

The *eiruv* foods are held while the following blessing and declaration are recited.

**בְּרוּךְ** אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר  
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל מִצְוֹת עֲרוּב.  
**בְּהַרְדִּין** עֲרוּבָא יְהִיא שָׂרָא לָנָא לְאַפּוּיִיו  
לְבִשׁוּלֵי וּלְאַצְלוּיִי וּלְאַטְמוּיִי  
וּלְאַדְלוּקֵי שְׂרָגָא וּלְתַקְנָא וּלְמַעְבַּד כָּל צְרָכְנָא,  
מִיּוֹמָא טָבָא לְשַׁבְתָּא לָנָא וּלְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל הַדְּרִים  
בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת.

## הַדְּלָקַת נְרוֹת

The candles are lit and the following blessings are recited. When Yom Tov falls on Shabbos, the words in parentheses are added.

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קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְּלִיק נֵר  
שֶׁל (שַׁבַּת וְשָׁל) יוֹם טוֹב.  
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שֶׁהַחֲיָנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזְמַן הַזֶּה.

### Selected Laws of Candlelighting on Erev Yom Tov

- Women should be dressed in their Yom Tov clothing prior to lighting the Yom Tov candles (*Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 75:6; *Mishnah Berurah* 262:11).
- According to many opinions, the Yom Tov candles should be lit before the onset of Yom Tov, which begins at *shekiah*, sundown. The son of the Sma quotes his mother as saying that this is the proper time to light, and many authorities follow this ruling. Others hold that the Yom Tov candles should be lit immediately before the start of the Seder. Every woman should follow her family custom. If one does not have a family custom, she should follow the first opinion and light candles prior to the onset of Yom Tov (*Siddur Yaavetz*, Laws of Erev Pesach 4; *Mateh Efraim* 625:33). When Pesach falls on Shabbos, however, the candles **must** be lit prior to *shekiah*.
- All opinions agree that on the second night of Yom Tov, the candles may only be prepared and lit after *tzeis hakochavim*, nightfall (consult a calendar or your rabbi for the exact time).

The *eiruv* foods are held while the following blessing and declaration are recited.

**B**lessed are You, HASHEM, our God, King of the universe, Who sanctified us by His commandments and commanded us concerning the commandment of *eiruv*.

**T**hrough this *eiruv* may we be permitted to bake, cook, fry, insulate, kindle flame, prepare for, and do anything necessary on the Festival for the sake of the Shabbos — for ourselves and for all Jews who live in this city.

## ☞ LIGHTING THE CANDLES ☞

The candles are lit and the following blessings are recited. When Yom Tov falls on Shabbos, the words in parentheses are added.

**B**lessed are You, HASHEM, our God, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us through His commandments, and commanded us to kindle the flame of the (Shabbos and the) Festival.

**B**lessed are You, HASHEM, our God, King of the universe, Who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.

- On Shabbos, women light the candles and then recite the *berachah*. On Yom Tov, however, many opinions state that it is better to first recite the *berachah* and then to light the candles, while some have the custom to light the candles and then recite the *berachah* as is done when lighting the Shabbos candles (*Mateh Efraim* 625:33). One should follow her family custom or consult a rabbi.
- The prevalent custom is for women to recite the *berachah* of *Shehecheyanu* when lighting candles for Yom Tov, although some communities have the custom that women do not recite the blessing of *Shehecheyanu* at this time, but wait to hear it at Kiddush. Even if a woman recited *Shehecheyanu* when lighting the candles, she may answer Amen to the *berachah* of *Shehecheyanu* when it is recited at Kiddush (*Shemiras Shabbos K'Hilchasah*, Vol. 2, Ch. 44, n. 18).
- After lighting candles, it is an auspicious time for women to daven, especially for the success of their children in Torah and mitzvos (*Rabbeinu Yonah*, *Iggeres HaTeshuvah* 81; *Rabbeinu Bachya*, *Shemos* 19:3).
- The act of lighting Shabbos and Yom Tov candles is the first mitzvah to usher in Shabbos and Yom Tov and therefore carries with it great merit and *berachah* (*Kedushas Levi*, Chanukah, *Kedushah Sheniyyah*).

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It is customary to recite the following prayer after the kindling.

The words in brackets are included as they apply.

