

HALOCHOSCOPE

This week's question:

If a woman kindled *Shabbos* lights before *plag hamincha*, should she extinguish them and rekindle them after *plag hamincha*? Should her husband kindle additional lights?

The issues, this week:

A) *Ner Shabbos*

B) *Tosfos Shabbos*, bringing in *Shabbos* early

next week:

C) *Plag hamincha*

D) *Shelo yakdim*, how early may one make *Shabbos*

E) Extinguishing and rekindling; the *brocha*

A) *Ner Shabbos*

According to most poskim, the *mitzvah* to kindle *Shabbos* lights is not Scriptural. Some consider it *divrei sofrim*, a Prophetic *mitzvah*. Rabbinical *mitzvos* like *Chanukah* and *Purim* could only have been instituted after the giving of the Torah. Others were instituted by *Moshe*, or even earlier, such as by the court of *Shem*, for those who observed the Torah, including the *Avos*. Reference is made to the *Shabbos* lights of *Sarah Imainu* and of *Rivkah Imainu*. A minority consider this *mitzvah* Scriptural.

Ner Shabbos could be a *mitzvah* in its own right, or part of a larger *mitzvah*, but significant enough to merit its own *brocha*. The two main sources for the *mitzvah* are *kavod* and *oneg Shabbos*. Both are based on the verses in the *Navi Yeshaya*, making reference to long-standing observances, dating back, at least, to the times of the Exodus. *Kavod Shabbos* is the *mitzvah* to honor *Shabbos* by preparing specially for it. This includes dressing specially nicely and cleaning, tidying and arranging the home. *Oneg Shabbos* refers to enjoying oneself on *Shabbos*, specifically in the physical sense. This includes enjoying special foods and resting. Some say this refers to having the entire home well lit. Having the table set with lights is part of *kavod Shabbos*. In another view, having the home well lit is part of *kavod*. Eating is enjoyed when the dining area is lit. Based on this, all would agree that one must kindle lights in both the living and dining areas.

Shabbos is the time for *shalom bayis*, domestic harmony. The first instance of domestic discord took place right before the first *Shabbos*. Adam and Eve argued about who was responsible for the sin of eating of the tree of knowledge. In essence, if people are unable to navigate the house easily, there will inevitably be a lack of *shalom bayis*. Since one may not kindle lights on *Shabbos* itself, it is essential to kindle them before *Shabbos*. With the addition of this idea, the obligation is expanded. It now includes areas that do not appear to be part of the general living or dining areas. On the other hand, were the obligation based purely on *shalom bayis*, the lights would be unnecessary in a home

that is already well lit. To fulfill *kavod* or *oneg Shabbos*, one must kindle lights specially.

This last matter is debated. A minority view says that one need not recite a *brocha* on these lights, since one need not always kindle them. If there is light in the home without these special lights, one has no further obligation. Therefore, even if one needs to specially supply the light, this kind of obligation could not be considered a *mitzvah* in its own right, with its own *brocha*. The majority view rejects this, maintaining that on the contrary, one would extinguish the existing lights and rekindle them for *Shabbos*. This pertains to our case. If the *ner Shabbos* is already kindled, why should it be extinguished and rekindled? If it is rekindled, why should there be a special *brocha*?

By kindling the lights, one ushers in his or her personal *Shabbos*. As we will discuss, one should try to begin *Shabbos* a little early. To satisfy the view that one must kindle special lights for *Shabbos*, they must be kindled at a time that this is evident: after the earliest time that *Shabbos* can be ushered in (*plag hamincha*, see below) and before *Shabbos* actually begins (*shkia*). They are the ideal way to start *Shabbos*. The woman of the house accepts *Shabbos* with the *brocha*. A man can do the same, but since he is obliged to participate in the service of *kabolas Shabbos*, he would stipulate that his kindling should not be considered his personal acceptance. This idea is not really a reason to kindle as much as a result of the other reasons. Since these are *Shabbos* lights, their kindling or the *brocha* recited on it is an indication of one's personal ushering in of *Shabbos*.

