

# LIGHTING SHABBOS CANDLES PART 3

*by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt*

Question: Is it permitted to light one Shabbos candle from another?

Discussion: Yes, it is permitted. While it is not permitted to use a lit Shabbos candle to ignite a match or to melt the bottom of another candle so that it should adhere to the candlestick, it is permitted to use a lit candle to light another candle[1]. The best way to do this is to pick up the unlit candle, light it, and then put that candle back into its candlestick[2].

Question: Is it preferable to kindle the Shabbos lights with olive oil rather than with wax candles?

Discussion: Many early sources speak about olive oil as being the preferred medium for the Shabbos lights[3], as the flame that it produces is the clearest and the purest. On Shabbos, when we want to avoid anything that could lead to tampering with the wicks or adjusting the light source, the Sages preferred the use of olive oil because the light it casts is superior to that of other oils. Nowadays, however, when wax candles cast as good — or even better — a light as olive oil, there is no halachic advantage to using olive oil rather than candles[4].

Question: What should a woman do if, after lighting the candles, a gust of wind blows them out, or they tip over and are extinguished?

Discussion: That depends on the particulars:

- If some or all of the candles blow out before the woman recites the blessing over them, she should relight the candles and recite the blessing[5].
- If some or all of the candles blow out after the blessing is recited, she should instruct a household member who did not yet "accept" Shabbos to rekindle the candles on her behalf[6]. No blessing is recited over the second lighting.
- If there are no household members available who can kindle the lights for her, or if the candles blow out after sunset (or even before sunset but after Shabbos has begun for the entire community), she should do nothing[7]. If, however, she will be distressed or even merely upset about not having lit candles for Shabbos, she may instruct a non-Jew to relight the candles on her behalf[8].

Question: Last week we mentioned that women customarily observe all Shabbos restrictions upon lighting candles, even though they are lighting well in advance of sunset. Is this custom mandatory or is it optional, i.e., may a woman stipulate that she is not "accepting" Shabbos when she lights

candles?

Discussion: This is a matter of dispute among the Rishonim. Some maintain that Shabbos begins automatically with candle lighting, and women have no choice in the matter. Accordingly, any stipulation that they may make to the contrary is invalid. Others, however, hold that women may stipulate that they do not "accept" Shabbos when lighting candles[9]. The final halachic ruling is a compromise between the two views. Under normal circumstances, not "accepting" Shabbos when lighting candles is forbidden. But if a special need arises, then an exception is made and a woman is allowed to make such a pre-condition — either verbally or mentally — before lighting candles[10]. It is difficult to define what exactly falls under the "special needs" category and what does not. When in doubt, one should consult a rabbinic authority[11].

Question: Must all members of the household "accept" Shabbos when the lady of the house kindles the Shabbos lights?

Discussion: Not necessarily. The basic halachah holds that Shabbos begins with the lighting of candles only for the lady of the house who is lighting the Shabbos candles. All other household members, including any girls in the house who do not light candles, are not obligated to begin observing Shabbos until sunset, or at a designated earlier time when the entire community "accepts" Shabbos[12]. The poskim stress, however, that it is highly praiseworthy for all members of the household to make every effort to begin Shabbos when the ladies light candles[13]. There are two reasons for this:

- There is a minority view among the Rishonim that Shabbos actually begins about fifteen minutes before sunset[14]. Although most poskim do not rule in accordance with this view, it is still advisable to attempt to satisfy this opinion as well[15].
- Waiting until the last minute before sunset places one in great danger of "missing the deadline" and inadvertently desecrating the Shabbos[16].

In addition, Rav M. Feinstein writes that he undertook a personal stringency not to ride in a car after candle lighting time, since it appears to some people as a desecration of Shabbos[17].

Question: Are all Shabbos restrictions in full effect once the lady of the house has lit candles?

Discussion: A number of exceptions apply in the interim period between candle lighting and the onset of Shabbos:

- The lady of the house may instruct any other person — Jew [who has not yet "accepted" the Shabbos] or non-Jew — to do anything on her behalf that is needed for Shabbos[18].
- If, after lighting candles, she realized that she forgot to wrap a towel around the soup pot (in order to retain its heat), some poskim permit her to do so[19], while others are more stringent[20].

1. If she is very thirsty, she may drink some water to quench her thirst[21].  
Some poskim hold that, b'diavad, she may daven Friday's Minchah even after lighting Shabbos candles[22].

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1. Mishnah Berurah 263:4.
2. To satisfy the opinion which holds that once lit, Shabbos candles should not be moved; see Discussion for Tishrei 21.
3. See Tosafos, Shabbos 23a (s.v. mereish), Sefer Chasidim 272 and Ma'asei Rav, quoting the custom of the Gaon of Vilna.
4. Mishnah Berurah 264:23. See Az Nidberu 3:4.
5. Rav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos k'Hilchasah 4, note 183).
6. O.C. 263:17.
7. She would not be required to add an additional candle in subsequent weeks, since her failure to light candles was not her fault.
8. Based on Beir Halachah 263:1 (s.v. lehadlik).
9. Both views are quoted in O.C. 263:10. There is a minority view that permits women to accept Shabbos "partially," i.e., accepting it for certain restriction and not for others. See, however, Har Tzvi, O.C. 139, who rejects this opinion.
10. Mishnah Berurah 263:44.
11. For instance: Praying at the Kosel is definitely an uplifting and inspiring experience. Yet Rav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos k'Hilchasah 43, note 137) ruled that a woman may not stipulate that she is not accepting Shabbos in order to travel there after lighting candles, as this is not considered a "special need."
12. Rama O.C. 263:10.
13. Mishnah Berurah 261:23.
14. This is the view of Sefer Yere'im, and it is quoted as halachah by the Bach and the Magen Avraham.
15. Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 261:21 and Beir Halachah (s.v. m'tchilas); Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:62.
16. Mishnah Berurah 263:16.
17. Igros Moshe, O.C. 1:96.

18. O.C. 263:17.
19. Rav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos k'Hilchasah, 43, note 113).
20. Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:74, hatmanah 1.
21. Da'as Torah, O.C. 271:4.
22. See Shemiras Shabbos k'Hilchasah 43, note 128.

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