



Text Message Q&A #100

Ask Rav Aviner: mororly@bezeqint.net

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Tzion

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Surgery on Chanukah

Q: Is it permissible to undergo surgery during Chanukah when as a result one will miss lighting Chanukah candles?

A: Yes. It is permissible for a person to put himself in a situation whereby he will lose out on performing a Mitzvah on account of "Pikuach Nefesh" – safeguarding his life (see Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, brought in Ashrei Ish, p. 233).

Working when Candles are Lit

Q: Should women refrain from working the entire time the Chanukah lights are lit?

A: It is enough to refrain for a half an hour (Mishnah Berurah 670:4).

Q: Is housework is permissible?

A: Yes. Food prep, washing dishes and similar activities (Chazon Ovadiah – Chanukah, p. 12. Shut Kinyan Torah 7:52 #3).

Q: If she is not at home?

A: It is permissible (Shut Mishneh Halachot, Tanina 1:530).

Q: Should men also refrain?

A: Some are strict, but it is permissible according to the basic halachah (Magen Avraham 670:1. Mishnah Berurah #3. Chazon Ovadiah – Chanukah, p. 14).

Chanukah Party for Mourner

Q: Is it permissible for a mourner to go to a Chanukah party?

A: No (Halichot Shlomo, p. 320).

One Who is Careful to Light Chanukah Lights

Q: Our Sages said that if one is careful to light Chanukah candles he will merit children who are Torah scholars - but many times this does not happen?

A: 1. Other reasons impede it (see Shut Teshuvot Ve-Hanhagot 2:340). 2. This is a general parable. See Ain Ayah (Shabbat 23b).

Permissible Uses of the Chanukah Lights

Q: It is forbidden to use the Chanukah lights except for looking at them, as we say in Ha-Nerot Ha-Lalu. Are there any cases where it is permissible to use them?

A: 1. It is permissible to use them for looking in a book to check a halachah relating to the Chanukah lights, since using the light is for its own sake (Birkei Yosef 673:5. Shaarei Teshuvah ibid. #3). 2. It is permissible to have one's picture taken next to the Chanukiyah, since this is not using its light (This is also the ruling of Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv brought in Shut Va-Yishma Moshe vol. 1, p. 212).

Scented Candle

Q: Is it permissible to use a scented candle for Chanukah lights?

A: Yes, and there is no problem with benefitting from the scent since one is not benefitting from the light (Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yoseh brought in Shut Ma'ayan Omer vol. 3, p. 332).

Blowing out Candles

Q: Is it true that it is forbidden – all year – to blow out candles?

A: Some are particular to refrain from doing so (Kol Bo #118). But when performing a Mitzvah, we say that no bad will come to one who performs a Mitzvah (Kaf Ha-Chaim, Yoreah Deah 116:115).

Lighting the Wrong Number of Candles

Q: What should one do if he lights either too many or too few candles on Chanukah?

A: Extinguish or add without a blessing (Shut Ha-alef Lecha Shlomo, Orach Chaim #380. Chazon Ovadiah, p. 29. And see Shut Shevet Ha-Kehati 1:202).

Using Friend's Chanukiyah

Q: Is it permissible to use a friend's Chanukiyah?

A: It is forbidden without his permission (Ha-Measef 673, vol. 1 siman #55, based on Shut Beit Yaakov #3 that the principle: "A person is happy when his possessions are used for a Mitzvah" only applies to Torah Mitzvot and not to Rabbinic Mitzvot).

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