יְהִי רָצוֹן לְפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי,  
שֶׁתְּחַוֶּינִי אוֹתִי [וְאֶת אִישִׁי, וְאֶת בְּנֵי,  
וְאֶת בְּנוֹתַי, וְאֶת אָבִי, וְאֶת אִמִּי] וְאֶת כָּל קְרוֹבֵי;  
וְתִתֵּן לָנוּ וּלְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל חַיִּים טוֹבִים וְאֲרוּכִים;  
וְתִזְכְּרֵנוּ בְּזִכְרוֹן טוֹבָה וּבְרָכָה; וְתִפְקְדֵנוּ בְּפִקְדוֹת  
יְשׁוּעָה וְרַחֲמִים; וְתִבְרַכְנוּ בְּרִכּוֹת גְּדוּלוֹת;

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## LIGHTING THE CANDLES / הדלקת הנרות

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### *Why We Light*

What are some of the reasons for the mitzvah of lighting candles on *erev Shabbos* and *erev Yom Tov*?

- *Kavod* — lighting candles is a means of honoring Shabbos and Yom Tov (*Rambam, Hilchos Shabbos 30:5*).
- *Oneg* — having light increases one's "*oneg Shabbos*," enjoyment of Shabbos and Yom Tov, since one can see and thereby enjoy his food (*Shulchan Aruch 263:1*).
- *Shalom bayis* — having light prevents people from stumbling in the dark and becoming irritated, so lighting candles promotes peace in the home (*Shabbos 25b*).

### *A Special Mitzvah for Women*

Candlelighting before Shabbos and Yom Tov is a special mitzvah given to women. Why were women given this mitzvah?

One reason is that Chavah convinced Adam to eat from the *etz hada'as*, the tree of knowledge. As a result, death was introduced into the world: Hashem decreed that people would no longer live forever. A person is compared to a candle. As a means of attaining forgiveness for Chavah's "extinguishing the candle of the world," and bringing death to mankind, Jewish women throughout the generations light candles on *erev Shabbos*

It is customary to recite the following prayer after the kindling.  
The words in brackets are included as they apply.

**M**ay it be Your will, HASHEM, my God and God of my forefathers, that You show favor to me [my husband, my sons, my daughters, my father, my mother] and all my relatives; and that You grant us and all Israel a good and long life; that You remember us with a beneficent memory and blessing; that You consider us with a consideration of salvation and compassion; that You bless us with great blessings;

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and *erev Yom Tov* (*Tur O.C. 263*).

Another reason women were given this mitzvah is that women are the ones most usually found in the home and are responsible for household duties. They therefore merit receiving the mitzvah of *hadlakas neiros*, which ensures that there will be ample light in the home (*Shulchan Aruch O.C. 263:3*).

## *In the Merit of the Candles*

Sometimes the light of the Shabbos candles can make smoke disappear....

*Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein recently told of a woman who became observant, though her husband refused to take on the mitzvos. She tried to get her husband to at least stop smoking in the house on Shabbos, telling him that it disturbed the atmosphere of Shabbos that she was trying to create, but her husband adamantly refused. Her rabbi came up with a suggestion for a compromise: the husband should refrain from smoking for as long as the Shabbos candles were lit. The husband agreed.*

*At first the wife used standard candles, but eventually she began using thicker candles, which burned longer. The husband, true to his word, refrained from smoking as long as the candles burned. As the weeks went by, the woman used thicker and thicker candles until eventually she began using candles that lasted 24 hours, the entire duration of Shabbos. The husband dutifully kept to his pledge, and as result of his wife's Shabbos candles, he increased his observance of Shabbos.*

### [35] **THE EISHES CHAYIL HAGGADAH**

וְתִשְׁלִים בְּתִינוּ; וְתִשְׁכֵּן שְׂכִינְתְּךָ בֵּינוּ. וְנִכְנִי  
לְגִדְל בָּנִים וּבְנֵי בָנִים חֲכָמִים וְנִבְוֹנִים, אוֹהֲבֵי  
יהוה, יִרְאֵי אֱלֹהִים, אֲנָשֵׁי אֱמֶת, זָרַע קֹדֶשׁ,  
בֵּיהוּ דְבָקִים, וּמְאִירִים אֶת הָעוֹלָם בַּתּוֹרָה  
וּבְמַעֲשָׂיִם טוֹבִים, וּבְכָל מְלָאכַת עֲבוֹדַת הַבוֹרָא.  
אָנָּא שְׁמַע אֶת תְּחִנָּתִי בְּעֵת הַזֹּאת, בְּזִכּוֹת שְׂרָה  
וְרַבֵּקָה וְרַחֵל וְלֵאָה אֲמוֹתֵינוּ, וְהָאֵר נִרְנוּ שְׁלֹא  
יִכָּבֵה לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, וְהָאֵר פְּנִיךָ וְנִשְׁעָה. אָמֵן.

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*With the candles lit and the cigarettes extinguished, the holy atmosphere of Shabbos shone in their home (Aleinu L'Shabei'ach, vol. 2, p. 537).*

## *A Mother's Prayers*

The time immediately after lighting Shabbos and Yom Tov candles is considered a special time for women to daven and, specifically, to pray for their children's spiritual welfare. The Talmud (*Shabbos 23b*) tells us that the Torah is referred to as "ohr," a light, and someone who fulfills the mitzvah of *hadlakas neiros* will merit having children who light up the world with their Torah.