Another reason arose in later times. Sects of Jews began to preach a misleading version of the *mitzvah* forbidding kindling fires on *Shabbos*. The text of the verse states: 'You shall not burn fire in your homes.' The deviant sects translated this to ban artificial light in the home, even if it was kindled before *Shabbos*. The traditional and Rabbinic meaning is that one may not do the *melacha* on *Shabbos* to produce fire. To show that one follows the Rabbis, one must kindle these lights before *Shabbos*, which is entirely permissible. The source for this reason is an almost explicit Scriptural reference to the *mitzvah*. The Torah says: You shall not kindle a fire in your homes **on the day of *Shabbos***', implying that one may kindle it before *Shabbos* and let it burn on into *Shabbos*.

Esoteric connections are made between *Shabbos* and light. The most basic of these is that the Midrash says that when Hashem blessed *Shabbos* at Creation, it was with light.

Assuming one kindles lights in all locations around the home, should he recite the *brocha* on *kavod*, *oneg*, or *shalom bayis*, and which location counts for these? The consensus is to recite the *brocha* where one eats. If there is already light there, such as when one woman has already kindled in that room, many maintain that another may kindle with a *brocha* elsewhere. If one will not be eating at home, he or she may recite a *brocha* on lights that are kindled anywhere in the home, provided that they will be alight later when the person can benefit from them. The obligation applies to all Jews. In one home, one person kindles for all members of the household. Priority is given to the woman who runs the house. This is her *mitzvah*. Some link it to atoning for Eve's part in eating from the *aitz hadaas*, tree of knowledge. A guest or lodger may participate in the household's lights by buying a small part of them. [See Vayakhel 35:3 Mechilta, Yeshaya 58:13-14, commentaries. *Shabbos* entire second perek, Poskim. Beraishis Rabah 60:15, Rashi 24:67, commentaries. Avudraham Lail *Shabbos*. Tur Sh Ar OC 263, commentaries. Be-

hag mitzvos kum aseï 138. Sefer Chasidim 1147. Bais Halevi 11. Yabia Omer II:17.]

B) Tosfos Shabbos

Halachic day begins at night. The exact timing of 'nightfall' is unclear. Sunset would seem to be easy to determine visually. Yet, *halachic* sunset is also controversial. From the beginning of the concealment of the sun below the horizon until the afterglow is no longer evident, is all part of *shkia*, the sinking of the sun. Some say the *rakia*, sky or firmament, is viewed as a mass. The sun is viewed as going through this mass. Its entry into it, its being considered inside it, and its exiting the other side are all part of the process. Thus there is a beginning and an end of *shkia*. After *shkia* is over, the sky gets progressively darker. Eventually it is dark enough for three average stars to be seen in average conditions, *tzais hakochavim*. The time lag between *shkia* and *tzais* is called *bain hashmoshos*. Does *halachic* day begin at *shkia*, *tzais*, or sometime in-between? Is *bain hashmoshos* part of the preceding day, the following night, half-half, or in doubt? The Talmud debates these issues, concluding that the entire period is to be considered in doubt.

The time lag is also debated. In one view it is as short as the blink of an eye. The conclusive opinion (R. Yehuda) is somewhat contradictory. In one context, he gives this time as three quarters of a *mil*, and in another, four *mil*. A *mil* is a linear distance. The Talmud uses the time taken to walk such linear distances to measure time. The day can be divided based on the distance expected to be traveled by the average walker. Most commentaries calculate a *mil* as eighteen minutes. Three quarters is thirteen and a half minutes. Four *mil* is seventy-two minutes. Why not test *tzais hakochavim* visually? What about astronomical variations? Evidently, the visual aspect of darkness is really a sign by which one can determine true *halachic* timing.

Interpreting all this is further debated by the poskim. The best known reconciliations of R. Yehuda are the *GRA*, *Rabeinu Tam* and the *Yereim*. *Rabeinu Tam* says that between the beginning of *shkia* and *tzais* is seventy two minutes. The first fifty-eight and a half minutes of this time is not considered *bain hashmoshos*. The sun has dropped below the horizon, but lingers out of view. When it disappears totally for the day, *bain hashmoshos* begins, and lasts thirteen and a half minutes. According to the *GRA*, *bain hashmoshos* begins when *shkia* begins, and lasts thirteen and a half minutes. Though it is still getting darker, it is fully night after this. *Tzais hakochavim* means that all stars can be seen. The smallest stars can not be seen until seventy two minutes after *shkia*. The opinion of the *Yereim* is generally interpreted as sundown being considered full night. *Bain hashmoshos* begins thirteen and a half minutes before then. Due to the doubts, *Shabbos* is presumed to begin at *bain hashmoshos*, with each community following one of the views.

