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"חוקי חיים"

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שע"י "חדר הזרעה" שכונת מנחת יצחק פעיה"ק ירושלם תובב"א - בראשות הרב חיים אהרן בלייער שליט"א

Halochohs compiled by HaRav Chaim Bleier – Translated from the Hebrew edition by R' Zerachya Shicker

Halochohs of

Neiros

Shabbos

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"חוקי חיים"

ותלמד
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שע"י "חדר הוראה" שבגנת מנחת יצחק פעיה"ק ירושלם תובב"א - בראשות הרב חיים אהרן בלייער שליט"א

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Hadlakas Neiros of Shabbos – 2 | Vayeitzei 5782

246

Reasons for the Mitzvah of Hadlakas Neiros

Different Reasons

1. Last week (Issue 245), we discussed the background of the mitzvah and its reasons. Before discussing several halachos and principles relevant today that are dependent on the various reasons, we will briefly go through the main reasons. Then we will bring up several practical halachic ramifications.
2. The main reason for the mitzvah is for **oneg Shabbos** (תוס' שבת דף כ"ה ע"ב ד"ה הדלקת רמב"ם פ"ה שבת ה"א): a person derives enjoyment from good illumination in the rooms in his house. Oneg Shabbos is primarily where the seudah is (Issue 245, par. 3, below par. 25).
3. Another reason is for **kavod Shabbos**. Some understand that it is an honor to Shabbos to be in an illuminated house (רש"י שבת דף כ"ה); others understand that lit candles inherently provide honor to a place, which is also why we light candles at an important seudah or at a chuppah even if they are not needed for their light (אוי"ז הל' ערב שבת סי' י"א ד"ה ומי, שו"ת אג"מ או"ח ח"ה סי' כ' אות ל', פוסקי זמנינו).
4. An additional reason is for "**shalom bayis**" (גמ' שבת דף כ"ג ע"ב). Some understand that it is to create **peace between a man and his wife**, as sitting in the dark causes discomfort and is not conducive to shalom bayis (רמב"ם פ"ד חנוכה ה"ד, יראים סי' תכ"ט); others understand that this refers to **peace within the house**, i.e., light is necessary to avoid bumping into things in the house and to prevent unpleasant occurrences that can cause a person distress (רש"י דף כ"ה ע"ב, מרדכי סי' רצ"ד).

Condition for Fulfilling the Mitzvah

5. There is a condition necessary to fulfill the mitzvah of hadlakas neiros: someone must benefit from the light. Whereas Chanukah candles are lit to publicize the miracle and a person may not benefit from their light (שו"ע סי' תרע"ג סי"א), it is the opposite with Shabbos candles. The mitzvah is specifically for people to benefit from their light by not sitting in the dark – whether because of oneg, kavod, or shalom bayis – or for the increased honor of the Shabbos. If no one benefits from their light, the mitzvah was not fulfilled and the brachah was levatalah (שו"ע סי' רס"ג ס"ט).
6. The benefit derived must fit with one of the reasons for the mitzvah, i.e., the candles must provide light in a place that would otherwise be dark or in a place where they enhance the honor of Shabbos, as will be explained.

Hadlakas Neiros Today

7. Due to the advent of electric lighting, the nature of the mitzvah of hadlakas neiros of Shabbos is very different today than it was in the times of Chazal. The Torah did not change ח"ו, but the reality changed and the halachos are affected accordingly.

Times of Chazal

8. In the times of Chazal and up until the invention of electric lighting, the purpose of hadlakas neiros was to avoid sitting in the dark. They really lit candles every night, not just erev Shabbos, and they lit everywhere they needed to be able to see. But not everyone had the money to provide as much light as necessary so Chazal made an obligation to light candles in honor of Shabbos, primarily to provide proper illumination, either because of oneg Shabbos, kavod Shabbos, shalom bayis, or to prevent bumping into things.

Today

9. However, today we rely on electric lighting and people do not sit in the dark, neither during the week nor on Shabbos. If so, how do we fulfill the mitzvah of hadlakas neiros to the extent that we can make a brachah? Like a lamp in the daylight (גמ' חולין דף ס' ע"ב), candlelight does not add any illumination to a room with electric lighting, as even without the candles we would not be sitting in the dark. We must explain how we fulfill the mitzvah of hadlakas neiros in light of the reasons for the mitzvah.

Brachah on Additional Light

10. The poskim argue whether a person may fulfill the mitzvah of hadlakas neiros and make a brachah in a spot where someone else already lit candles.
11. Some are uncertain about the ability to fulfill the mitzvah in a place where someone already lit Shabbos candles since the second candles do not add anything. Even so, they note that the minhag is to light with a brachah nonetheless (מרה"ח אור דרוני, פסקי הלכה ענ"א). Others are not concerned. They write that multiple women may light with a brachah since the additional candles have the benefit of shedding light in every corner of the house, providing more shalom bayis and extra joy (שו"ת מהר"ל סי' נ"ג הובא בב"י סוף סי' רס"ג).
12. **Mechaber's opinion.** In view of this machlokes, the Shulchan Aruch writes (שם ס"ח) that only one person should make a brachah to make sure there are no brachos levatalah. This is the Sephardi minhag (בן איש חי שנה ב' נח סי"א): one woman is motzi the others with her brachah. They do not make a brachah on additional light unless the second woman's candles are longer than the first woman's and will provide benefit after the first ones go out (שו"ת רבי עקיבא יוסף או"ח ח"ב קצ"ט ס"ח).
13. **Rama's opinion.** However, the Rama writes that we make a brachah even on additional light (רמ"א שם); this is the Ashkenazi minhag. Every married woman lights with a brachah even if there are multiple women lighting in one room. If it is possible to light at somewhat of a distance from other candles, that is better (מג"א מ"א). (סקט"ו בשם הש"ל"ה, but if that is not possible, they can light next to each other (א"ר סקו"ז, דרך החיים אות י"א, מ"ב סקל"ז)).
14. **Today.** Nowadays that we have electrical lighting, how can one make a brachah at all on hadlakas neiros according to the Mechaber, who holds we do not make a brachah on additional light? Not only that, it could be that even according to the Rama, who holds we make a brachah on additional light, that was only back in the day when the room would be dark without Shabbos candles and every extra candle provided more light. Perhaps in a room with bright electric lighting, a candle does not give *any* extra light, in which case even according to the Rama one would not be able to make a brachah. There are multiple scenarios that must be discussed.

Some Extra Light

15. **Candles on/near the table.** When the candles are lit on or near the table the seudos are eaten on, they provide a little extra light, even in a room with electric lighting. They create a bit more enjoyment and happiness, as the light of 100 candles is not the same as the light of 101 candles (כלשון מהר"ם שו"ת ד"ב סי' ר"ח). Hence, according to the Rama, a brachah can be made.

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