



Parshas Tetzaveh 5765

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Is there a problem reciting a b'racha when there are electric lights in the same room?

Shabbos) and immediately light the Shabbos candles, thus reciting the *b'racha* over both. ⁴

In the previous shiur we learned that Sephardim should not recite a *b'racha* when lighting candles next to other candles and even for Ashkenazim there is room for a *hidur* to light, when possible, in a place that does not have other candles.

It would seem then, that nowadays, when we have bright electric lights lighting up our homes, there would be a problem in making a *b'racha*. ¹ Indeed we find that the *poskim* ² discussed this problem ³ and offered several solutions, as follows.

- 1) The wife should first light the Shabbos candles with the electric lights off and only after she lights the candles should the husband turn on the electric lights. The wife may not turn them on after lighting candles because she accepts the Shabbos with her lighting.
- 2) The Shabbos clock should be prearranged in such a way that the lights will turn on only after she has lit the candles.
- 3) She should first turn on the electric lights "*lichvod Shabbos*" (for the sake of

If one does not have Shabbos candles (hotel room, hospital etc.) may one recite a b'racha over electric lights?

We find many opinions in this matter that hold that one may recite a *b'racha* and consequently, one who lights electric lights specifically for Shabbos and recites a *b'racha*, has on what to rely. ⁵

Must one accept Shabbos with the candle lighting?

The accepted custom is that the housewife accepts Shabbos with her lighting and therefore she should finish all her preparations before she lights the candles.

This is also the basis for the manner she lights and recites the *b'racha*. Since there is an opinion who says that she accepts the Shabbos with the *b'racha*, and henceforth she will not be able to light the candles, she first lights, covers her eyes and then recites the *b'racha*. The reason for covering the eyes is in order to benefit from the light only after the *b'racha*.

¹ This might even pose a problem for Ashkenazim, because the *heter* to light and make a *b'racha* next to other candles is based on the *s'varah* "the more light the merrier". This might not be able to be said in the presence of electric lights where candlelight will not add much, if at all. There is however another *s'varah* that says that the Shabbos candles lend the meal the special ambience of a Shabbos atmosphere which is not provided by the electric lights. Based on this *s'varah* we could say that one may recite a *b'racha* even in the presence of electric lights.

² See the *SS"K* 43:34.

³ See also the *SS"K* 43 footnote 171.

⁴ HaGaon Rav Sternbuch first lights the candles and then turns on the lights and then recites the *b'racha*. He wishes to light the candles when there are no other lights turned on.

⁵ *SS"K* 43:4 and footnote 22. It appears that Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach was not so in favor of it unless the electricity is derived from a battery, see the footnote in the *SS"K*.

May one light and stipulate that one does not want to accept Shabbos with the lighting?

This is a *machlokes*. The *BaHag*⁶ says that she accepts the Shabbos with her lighting, as mentioned. Several *Rishonim*⁷ learn that she can make a תנאי – a stipulation – that she does not accept Shabbos with the lighting. The *Kol Bo* and R' Peretz learn that she cannot make a תנאי and she must accept Shabbos with her lighting. The Magen Avraham⁸ rules that one should not light and make a תנאי unless necessary. The *Mishna Berura* says⁹ that the reason for this is because there are opinions that hold that a תנאי does not have an effect, as mentioned.

What would you consider as being necessary to rationalize not accepting Shabbos with the lighting?

This is difficult to ascertain, for example, if she wishes to travel to the *Kosel HaMa'arvi* after lighting, and the only way to do that is to light and to make a תנאי that she is not accepting Shabbos. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach holds¹⁰ that it is not “necessary” to travel to the *Kosel* and as such she may not light and stipulate that she is not accepting Shabbos. If a couple are eating at their parents on Shabbos night and it is much easier to travel there before Shabbos, I think that they would be better off lighting candles at their parents rather than lighting at home and making a תנאי. They must nevertheless leave lights on at home, as mentioned earlier, because there must be light in one's home on Shabbos.

If a man lights, does he have to accept Shabbos with his lighting?

The *halacha* is that a man does not and he need not accept Shabbos with his lighting,

⁶ *Ba'al Halachos Gedolos*.

⁷ *Hagahos Maimoni* in the name of R' Meir and the Mordechai.

⁸ *Simon* 263:20.

⁹ *Simon* 263:44.

¹⁰ *SS"K* 43 footnote 137.

nevertheless the *Mishna Berura* writes¹¹ that it is preferable to stipulate that he is not accepting Shabbos with his lighting.

Vort on the Parsha

The *possuk* says “I will dwell amongst the *B'nei Yisroel* and I will be their *Elokim*” (29:45). The *Seforno* explains “dwell” to mean that *Hashem* will accept our service willingly and He will hearken to our prayers. He then explains that being our *Elokim* means that He will manage *B'nei Yisroel's* affairs without a medium and they will not have to fear from the astrological signs.

It is possible that the two parts of the *possuk* are interwoven, because indeed there is such a thing as *mazal* – as we say *mazal tov* to each other on many occasions, and if there was no *mazal* for *b'nei Yisroel*, what do we say it for. The answer is that we have the ability to change and modify our *mazal* through prayer and service. Therefore the *possuk* says, *Hashem* will dwell amongst us and He will hear our prayers, which will have an effect to the point that we need not fear the *mazal* or astrological signs.

Food For Thought

If the father of the house accepts Shabbos early, do the members of the household follow suit?

If one forgot to recite the b'racha over the candles, may one recite it later?

If the candles went out after being lit but before the b'racha, may she relight them?

If a gentile lit the candles for me after sh'kiah – sunset, may I recite the b'racha?

Answers coming be"H next week.

¹¹ *M"B Simon* 263:42.

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Note: The purpose of this series is intended solely for the clarification of the topics discussed and not to render halachic decisions. It is intended to heighten everyone's awareness of important practical questions which do arise on this topic. One must consult with a proper halachic authority in order to receive p'sak.