

# HOW TO LIGHT SHABBOS CANDLES

Shabbos candles are lit 18 minutes before sunset. After sunset has already passed, Shabbos automatically begins, and one can no longer light the Shabbos candles.

**1 LIGHT 2 CANDLES** that are large enough to burn for 2-3 hours, or until the Friday night meal has concluded.

Some have the custom to light 1 candle or many candles. Ask your Rabbi which custom to follow.



**2 EXTEND YOUR HANDS** over the candles, then draw them inwards in a circular motion, as if to bring the light toward you. This symbolizes that you're drawing the spirituality and holiness of Shabbos into your home and into your life. Do this motion 3 times. Then cover your eyes.



**3 SAY THE BLESSING** while your eyes are closed:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ  
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שַׁבָּת.



*Ba-RUCH / ah-TAH / ado-NOY / eh-lo-HEY-nu / MEH-lech / ha-o-LAM  
a-SHER / kee-d'-SHA-nu / bi-mitz-vo-SAV / vi-tzee-VA-nu  
l'-had-LEEK / neir / shel / Shabbos.*

Blessed are You, Hashem, our God, King of the universe,  
Who has sanctified us with His commandments,  
and commanded us to kindle the light of Shabbos.

By saying this blessing, you are accepting Shabbos upon yourself. As soon the blessing is finished, prohibited activities (such as using electronics) cannot be done. The candlesticks should not be moved because they are "muktzeh."

**4 TALK TO GOD** when you're done saying the blessing. Take a moment to thank God for everything He has given you, and ask for all that you desire for the future. God loves to hear your prayers! Jewish women traditionally use this special time to pray for their families and ask to raise upright and God-fearing children and descendants who will follow in the ways of Torah and Judaism. You can also use this time to pray for others who need good health, relief from pain, or any other need. Open your heart and speak to God.

# WHY LIGHT CANDLES ?



**LIGHT REPRESENTS CLARITY.** Shabbos is a day of clarity, when we can see our purpose in this world with greater clarity. All the distractions of technology and regular weekday pressures fade away. We spend a precious 25 hours focusing on the needs of our souls and our spiritual connection to God.



**CANDLELIGHT BRINGS CLOSENESS.** Couples light candles at romantic dinners because the dim light brings people closer together in a deep way. Shabbos is our “date” with God because on this day, we can focus totally on God without the regular distractions of the busy week.



**LIGHT BRINGS PEACE.** The Shabbos candles usher peace into the home because the soft glow of the candles provide a peaceful ambiance. Practically speaking, light also helps keep peace at home because it prevents us from stumbling in the dark, and allows us to see our food better so we can enjoy it more as we eat it. Shabbos is a day of peace and rest when we can focus on our families, friends, God, and all that is dear to us.



**THE SOUL IS CALLED A “CANDLE OF GOD.”** Just as the soul infuses spirituality into the body, Shabbos infuses spirituality into the week. The spirituality of Shabbos lights up a week that would otherwise be shrouded in darkness, confusion, and materialism.

## SPECIAL FOR WOMEN

Both men and women are equally obligated to light Shabbos candles. However, lighting candles is one of **3 mitzvos that are given especially to women**, so mothers and wives usually light the candles on behalf of the men in their household.

Why specifically women? Jewish tradition teaches that women are more naturally attuned to spirituality, and **it is their primary responsibility to infuse spirituality into their homes**. Women are more involved in the day-to-day tasks of running a home, which provides many opportunities to infuse these mundane tasks with meaning and spirituality. **Women have the power to set the tone for their home and ensure that their families remain connected to God and Judaism.**

Our Sages teach that when Sarah (Abraham’s wife) would light the Shabbos candles, her flames would keep burning all week long, from one Shabbos to the next. The power of a Jewish woman extends throughout the entire week and can elevate her own life and the life of her family.

