

Home Ritual of Shabbat Series, Part 1

Shabbat Candles

By Rabbi Phil Kaplan

1) Blessing on the Candles

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של שבת:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to light the light of Shabbat.

2) Mishnah, Shabbat 2:1

With what may they kindle [the Shabbat light] and with what may they not kindle them? They may not kindle with cedar fiber, uncarded flax, a raw silk, a desert wick, or seaweed, And not with pitch, wax, castor oil, [terumah] oil [which must be] burnt, tail fat, or tallow. Nahum the Mede says: they may kindle with melted tallow. And the sages say: whether melted or not, they may not kindle with it.

3) Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 263:5

Rama: Some say to make the blessing before lighting. Some say to make it after lighting. And in order for it to be *over asiyato*, do not derive the benefit of the mitzvah until after the blessing. [You can do this by] putting your hand over the candle after you light it, and then you make the Bracha, and then you take away your hand.

4) Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 263:1

Be meticulous to make sure to beautify the lighting of the Shabbat light. There are those who light two candles, in relation to the two ways we are commanded to honor shabbat, remember Shabbat (Exodus 20:8), and to keep Shabbat (Deuteronomy 5:12). Rama: There are also those who light three or even four lights, which is their custom. You can always add to the light with more lights for additional family members, or for whatever reason, but you can never subtract.

5) Talmud, Shabbat 23b

Rava said: It is obvious to me. [In the case of a poor person who must choose between purchasing] Shabbat candles for his home or Hanukkah candles, the Shabbat candles for his home take precedence, due to *shalom bayit*, peace in the home. Between Shabbat candles and wine for kiddush, the Shabbat candles take precedence because of *shalom bayit*.

6) Rashi on Talmud, Shabbat 25b

And in a place where there is no candle, there is no "**Shalom**", that one walks and stumbles and walks in darkness.

7) Magen Avraham 263:13

We say a blessing (when lighting Shabbat Candles): For lighting (Shabbat) candles is a requirement in order that we will have peace in our homes, so that one won't stubble on wood or stone.

8) Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 263:2

Both men and women are obligated to have a lit candle in their house on Shabbat.

9) Arba'ah Turim 1:263

[Both men and women are commanded to light,] but women are more commanded than men, as it says in the Midrash: Since she extinguished the lamp of the world, meaning she caused the death of the first human. And the Rambam explains [that women are more obligated] because they are found at home and they take care of household needs.

10) Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 263:6

Young men who travel to learn away from their homes must ignite the Sabbath lamp in their rooms, and bless over them, but one who is with his wife need not ignite in his room and bless over them because his wife blesses for him.

11) Mishnah Berurah 263:11

For the first Shabbat after a woman gives birth, the man should light and make the blessing. And during the days when she is in a state of *niddah*, she blesses alone.