

בית הוראה דיעטראיט  
**BAIS HORA AH OF DETROIT**  
HALACHA HOTLINE

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF HaRav Shmuel Irons שליט"א VAAD HALACHA Rav Aharon Yoel Sorscher · Rav Yissachar Wolf · Rav Boruch Miller

KITCHEN \* SHABBOS \* YOM TOV \* BRACHOS \* AVEILUS \* TAHARAS HAMISHPACHA \* EVERYDAY SHAILOS

## ISSUE #21 – Shabbos Candles FAQs

### Commonly Received Questions and their Answers

Below are some common questions and answers based on psakim from the rabbonim of the Bais Horaah. Please note: in the event one believes they have heard a different opinion in the past, one's family posek should always be consulted. Mareh mekomos for any specific answers below are available by email request to [ask@bhdetroit.org](mailto:ask@bhdetroit.org).

- **Is a bracha of shehechyanu recited by a woman who is lighting candles for the first time?**
  - The common minhag is that shehechyanu is not recited on the mitzvah of hadlokas neiros.
  - However, a woman who is particularly joyful about using expensive candlesticks for the first time would indeed say shehechyanu. A woman who is using such candlesticks the first week she is lighting should have both the mitzvah and the candlesticks in mind during the shehechyanu.
- **Is it preferable to specifically use olive oil over other types of candles?**
  - Commercially manufactured candles which produce a clean and consistent flame may be used even l'chatchila. However, some have a family minhag to specifically use olive oil.
- **Is it necessary to turn off the lights in the room when lighting the candles?**
  - There is no obligation to do so. However, it is praiseworthy to turn the lights off and then back on, specifically for kavod Shabbos, just prior to making the bracha.
- **If a woman forgets to light candles one week, is she required to light an extra candle in the future?**
  - In general, an extra candle is added. However, this question depends on the specific circumstances. A halachic authority should be presented with all the details and considerations to determine if this is indeed required in a particular case.
- **May one flame be used to light another?**
  - One may light one Ner Shabbos from another Ner Shabbos. However, one may not light a match or any intermediary flame from a Ner Shabbos, even in order to then light another Ner Shabbos.
- **Are men obligated in Ner Shabbos?**
  - Yes. Both men and women are obligated in Ner Shabbos. However, due to several reasons, a woman is given halachic precedence in the performance of this mitzvah. In any case, it is praiseworthy for a man to prepare the candles in his home.
- **If, for some reason, a woman will miss candle-lighting, what should be done?**
  - In this case, the husband or another family member over Bar/Bas Mitzvah should light the candles. An extra candle is not required in the future since the candles were ultimately lit.
- **If a flame blew out before the bracha was recited, may it be relit?**
  - The common custom is that the flame may be relit as long as the bracha was not yet recited.
- **We will be sleeping at home, but eating the Friday night meal elsewhere. Where is the best place to light?**
  - Shabbos candles must be lit in a location where they will either be useful in providing light or bring honor (kavod) to the Shabbos seudah. All other considerations are secondary to this requirement.
  - In this case, because you are sleeping at home, the best place to light is generally at home. However, you must find a way of deriving benefit from the candles. A practical solution would be to light at least one long-lasting candle (e.g. a yahrtzeit candle) so that it will still be burning upon your return home after the meal. You should then have a snack or drink near the burning candle. If that is not an option, one may light at the location of the meal in such a way that the light enhances the Shabbos seudah. Please note, the mitzvah of Oneg Shabbos dictates that in all cases one ensure that his home is properly lit so as not to stumble upon returning from the seudah.

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- **I recognize that it is ideal to light at home, however the distance of my meal makes it difficult to travel both ways by foot. What is the best option?**
  - In this case, you should light at the location of your meal so that you can drive there before candle-lighting. The candles must be within sight of your seat at the meal. In a case of need, where there is no option to light at the meal in the halachically acceptable manner described above, a halachic authority should be consulted with the specifics of the situation.
- **I will be sleeping at someone else's home and eating the Friday night meal elsewhere. Where is the best place to light?**
  - Either location can work; the best option is the one which will allow for placement of the candles that maximizes kavod and enjoyment of the light. Considerations include the following:
    - If lit at the meal location, will they be visible to you from the table?
    - If lit at the sleeping location, will they still be lit upon return?
    - Is there a visible and safe location to light them?
- **What should be done when spending Shabbos in a hospital that does not permit lighting candles?**
  - An incandescent light should be used. Please Note: Most lights today are either LED or fluorescent, however many Bikkur Cholim organizations stock special incandescent battery powered lights.
  - A bracha may be said on incandescent lights. If one only has non-incandescent lights, they should be turned on l'kavod Shabbos however no bracha is made.
  - One should be sure to eat something or spend time near the light.
- **What should a boy or girl in yeshiva or seminary do for hadlokas neiros?**
  - Generally the school will have someone light in the dining room on behalf of all students. If the school is closed, a student can be yotzei with the family with whom they will be eating the Shabbos meal. It is preferable for them to contribute a small amount (e.g. at least 10 cents) to the cost of the lights.
  - Here too, Oneg Shabbos requires ensuring that their sleeping area has sufficient light so as not to stumble in the dark.
- **If one is out of town, but his wife is lighting at their home, does he need to light?**
  - If he will be eating alone, he should light on his own. Otherwise, he is yotzei with his wife's lighting at their home.
- **If a woman will be in the hospital and her husband is at home, what should be done?**
  - He should light at home and have his wife in mind.
  - She should make sure that her room has some light on.
  - However, if the husband will not be at home, he should arrange to be included in his host's lighting. A common practice is to contribute a small amount (e.g. at least 10 cents) to the cost of the lights. Additionally, the woman should light an incandescent light with a bracha.
- **If a woman usually lights more than two candles, should she light the same amount while traveling?**
  - The common custom is to light only two candles while traveling.
- **When is the earliest time that candles may be lit?**
  - Shabbos candles may not be lit prior to plag hamincha. This is especially relevant when making early Shabbos during the summer months; it is essential to note the time of plag hamincha and not light candles prior.

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