*Rav Aharon Shmuel Kaidanover was a great rav and Torah scholar, but his mother was a simple woman and unlearned. She didn't even know how to read Hebrew, let alone daven. Yet after lighting the Shabbos candles each week, she would pray in her native Russian that her son Shmuel grow up to be a Torah scholar. These heartfelt tefillos of a simple mother were answered in her son's immense achievements in Torah learning (Da'as Moshe, Terumah, quoting his father the Maggid of Kozhnitz).*

A more recent story illustrating the immense power of a mother's tefillos at *hadlakas neiros* was told by an outstanding Torah scholar who came from a family that had not been religious for generations. Asked how someone without a background in Torah studies could attain such heights in learning, the *talmid chacham* attributed his success in Torah to his grandmother.

that You make our households complete; that You cause Your Presence to dwell among us. Privilege me to raise children and grandchildren who are wise and understanding, who love HASHEM and fear God, people of truth, holy offspring, attached to HASHEM, who illuminate the world with Torah and good deeds and with every labor in the service of the Creator. Please, hear my plea at this time, in the merit of Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel, and Leah, our mothers, and cause our light to illuminate that it not be extinguished forever, and let Your countenance shine so that we are saved. Amen.

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*My grandmother wasn't religious, but she always lit candles on Friday night before sundown and davened for the success of her children and grandchildren, remembering that her mother had done so. What kind of success did she have in mind? Well, her husband, my grandfather, worked for then-Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion. He would come home every day praising his boss's talents, skills, and brilliance. Impressed by these stories, my grandmother would daven every Friday night after lighting candles that her children and grandchildren should grow up to be like Prime Minister Ben-Gurion.*

*One day the prime minister met with the Chazon Ish in a well-publicized meeting. After the meeting, Prime Minister Ben-Gurion called all of his staff together, including my grandfather, telling them how he had never met someone like the Chazon Ish, a man with such brilliance and deep perception.*

*My grandfather came home that day, and as usual reported everything that Ben-Gurion had said at the office. Upon hearing how Ben-Gurion said that he had never met such a man as the Chazon Ish, my grandmother said that if Prime Minister Ben-Gurion said that the Chazon Ish was a man like no other, she would start davening Friday night after candlelighting that her children and grandchildren should be like the Chazon Ish, and not like the prime minister!*

*It appears that the awesome power of a woman's tefillos at the time of candle lighting made all the difference for me! (L'ha'er, p. 20; HaMechanech, p. 200).*

[37] **THE EISHES CHAYIL HAGGADAH**

Today, Jewish mothers around the world daven for their children's growth in Torah and mitzvos. We can never underestimate the power of a mother's prayers!

*Ten-year-old Moshe was struggling in school. He tried very hard to pay attention and follow what was being taught in class, but he just wasn't getting it. Why was it so easy for his friends to learn Torah, and for him it was so hard? Why couldn't he understand what the rebbi was saying?*

*Moshe's parents did what they could; they hired private tutors, consulted with teachers and learning-disability specialists, but to no avail. No one knew why, but Moshe just wasn't succeeding.*

*Not succeeding, that is, until the middle of the year, when Moshe's rebbi noticed some positive changes. Suddenly, Moshe seemed to be able to sit and listen. A few days later, he asked a question on the sugya; a week later, he answered one. Was all the extra help that Moshe was getting beginning to pay off?*

*The rebbi called Moshe's parents to share the wonderful news of their son's progress and find out what had finally made him turn the corner. Moshe's mother explained the near-miraculous turnaround in her son's learning.*

*"For months, Moshe came home crying, pouring out his heart to me. He wanted so much to learn Torah, to understand what was being taught, but nothing seemed to help him. How long can a mother see her son in such excruciating pain? I knew I had to do something.*

*"A few weeks ago, I told Moshe that when a mother lights candles on erev Shabbos, there's a special zechus in her prayers for her children's achievements in Torah study. I explained that I had always davened for his success, but that from now on I would daven with even greater concentration and intensity. I suggested that the next time I lit Shabbos candles, he should stand next to me, and we would daven together, in the hopes that both of our tefillos would be heard by Hashem.*

*"The next Friday, at hadlakas neiros time, Moshe stood by my side as I lit the Shabbos candles. We then began to daven together, and I heard Moshe, my little 10-year-old tzaddik, cry out to Hashem, pleading for success in his learning. Moshe's tefillos and tears mingled with mine in a harmonious plea to Hashem. This has been going on for the last few weeks, and,*

*baruch Hashem, our tefillos are being answered" (Barchi Nafshi, vol. 4, p. 352).*

## *The Power of Women's Tefillos*

The *tefillos* of a woman are particularly effective and dear to Hashem. When Rachel Imeinu died, Yaakov Avinu didn't bury her in Me'aras HaMachpeilah, where he would later be buried with his forefathers. Instead, he buried Rachel on the outskirts of the city so that generations later, when the Jewish people would pass by her grave as they were sent to exile, she would cry out to Hashem for their salvation: the heartfelt prayer of a mother for her suffering children.

