

HALOCHOSCOPE

This week's question:

A woman has been kindling three *Shabbos* lights. Originally she kindled two. One *Shabbos* she did not kindle, and as a result added the third from then on. Her future husband has seven children, including some single, none of whom currently live with their father. The first time she married, she did not add any new lights. She has no children of her own. Should she continue her practice as is, or should she add any new lights, and if so, how many? Does her future husband's practice have any bearing on this matter?

The issues:

- A) *Ner Shabbos*
- B) Who kindles?
- C) How many candles are kindled, and why?
- D) One who forgot to kindle one week
- E) Changing a practice; following a husband's practice

A) *Ner Shabbos* [Summary of Halochoscope XVI:5.]

According to most poskim, the *mitzvah* to kindle *Shabbos* lights is not Scriptural. Some consider it *divrei sofrim*, a Prophetic *mitzvah*. Some Rabbinical *mitzvos* were instituted after the giving of the Torah. Others were instituted by *Moshe*, or earlier, 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.

Two main sources for the *mitzvah* are *kavod* and *oneg Shabbos*. Both are based on the verses in the *Navi Yeshaya*. *Kavod Shabbos*, honoring *Shabbos* by preparing specially for it, includes dressing specially nicely and tidying the home. *Oneg Shabbos* refers to enjoying oneself on *Shabbos*, including 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. Thus, 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.

By kindling lights, one ushers in his or her personal *Shabbos*. One should try to begin *Shabbos* a little early. To kindle special lights for *Shabbos*, they must be kindled at a

time that this is evident, late afternoon. 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. The text of the verse states: 'You shall not burn fire in your homes.' Deviant sects translated this to ban artificial light in the home, even if it was kindled before *Shabbos*. The Rabbinic meaning is that one may not do produce fire on *Shabbos*. To show adherence to the Rabbis, one kindles lights before *Shabbos*, which is entirely permissible. There is an almost explicit reference to this source. 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. [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. Behag mitzvos kum asef 138. Sefer Chasidim 1147. Bais Halevi 11. Yabia Omer II:17.]

B) Who kindles?

The obligation applies to all Jews. It is partly to light up the home, but is a personal obligation as well. In a household, one fulfills both obligations at the same time. In one home, one person kindles for all members of the household. Priority is given to the woman who runs the house. A guest or lodger may participate in the household's lights. The poskim say that one who plans to eat food prepared by the host need only ask the host to have him in mind when kindling. For married men who are away from home, the wife may be considered the agent of her husband. Many poskim maintain that the husband should also try to fulfill the *mitzvah* himself in some form. Such agency also works, according to many poskim, in the reverse. Some say that if both spouses are away from home in different locations, they must both kindle or participate separately.

Single men and women who have homes of their own would follow the basic procedures mentioned here. If a man is divorced or widowed with a daughter home, the daughter should kindle for the family. Otherwise, he is treated like a regular single. [See Refs to previous section. Chovas Hadar, Nairos *Shabbos* 4-6 8 11-13, notes. Gitin 90a, Poskim. Tur Sh Ar EH 119:2, commentaries.]

C) How many candles, and why?

The basic *mitzvah* is to kindle one lamp. Since the idea is to provide light, one may kindle as many lamps as he wishes. The common practice is to kindle two lamps. The Talmud relates how people sometimes do things for *kavod Shabbos* in pairs. This symbolizes the duality of *shamor* and *zachor*, the two ways the *mitzvah* to observe *Shabbos* is worded in the *aseres hadibros*. Accordingly, it has become the *minhag* to kindle two lights for *Shabbos*. Additional lights are added in accordance with various *minhagim*.

One common *minhag* is to add a light for each new child. There is no recorded early basis for this, but that it is so widespread that it must be quite well-established. In recent *halachic* works, various explanations have been suggested. The *zachor* and *shamor* lights double as lights for the husband and wife. By adding one for each child, there is a lamp for each member of the home. This concept exists in the *mitzvah* of *Chanukah*. Some say,

the Talmud says that faithful adherence to this *mitzvah* evokes divine assistance in raising scholarly children. Thus, one *ner* connects to each child. This *minhag* is continued even after children leave home or pass away. [See Tur Sh Ar OC 263:1, commentaries. Piskei Teshuvos notes 19-20 30, refs. Radiance of Shabbos 4:IV:1, notes.]

D) One who forgot to kindle one week

The poskim cite a *minhag* that a woman who forgot to kindle *Shabbos* lights one week should kindle an extra light for the rest of her life. Various explanations are offered for this. It could be seen as *tashlumin*, to make up for her omission. Some suggest that it is a *kapara*, to atone for the missed week. The reason commonly accepted is that it is a reminder to her to keep *kavod Shabbos* in mind, so she should never again forget. Based on this reason, if she did not forget, but was unable to fulfill it, she is not penalized. If it were *tashlumin*, she would need to make it up anyhow.

