take care of the home, and the like.”⁶⁸

In his notes from the winter of 5695, recorded in Vienna, the Rebbe relates that the Rebbe Rashab would also refrain from studying *chassidus* on *nittel nacht*, even in a cursory manner. When *nittel* coincided with the eve of Shabbos, he would defer the delivering of his customary *ma’amor* to Shabbos morning instead.⁶⁹

68) Printed in *Sefer HaSichos*. See further in the original *sichah*.

69) For more on this topic, see *Heichal Menachem*, p. 268. However, refer to the *reshimah* of Chof Kislev 5693. Also take note of a short *Sichah* delivered on *Leil Gimmel D’Chanukah* 5750.

Regarding the *mitzvah* of a *mikveh* night that coincides with *nittel*, see *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 12, p. 424.