

Shabbos Candles – Part II

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Who is obligated to light?

We mentioned last week that the Mitzvah of lighting Shabbos candles is generally performed by the woman of the house. Obviously, the mitzvah can be done by any member of the household who is a bar chiyuvah (see Shuchan Aruch Siman 263, sif 2). This excludes the general exemptions of cheres, shoteh, v'kattan. Therefore, in a case where the woman of the house is not at home, the man of the house should light. The Be'er Moshe (Shut chelek 8, siman 67) writes that his obligation takes precedence over any of his children including the girls of the house (also See Kavod V'oneg Shabbos p.7 in the name of Rav Moshe Feinstein). If neither of the parents is at home, the Shmiras Shabbos K'hilchasah (perek 47, sif 7) writes that the obligation should be fulfilled by one of the children who is a bar chiyuva, but priority should be given to the girls of the household. Aside from the actual obligation, the Aruch Hashulchan (siman 263, sif 7) quotes that there are those who have a minhag that all girls living in the house light Shabbos candles with a bracha. This is despite the fact that we normally assume that one set of Shabbos candles serves to fulfill the entire family's obligation. He explains that even though the husband is yotzeh with his wife's candles and her bracha, since women have a stronger obligation than men, all Jewish girls light with a bracha. He adds that it's best if they light in a separate room than their mother, but if they can't, they should at least light using a separate Menorah. Rav Ovadiyah Yosef disagrees with the Aruch Hashulchan's premise that due to the stronger obligation of women they can light with a bracha and explains that the fact that women generally light the candles is not indicative of their greater obligation – it simply grants them precedence over men concerning who lights the candles. The chiyuv that exists is the same for both men and women. He points out that if one already has this minhag he need not discontinue it, but those who don't should not say a bracha even if they wish to light in a separate room. All of these halachos apply to a family that lives in the same house. We will now discuss cases where one is not at home.

Dormitory Students

The Mechaber writes (263,6) that young men who are learning in yeshiva must light in their own rooms with a bracha. The Aruch Hashulchan (263,5) explains that if children (who are of age) that spend Shabbos outside their homes they have their own obligation to light Shabbos candles, for they are only considered to be part of their parents' household when they are at home. They should therefore light with a bracha where they are staying for Shabbos. The Mishnah Berurah (s.k. 28) adds that this even applies to married men who are staying in a different location than their wives. In the Biur Halachah (s.v. Bachurim), he explains that even in one's own home, he has an obligation to light in all of the rooms that he will be using because of shalom bayis. Normally he would not say a bracha on this lighting because the bracha that his wife says covers the entire house. In this case, he finds himself in his own room with the

same obligation, but no one has said a bracha for him. Thus, he must light candles in his room with a bracha. However, in a situation where he doesn't have his own room and the ba'al habayis lights his own candles, there's no chiyuv shalom bayis. All that remains is his general obligation to light Shabbos candles, and he fulfills this through his wife's lighting at home. However, the Shmiras Shabbos K'hilchasah (perek 45 sif 3) paskens that a husband who is normally yotzeh with his wife's lighting can continue to rely on her even if he is away for an occasional weekend. He applies the same thing to children who spend a rare shabbos away from home. This leads to a problem for most students who are learning in dormitory yeshiva. Since they have a separate room in which they are staying, they are considered to be on their own, and have an obligation to light their own Shabbos candles. Furthermore, most yeshiva dorms present a problem as to where to light the candles. The students generally sleep in a dorm room that is designated for a few of them, and they all eat together in a communal dining room. Therefore, Rav Binyamin Zilber and Rav Moshe Shternbuch (shu't Az Nidbru chelek 5, siman 2, Shu't Tshuvos V'hanhagos (chelek 2, siman 157) advise that one should do one of two things: 1) If there is someone lighting in the dining room, the boys should pay a few cents to the one who lights, thereby acquiring a small portion of the candles. Thus, it is considered as if they too lit candles. 2) They should light in their rooms and say a bracha. They should be careful to receive some benefit from the candles so that it will be a kiyum in shalom bayis. The Chazon Ish is quoted as recommending that they also eat something by the candlelight. This suffices for students who are eating in the Yeshiva. However, if they are sleeping in their dorm rooms and are eating their meals in other people's homes, Rav Shternbuch writes that they are not yotzeh with the candles of the ba'al habayis by whom they are eating. They must therefore be makpid to light in their rooms with a bracha. There is some room for leniency according to the Shulchan Aruch Harav (sif 9) who holds that if they are eating out and aren't bringing any food to be used in the meal, they are considered to be relying on the ba'al habayis and are yotzeh with his candles. In a case where one is eating by his parents' home and sleeping in the yeshiva dorm, he is yotzeh with his parents' candle-lighting. It is important to note that according to the Mishnah Berurah (s.k.30), if many individuals are sharing a dorm room or an apartment, and none of them is the official ba'al habayis, they should join together financially in purchasing the candles so that the hadlakah should count for each of them.

Going away from home for shabbos

In a situation where a family is spending Shabbos in another home, the Mechaber (263,8) quotes conflicting opinions concerning whether each wife should light with a bracha or they should designate one individual, and paskens that only one should say a bracha. The Rema argues and assumes that all of the women lighting should do so with a bracha. The Mishnah Berurah (s.k. 32,35,38,45) explains the situation as follows: According to the Rema, one is permitted to light in the dining room along with the candles of the ba'al habayis if these additional candles provide any added light. However, if the guest's second set of candles won't provide any supplementary illumination, one should probably not say a bracha on these candles. In this situation, one might be better served joining in (financially) with the ba'al habayis' candles. However, if the guests have an area that is designated solely for their personal use, even if they don't eat in that locale, even the Mechaber would agree that they can light

there with a bracha. In fact, the Shmiras Shabbos K'hilchasah recommends this as the best place for guests to light candles. When they light in their room, they should make sure to get some benefit from the candles in order that the bracha not be l'vatalah. If one does decide to light candles in their host's dining room they should be sure that their own room has whatever light they deem necessary.

Eating at parents or in-laws

If a family is eating the Friday night meal at the home of their parents or in-laws, many people have the minhag to light where they are eating the meal with a bracha. However, the Shmiras Shabbos K'hilchasah (45,8) advises that they should really light at home with a bracha (assuming that they will be home after plag haminchah on Friday afternoon) keeping in mind not to be mekabel shabbos until later. If the wife wishes to light again at her parents' home, she should do so without a bracha. One should again be careful to have the candles last long enough that they can receive benefit from them upon their return on Friday night.

Hotels

If a family is away for Shabbos at a hotel, the minhag is to light in the hotel's dining room with a bracha. This is a correct minhag, but only in a case when the candles will provide additional light to the eating area. Many hotels situate the candle lighting area in a far corner of the room, where no one can enjoy them. If one wishes to light here, they should do so without a bracha. The Shmiras Shabbos (45,9) writes that if they close enough to anyone's table to add light to the meal, one may light with a bracha. If this is not so, they should light in the room with a bracha, taking care to receive some benefit from the candles.

In all of these cases, one should consult with one's particular rav for a definite p'sak halachah.