



Text Message Q&A #228 Ask Rav Aviner: toratravaviner@yahoo.com

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Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a day. Here's a sample:

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: Should men also refrain?

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

Chanukah Lights in a Guard House

Q: Should someone on guard duty light in his guard house?

A: Yes. It is his temporary residence (Yalkut Yosef – Moadim p. 208). It is also a nice way of publicizing the miracle.

Waiting for One's Family to Light Chanukah Candles

Q: Should one light Chanukah candles right away at nightfall or wait for one's spouse?

A: If one lights inside the house, he should wait. If one lights outside, he may wait as long as there are still passersby (The Chafetz Chaim's rebbe, Rebbe Nachumke of Grodno, once waited several hours until his wife returned home before lighting the Chanukah lights. The Chafetz Chaim asked him why he waited, and his teacher explained that if one can only buy either Chanukah candles or Shabbat candles, we rule that he should buy Shabbat candles, since Shabbat candles are for "Shalom Bayit" - peace and tranquility of the home [Shabbat 23b. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 678:1]. "If Shabbat candles take precedence over Chanukah candles because of Shalom Bayit, then all the more so I should wait for my wife, since if I don't wait for her, she may be distraught." Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv explains, however, that this conduct of Rebbe Nachumke only applies outside of Israel where people light Chanukah candles inside: since the lighting is publicizing the miracle to his family, we therefore take "Shalom Bayit" into consideration. But in Eretz Yisrael, where we light outside, we must light while there are passersby in order to publicize the miracle to them. If it is too late, we do not fulfill the Mitzvah. We therefore do not take "Shalom Bayit" into consideration. Peninei Chanukah, pp. 172-173).

Operation during Chanukah

Q: Is it permissible to undergo surgery during Chanukah even though the person will not be able to light Chanukah candles?

A: Yes. It is permissible for a person to put himself in a situation where he will be unable to fulfill a Mitzvah on account of Pikuach Nefesh (preserving life). See Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv brought in Ashrei Ish, p. 233.

Segulah for Chanukah Wicks

Q: I heard that there is a Segulah to find a match by taking the leftover oil and wicks from the Chanukiyah, burning them, and then walking over them 7 times. What is the source?

A: Nonsense (And Ha-Rav Ben Tzion Mutzafi wrote in Shut Doresh Tzion: I have not heard about this).

[By the way, regarding burning the wicks, the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 677:4) writes that one should burn the leftover oil in the Chanukiyah at the conclusion of Chanukah. The commentaries add that the same should be done with the wicks, which are saturated with the oil. The reason one should burn them is because they were set aside for a Mitzvah and may not be used for another purpose (such as burning or eating). If they are put aside for the next year, there is a fear that they will accidentally be used (see Tur ibid. and Mishnah Berurah #19).

If so, it would appear that there is no obligation to burn them according to the basic Halachah, since the only fear is that someone may use them. It would also therefore be permissible to bury them or place them in a plastic bag and throw them away.

In his commentary on Pirkei Avot, 'Az Yomru' (pp. 131-133), Ha-Rav Yitzchak Aharon Goldberger, Dayan and Rosh Yeshiva of Chasidei Pupa, writes that he discussed this question with the Admor of Pupa. Rav Goldberger once saw the Admor in the middle of the night burning the wicks in the courtyard, moving them around with a stick in the fire until they were completely ash. Rav Goldberger said

that perhaps there is no obligation to burn the wicks, just as it is permissible to throw out detached Tzitzit as long as it is done in a non-disgraceful manner, or to place them in a Geniza according to the custom of those who are meticulous in Mitzvah observance (Shulchan Aruch and Rama, Orach Chaim 21:1). Similarly, it is permissible to wrap separated Challah in paper and throw it in the garbage if it is difficult to burn it, so that no mishap occurs (Mahar"i Steif brought in Teshuvot Ha-Maor. And also brought in Mo'adim Uzmanim 7:177. See also Shut Minchat Yitzchak 4:13).

The Admor of Pupa responded that perhaps his words are correct, but since our Sages used the term "to burn it", he prefers to perform the obligation according to what our Sages said. He is therefore particular to completely burn the wicks. And this is the Minhag among some Chasidim, and the meticulous burn them among a large group of people.

Ha-Rav Chaim Kanievski, however, answered that the wicks may be buried (Shut Yadon Moshe 12:71).

This, however, has no connection to a Segulah – M.T.]

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