

Kindling the Shabbos Lights :

A - WHEN TO DO THE MITZVAH?

1. The first Mitzvah when Shabbos is ushered in is the kindling of the Shabbos candles.
2. **There are different customs about exactly when to light. The different opinions are 15, 18, and 20 minutes before sunset. The time posted in our Shul bulletin reflects the 18 minute opinion.**
3. **Only in an extreme emergency, [or if one forgot earlier] one may still light candles even 2 minutes before sunset. It is forbidden to light candles after sunset.**
4. Men who daven in Shul, must accept “Tosefes Shabbos” add least 2 minutes before sunset, regardless if they started staying Kabbolas Shabbos or not. Men should optimally say “Mishmor Shir Leyom Hashabbos” before sunset.
5. One is permitted to kindle the Shabbos lights earlier than the above said times. The earliest one may light candles is 1 ¼ Halachik hours before sunset.

B - WHO DOES THE MITZVAH?

6. The obligation to light Shabbos candles applies to all adult members of a household. However, not every member of the household is required to light. When one member of the household lights, the entire household fulfills the Mitzvah.
7. On Friday afternoon, the wicks of the Shabbos lights should be charred [lit and extinguished] so that they ignite easily. The custom is that the man of the house should do this.
8. The men prepare the Shabbos lights so they have a share in the Mitzvah. One should make sure that the candles are securely fixed in the holders. This demonstrates that the kindling is done for the sake of the Mitzvah.
9. The custom is for the men to wait to go to Shul until after candle lighting, to make sure that his wife does it on time.
10. The Mitzvah of kindling the lights has devolved upon the woman of the house. The Zohar says that a woman should rejoice over being able to kindle the lights and illuminate

the Shabbos. The Satmar Rav said that a woman should wear all her jewelry when she kindles the Shabbos lights, in honor of the Mitzvah.

C - PRIOR TO LIGHTING:

11. It is customary for women to wear a white kerchief and a white apron when kindling the Shabbos lights.
12. It is a Mitzvah to give Tzedakah with joy before kindling the Shabbos lights. It is customary for women to place some coins in a charity box before lighting. For mystical reasons it is recommended that a woman gives three small coins for Tzedakah.
13. One must make sure to kindle the lights in their proper place at the time of lighting, and not move them to another place afterwards. It is preferable to kindle the lights on the Shabbat table or somewhere in that room.
14. Care should be taken to ensure that there is sufficient lighting [via any source of illumination] throughout the house in any areas that will be used.

15. A husband should gently remind his wife to light before Shabbos. It is preferable for the husband to see the wife lighting, while still making it on time to Mincha in Shul. If for any reason the wife can not light the Shabbos lights, the husband should light. When the husband lights, he makes the blessing before lighting, and it is assumed that he has not brought in the sanctity of Shabbos with his lighting. [e.g. he can still drive to Shul before sunset.]

D - WHAT TO USE FOR THE MITZVAH ?

16. The Mitzvah is done to perfection when one uses olive oil. The Arizal says that at least two Shabbos lights should burn olive oil. [Regular candles that burn brightly are also acceptable.] If one can't get olive oil, one should use other types of oil, or wax or paraffin candles. ***If one can't get oil or wax candles at all one should turn on the electric lights with a Bracha.*** Even among the authorities who permit the use of electric lighting when needed many would

disqualify the use of fluorescent bulbs as they work differently than standard light bulbs.

17. It is commendable for a woman to kindle the Shabbos lights with a wax candle instead of a match. [Matches are also acceptable.]
18. The shabbos candles must burn at least until the beginning of the meal. Preferably, they should burn throughout the meal.
19. When the Shabbos lights are the only source of light, it is best to use candles that are long enough [or sufficient oil is used] to last until after the meal.

E - HOW TO DO THE MITZVAH?

20. After kindling the lights, the woman first places her hands in front of the lights, and then she encircles the lights with her hands, and finally covers her hands with her face. At that moment, she makes the blessing on the lights. [See Artscroll Siddur page 296.] She removes her hands from her eyes after the blessing is concluded. **At this point, she has brought in the sanctity of the Shabbos, and is**

prohibited from doing any Halachikly defined work on Shabbos.

- 21. According to Sephardim, many poskim say that women should say the Bracha before lighting. However, some say that those who have the practice of saying it after lighting should continue their practice, and if a woman doesn't have a practice, she should say the bracha before lighting.**
- 22. There is a dispute whether one can light Shabbat candles in a place that is already lit up with electric lights. Therefore, some say that one should turn off the electric lights, turn them back on for the sake of Shabbat, light the regular candles, and then say the bracha. Others say to turn off the lights, light the regular candles, and then turn on the electric lights.**
- 23. The Beracha recited when lighting the Shabbat candles is "Baruch Ata Hashem Elokeinu Melech Haolam Asher Kidishanu Bimitzvosav ViTzivanu LeHadlik Ner Shel Shabbos."**
- 24. When kindling the lights, the woman should set fire to most of the wick so that the flame**

will be burning well by the time she removes her hand after completing the lighting.

25. There are different opinions as to what to do with the match or candle that were used for kindling the lights. Some women put out that fire, others do not.
26. After kindling the lights, women say a special prayer that their husband and that their children should become Torah scholars or marry Torah scholars. A woman who lights the candles in a *joyful frame of mind* receives the power to have her prayers answered at this time. [Artscroll Siddur pg.296]
27. Under certain circumstances a woman may delay the acceptance of Shabbos until just before sunset, even though she already lit the candles. Under those special circumstances, (Mikveh preparations, driving a car when absolutely necessary, davening Mincha) she must stipulate either verbally or mentally that in spite of the fact that she is lighting the candles now, she does not accept Shabbos until just before sunset. Such stipulations would enable her to drive a car to Shul or to say the Mincha prayer before sunset. *In these*

circumstances she should first make the blessing and then light.

28. There is a custom to draw the curtains after kindling the Shabbos lights. The special holiness of Shabbos is meant only for the home – unlike the lights of Hanukah.
29. The Shabbos lights are very special. We should try to glance at them as often as we can.
30. If a woman does not kindle the lights for Shabbos due to her own *negligence* (and no lights were lit in the house at all), she must light an additional light for the rest of her life.

AWAY FROM HOME:

31. If a person / family eats the Friday night meal at a friend's house they do not fulfill their obligation of Neros Shabbos with their hosts. They must light their own candles. (Similarly, children who eat the Friday night meal at a friend's house, but will return home to sleep, fulfill their obligation of Neros Shabbos with the candles which were lit in their own home.) Therefore, it is preferable that the guests light in their own home to fulfill their own primary

obligation. However, some benefit from the light of the candles must be derived before the candles burn out, either before leaving home or after returning from home. If lighting in their own home is not an option, the wife may light in their host's home, before Shabbos, even with a beracha since she has contributed secondary light to her host's household.

32. If a family are guests away from home for Shabbos, they technically fulfill their candle - lighting requirement with the lighting of the woman of the house in which they are staying. It is customary, however, that all married women light their own candles and recite a bracha.
33. If one is staying in a hotel / hospital for Shabbos, some say that one should light an incandescent bulb with a bracha in one's private room. This may be done even if the light is in a closet or in the bathroom, however, if one lights in the bathroom, the bracha should be made outside the bathroom. However, if this option isn't possible, one should light in the dining room so that people can derive benefit from it, but one may not light with a

bracha in a place that no one will get benefit from the candles. If there are family members lighting at home, then you light in the hotel / hospital without a bracha.