

1) Shabbat 23b

אָמַר רַב הוּנָא: הַרְגִיל בְּנֵי הוּיִין לֵיהּ בְּנִים תְּלִמְיָדֵי חֲכָמִים. הַזְהִיר בְּמִזְוִזָּה — זֹכָה לְדִירָה נְאֻהָ. הַזְהִיר בְּצִיצִית — זֹכָה לְטָלִית נְאֻהָ. הַזְהִיר בְּקִידוּשׁ הַיּוֹם — זֹכָה וּמְמַלֵּא גְרָבֵי יַיִן. רַב הוּנָא הָוָה רְגִיל דְּהָוָה חֲלִיף וְתַנִּי אֶפְתָּחָא דְרַבִּי אָבִין נְגָרָא. חָזָא דְהָוָה רְגִיל בְּשָׂרְגִי טוּבָא, אָמַר: תְּרֵי גְבָרֵי רַבְרָבֵי נְפָקֵי מֵהָכָא. נְפָקֵי מִיַּנְיָהּ רַב אִידִי בַר אָבִין וְרַב חִיָּיא בַר אָבִין. רַב חִסְדָּא הָוָה רְגִיל דְּהָוָה חֲלִיף וְתַנִּי אֶפְתָּחָא דְבֵי נְשָׂא דְרַב שֵׁיזְבִי. חָזָא דְהָוָה רְגִיל בְּשָׂרְגִי טוּבָא, אָמַר: גְּבָרָא רַבָּא נְפָק מֵהָכָא. נְפָק מִיַּנְיָהּ רַב שֵׁיזְבִי.

Rav Huna said: One who is accustomed to kindle lights on Shabbat and Hanukkah will be rewarded with children who are Torah scholars and who will disseminate the light of Torah. One who is meticulous in performing the mitzva of *mezuzah* merits a beautiful house on which to affix his *mezuzah*. One who is meticulous in performing the mitzva of ritual fringes merits a beautiful garment. One who is meticulous in performing the mitzva of *kiddush* of the day merits and fills jugs of wine. Rav Huna was accustomed to pass by and teach at the entrance of the house of Rabbi Avin the carpenter. He saw that Rabbi Avin was accustomed to kindle many lights in honor of Shabbat. Rav Huna said: Two great sages will emerge from here. Indeed, Rav Idi bar Avin and Rav Hiyya bar Avin, his two oldest sons, emerged from their family. Rav Hysda was accustomed to pass by and teach at the entrance of Rav Sheizvi's father's family home. He saw that Rav Sheizvi's father was accustomed to kindle many lights in honor of Shabbat. Rav Hysda said: A great person will emerge from here. Indeed, Rav Sheizvi emerged from them.

2) Shulchan Aruch, Orech Hayim 263:1

יֵשׁ מְכֻנְיָם לְעֵשׂוֹת ב' פְּתִילוֹת אֶחָד כְּנֶגֶד זְכוֹר וְאֶחָד כְּנֶגֶד שְׂמוֹר

There are those who prepare two candles [for Shabbat]. One corresponding to “remember” and one corresponding to “guard”.

3) Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 25b

הַדְּלִקַת נֵר בַּשַּׁבָּת חֻבָּה

Lighting Shabbat Candles is obligatory

4) Rashi on BT Shabbat 25b

"חובה" - כבוד שבת הוא, שאין סעודה חשובה אלא במקום אור כעין יממא...

Obligatory: This is [included in] the honor of Shabbat, for a meal is only special/important in a place where there is light as bright as day.

5) Mishneh Torah, Sabbath 5:1

הַדְּלִיקַת נֵר בְּשַׁבָּת אֵינָה רְשׁוּת אֶם רְצָה מְדַלֵּיק וְאִם רְצָה אֵינּוּ מְדַלֵּיק. וְלֹא מִצְוָה שְׂאִינּוּ חַיִּב לְרַדֵּף אַחֲרֶיהָ עַד שִׁיעֲשֶׂנָה כְּגוֹן יַעֲרוּבֵי חֲצֵרוֹת אוֹ נְטִילַת יָדַיִם לְאַכִּילָה אֶלָּא זֶה חֻבָּה. וְאֶחָד אֲנָשִׁים וְאֶחָד נְשִׁים חַיִּבִּין לְהִיּוֹת בְּבִתְיָהוּן נֵר דְּלוּק בְּשַׁבָּת. אֶפְלוּ אֵין לוֹ מָה יֵאָכֵל שׂוֹאֵל עַל הַפְּתָחִים וְלוֹקֵחַ שָׁמֶן וּמְדַלֵּיק אֶת הַנֵּר שְׂוֵה בְּכָלֵל עֲנֵג שַׁבָּת. וְחַיִּב לְבַרֵּךְ קֹדֶם הַדְּלָקָה בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְּלִיק נֵר שַׁבָּת. כְּדָרֵךְ שְׂמִבְרַךְ עַל כָּל הַדְּבָרִים שֶׁהוּא חַיִּב בָּהֶם מְדַבְּרֵי סוּפְרִים:

The lighting of Sabbath lights is not of free choice, to light or not to light as one chooses, nor is it the kind of religious performance that an individual is not called upon to make a special effort to render, such as preparing an *eruv* in courtyards or washing the hands before eating. It is rather a duty, binding on men and women alike; they are obligated to have lamps burning in their homes on Sabbath eve. Even if one has nothing to eat, let them go begging at the doors, buy oil, and light a lamp, forming an integral part of Sabbath delight (*oneg shabbath*). Before lighting, one should recite a blessing: "Blessed are you, Hashem, who rules the universe, who sanctified us with your commandments, and commanded us to light the Sabbath lights." This is the same principle that one recites a benediction over all duties introduced by the sages.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, "The Sabbath," page 66

"Just as creation began with the word, "Let there be light!" so does the celebration of creation begin with the kindling of lights."

Question 1) According to source 1, why would the performance of certain rituals result in a reward of "beauty". What is this source saying about what these rituals do for a person?

Question 2) In a world without electricity, what would the experience of Shabbat have been like without lamps to fill one's home with light?

Question 3) When else do you light candles in your life (not in a religious context)? What does lighting candles do for the experience?

Question 4) Why would we continue to light Shabbat candles when we have electricity? Is there value in continuing this practice? If so, what is that value for you personally?

The candles are lit before the blessing is recited.

BARUCH atah, Adonai
Eloheinu, Melech haolam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav,
v'tzivanu l'hadlik
ner shel Shabbat.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק
נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

BLESSED ARE YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who hallows us with mitzvot,
commanding us to kindle the light of Shabbat.