Questions are raised about this *minhag*: It is relatively recent; it is unusually harsh for an atonement (as a reminder, it makes more sense); apparently, it only applies to women; there are *minhagim* on the exact number of lights to kindle – may one add to the number? The last issue is debated, and the prevailing custom is to permit it. Some say that the punishment for laxity in this *mitzvah* is death in childbirth. This strong *kenass* was instituted so that she may protect herself from this forever.

Based on this, a novel idea is suggested to explain the *minhag* of kindling one lamp for each child. When a woman gives birth, the common practice is that her husband kindles that week. Though she was not negligent, she still compensates by kindling an additional light after that. Thus, she kindles a number corresponding to her family members.

If a woman can not afford an extra light, she may add oil or use a longer candle. If a woman forgot one of her usual number of candles, some impose the *kenass*. Others say that this is a *minhag*, and it is best not to add to the original custom. Nowadays, we have electric lights on, except in locations where Jews are producing the electricity. Accordingly, in terms of *shalom bayis* or to defy the deviant sects, even if one forgot to kindle special lights, there is still light in the house. Moreover, the main *kavod* and *oneg* comes from the electric lights. The candles are added for ambiance, a small aspect of *kavod* or *oneg*. Some even question the validity of reciting the *brocha* on these candles. Accordingly, some contemporary *poskim* ponder whether the *kenass* should apply in this situation. In reality, since she would normally kindle with a *brocha* despite her electric lights, she should probably adhere to the *kenass*. [See Darkei Moshe, Bach, Rema, Levush OC 263:1, commentaries. Refs to section C.]

E) Changing a practice; married women following husband's practice

Once a woman begins kindling a specific number, it is treated as a *hanhagah tovah*, meritorious practice. This has the status of a *neder*, voluntarily adopted practice, which is binding for the future. In order to change or stop the practice, she must obtain *hataras nedarim*, annulment of her vow, by going before a panel of three men. Her husband may do this on her behalf. There should also be a reasonable excuse for making the change.

If a woman is divorced or widowed, even if she moves back into her mother's home, the poskim say that she continues kindling the number she originally kindled. A man who is divorced or widowed need not continue kindling the number that his wife kindled.

It is considered his wife's *neder*, rather than his own. He should kindle two lights to represent *zachor* and *shamor*, since this is the basic common *minhag*. He may undertake to continue the full number anyhow, for the same basic reasons mentioned earlier [except the novel approach, which does not apply to him]. If he remarries and the new wife has a different *minhag*, he does not require *hataras nedarim*.

This last note indicates that the *minhag* of kindling *ner Shabbos* is determined by the woman, even after she marries. There is always an issue with a couple who observe different *minhagim* from home. They cannot always continue to keep their separate practices. In the words of the early poskim, this raises the issue of *lo sisgodedu*, do not make factions, a Scriptural *mitzvah*. While two separate communities may practice according to separate rulings, even in the same town, one community may not do so. The main reason is to prevent discord. This certainly applies in the home. The question then arises, which side should the new couple follow? The straightforward answer is to follow the rule that is applied to one who moves to a new community. He must follow all the practices of his new community, and must give up the rulings of his former community. Normally, a wife joins her husband's community. In some cases, the opposite takes place. In either case, both follow the practices of their current community. Assuming that there is no single community in town, the issue arises in the home. The community has variant rulings.

However, when it comes to certain practices, there is no need to follow one practice or the other, because it need not lead to discord. Common examples of this are where there is no absolute need for both to be doing the same thing. For example, a ruling on a food matter applies to both together when they eat a meal. A ruling on a clothing matter applies to each individually. What about *ner Shabbos*? The common practice has evolved where the wife follows her own *minhag* from home. Since she is the one kindling, and it does not affect her husband directly, she may continue her old practice. Moreover, this becomes the practice of the family, so that her daughters may follow it as well.

In our case, the husband is independent of his ex-wife's *minhag*. She probably kindles two or adds one for each child. He probably does not add. The new wife certainly need not add, according to our discussion. [See refs to section C. Halochoscope XV:7.]

In conclusion, she should not change her original practice when she gets married.

On the Parsha ... *We shall fall to the sword, our wives and our young ones will be the spoils .. [14:3] As for the young ones who you said would be the spoils, them shall I bring in, and they shall know the Land that you disdained. [14:31]* Apparently, only the men rebelled. Indeed, the verse implies that the punishment applied to the men who had been counted. Yet, there is no mention of the wives being permitted to enter Israel! Perhaps the wives were in the middle. They would have supported their husbands, but they had more trust in Hashem. This was not one of the things that required them to follow their husbands' '*minhag*'. However, they did not openly resist the rebellion as they had done at time of the sin of the golden calf. Therefore, they were spared the decree, but only in the merit of their children.

Sponsored by Joel and Gail Ungar in memory of Leo and Hilda Ungar a”h.

Sponsored in memory of Baila Malka bas Baruch a”h, whose *yahrzeit* was on the 19th of Sivan. ם

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