While the advent of the new day is in Hashem's hands, we have a *mitzvah* to sanctify *Shabbos* and declare its holiness. This applies during the day and at the onset. During *Shabbos*, close to the beginning, we need to recite *kidush*, and *havdalah* at the end. We also need to 'accept' *Shabbos* at the beginning. This can be done by candle-lighting, saying *kidush*, *lecha dodi*, *mizmor shir*, *borchu*, *maariv*, or even 'good *shabbos*' with the correct intent at, or before, the beginning. If one did not accept it before *Shabbos*, he still does so during *Shabbos*. *Shabbos*, for him, began at *bain hashmoshos*. If one accepts it early, *Shabbos* begins for him, even if it is still light. He has extended *Shabbos*.

This extension is called *tosfos Shabbos*. It is derived from a Scriptural *mitzvah* to extend *Yom Kippur*, beginning and end. *Shabbos* may be extended to as early as *plag ham-incha*, a seasonal hour and a quarter before 'night' [see next section]. Thus, a part of an earlier day that could be considered attached to the next day is sanctified with the holiness of *Shabbos* for this person. *Shabbos* has a list of commandments, mostly negative, enforced by severe penalties. *Tosfos Shabbos* is less severe. It is based on a positive *mitzvah* and does not carry the penalties. One does not have the ability to impose the stringency of *Shabbos* that Hashem imposes. However, *tosfos Shabbos* is Scripturally binding. There is a view that only the last moments are included in the Scriptural aspect. Any earlier self-imposed time is Rabbinically *Shabbos*. In one respect, *tosfos Shabbos* is more stringent than *bain hashmoshos*. *Bain hashmoshos* is treated as a *safeik*, doubt of the more severe *Shabbos*. *Tosfos Shabbos* is definite *Shabbos* for the person who accepted it early.

As it depends on the individual, *tosfos Shabbos* is subjective. If a community accepts it at a certain time, all individuals are bound by the *minhag makom*. Many begin fifteen or eighteen minutes before sunset. This guarantees that one is adding on time even according to the opinion of the *Yereim*. In communities where there is no single authority, some people do *melacha* after this time. Many poskim maintain that the minimum is to add two minutes before *bain hashmoshos*. As a self-imposed acceptance, *tosfos Shabbos* is viewed by some poskim as a relative and subjective 'vow'. Normally, one does not give much thought to how much he accepts. He accepts the concept of *Shabbos*, including all of its restrictions and stringencies. However, it is possible to both exclude certain matters, such as the option to make a *kidushin*, and even certain Rabbinical prohibitions, including some that are permitted during *bain hashmoshos*. If one accepted *tosfos Shabbos*, he or she may no longer do *melacha*, including kindling *ner Shabbos*. [See Brochos 2b, Shabbos 35a 118b, Psachim 94a, Rosh Hashana 9a Kesubos 50a, etc. Poskim. Tur Sh Ar OC 89 261 262:3 263:4 10 11 15 16, etc., commentaries.] *to be continued ...*

On the Parsha ... *Shabbas Shabason for you .. from evening to evening shall you observe your Shabbos .. [23:32] Shabbos is determined by Hashem. [Ibn Ezra] This really refers to all Shabbosos. This means that the onset is automatic. Adding to it beforehand is up to us, and is thus called 'your Shabbos'. [Karnei Or, Yahel Or] Why is this concept taught in the mitzvah of Yom Kippur? Rashi [23:35] says that the way to sanctify other Moadim is with food and drink, as well as clean clothing and tefillah. On Yom Kippur, it is only through the clean clothing and tefillah. Eating is done on the day itself. To properly sanctify it with clean clothing, one must be wearing them when the day begins. Kindling lights is even forbidden on the day of Shabbos or Yom Kippur. The **only** way to fulfill it is to do it before the onset. However, if one kindles or puts on the clean clothing early, it could be construed as honoring Friday. In order to make it obvious that it is to sanctify Shabbos, the Torah gave us the power to make it Shabbos immediately after dressing for Shabbos, if we so wish. Indeed kindling the *nairos* early literally ushers in the personal Shabbos. This is how we individuals make Shabbos our own.*

Sponsored By Joshua Sandler, in memory of Dinah bas Lazer and Bluma a"h, whose *yahrzeit* is

on the 22nd of Nissan. 🕯

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