Another woman in *Tanach*, Chanah, is held up as an example of how we pray. The Talmud (*Berachos* 31a) deduces many essential laws of *tefillah* from Chanah's heartfelt *tefillah* to Hashem that she should merit a child, a prayer that was answered with the birth of Shmuel HaNavi. On Rosh Hashanah, we read the chapter describing Chanah's *tefillah* in the haftarah, teaching us that in the merit of the Jewish women's *tefillos* we can merit a favorable judgment.

The Eish Das asks why we read the Torah portion that focuses on the merits of our foremothers on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, leaving the Torah portion regarding the merits of our forefathers for the second day. He explains that when a child falls, a father picks him up, dusts him off, and helps him get back on his feet. A mother, with her *tefillos* and actions, prevents the child from falling in the first place. On Rosh Hashanah, then, the foremothers' great merits are recalled even before those of our forefathers.

*The first Belzer Rebbe, Rav Shalom Rokeach, would only daven in a shul that housed a women's section. He would say that the tear-laden tefillos of the women enable all the tefillos in the shul to go up to Hashem (Margoliyas HaShas, Bava Metzia, p. 446).*

*Similarly, when the Chozeh of Lublin first entered the new beis midrash built for him, he said, "There is still something missing here." He explained that there was no women's section in the beis midrash. "The tears and tefillos of the women are vital for the acceptance of all the tefillos!" (HaLekach V'Halibub Haggadah, p. 50).*

*In Ponevezh, too, they learned the importance of women's*

*tefillos. The Ponevezh Yeshivah is particularly crowded on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, since both current students and alumni flock to the yeshivah to daven among their great roshei yeshivah and rebbeim. One year the expected crowd was going to be too large for the beis midrash. Those in charge of the seating suggested that they open the women's section and use it for additional men's seating. When they went to the rosh hayeshivah, Rav Shach, to ask his opinion, he flatly refused. "You may not take away the women's section. We need the tears and tefillos of the women davening there!" (Orchos HaBayis, p. 396).*

*Rav Yosef Shaul Nathansohn, the rav of Lemberg and a great posek, was asked if it was permitted to make the men's section of the synagogue smaller in order establish a women's section. He wrote, "I don't see any reason for this to be prohibited. On the contrary, this [establishing a women's section] is a great mitzvah...for they [Chazal] have said it was in the merit of the Jewish women of the generation that the Jewish nation merited redemption" (Shaul U'Meishev 2:22).*

The Talmud says that ten portions of "sichah," speech, were sent down to this world; women took nine shares, and men took one (*Kiddushin* 49b). The plain meaning of this is that innately women are more inclined to talk than men. Rav Shimshon Dovid Pincus gives a deeper explanation of this Talmudic teaching. The word *sichah* specifically refers to *tefillah* (*Berachos* 26b). Women didn't take a greater portion of ordinary talk and chitchat; they took a greater portion of *tefillah*. Women were given a unique and exceptional ability to connect to Hashem through *tefillah*. Moreover, the word *sichah* implies an informal conversation; we can speak to Hashem at any time and in any place about anything that's on our minds (*Nefesh Chayah*, p. 38).

The Chazon Ish writes that one can daven to Hashem in any language in which he is comfortable, and he should pray to Hashem "as one speaks to his friend." You can talk to Hashem on a moment-to-moment basis, in any language, without any formal preparations (*Kovetz Igros* 2:2; *Mesillas Yesharim* 19). Whether you're cooking supper, driving, taking care of the children, or shopping for groceries, you can always converse with Hashem.

*Rebbetzin Shoshana Aliza Zilberstein, the daughter of Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, and the wife of Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein, was*

*once at home when a neighbor came to ask her a question. The neighbor was about to knock on the door when she heard the rebbetzin speaking to someone. Not wanting to disturb, the neighbor left.*

*Fifteen minutes later the neighbor returned, and again she heard the rebbetzin talking to someone. The neighbor waited a few more minutes until the conversation stopped. Finally, she knocked.*

*Rebbetzin Zilberstein opened the door, and the neighbor was surprised to see that the rebbetzin was alone, and she wasn't on the phone. It turned out that the rebbetzin had been davening, and when she davened she spoke to Hashem with ease, simplicity, and directness, as one would speak to a friend (Shoshanas HaAmakim, p. 8).*