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Shabbat Candles

Light Up Your World





Light Up Your World

We're putting an awful lot of power into a young girl's hands. It's called a Shabbat candle. If she knows how to use it and when and where to light it, you better watch out. One young girl with one little candle can light up an entire home. Maybe even an entire world.

Candle Power

Light has always been Jewish secret weapon #1. A little bit of light can scare away massive darkness. So when things get dark, the sages say, get to work making light. Spiritual light.

The first woman to harness spiritual light was Sarah—as in Sarah and Abraham, the first Jews. Her Shabbat candles, they say, burned straight through from Shabbat to Shabbat. All week long, they made everything in her home shine—everything they ate, everything they owned, everything they did. And she passed that power on to her great-granddaughters for all generations.

So when one Jewish girl lights a single candle just before sunset on Friday, saying a blessing and a heartfelt prayer, she's not alone. She's lighting together with Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah and all the Jewish mothers and daughters for hundreds of generations. Now that's an awesome amount of light.



You can bet that home will never again be the same.

“When a woman lights the Shabbat candles with joy in her heart, she brings peace into the world, health and happiness to her family, and is blessed with children who brighten the world.” –The Zohar

“Just as any candle reveals whatever is hidden in a dark room, so too the Shabbat candles reveal the G-dliness hidden in all things. Just as the light of the Shabbat candles bring peace between a husband and wife, so, too, they bring peace between G-d and His world.” –The Rebbe

“When I light my Shabbat candles, I imagine the view from outer space. As darkness creeps around the face of the earth, I can see how little flames flash upward to consume it. First in New Zealand, then Australia and around the whole globe until Hawaii or Tahiti. Over a period of twenty-four hours, the world is never left in darkness.” –A mother in Los Angeles

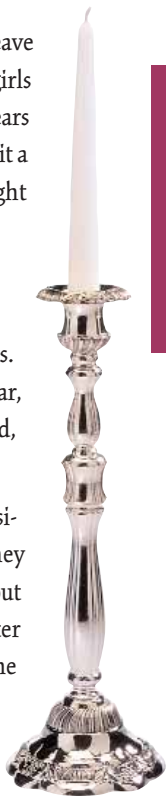
“Candles. Kewel!” –Chaya, age 12

7 Reasons Why Every Jewish Girl Should Light a Shabbat Candle (and women too)

In 1974, the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, began a campaign to get every Jewish girl to light a Shabbat candle. It's still going strong. Here are some of the reasons he gave for the campaign:



1. When there's more darkness, we need more light. Right now, there's a lot of darkness out there.
2. There are Jewish homes where no candle is lit. We need to light more candles to make up for them.
3. A young girl sees her candle spreading its light over the Shabbat table and she is filled with pride that lasts a lifetime.
4. Once upon a time, a girl didn't leave home until she married. Today, girls may live on their own for many years before marriage. Girls who never lit a candle at home often don't light when they leave.
5. It was originally the custom in many homes for all the women and girls to light their own candles. Only during the First World War, when paraffin was strictly rationed, did this practice dwindle.
6. Little girls are fireballs of enthusiasm, experts at getting what they want. A girl gets all fired up about lighting a candle, a few weeks later the mother is lighting and soon the whole house is filled with light.



7. Lighting Shabbat candles brings us closer to the Time of Light for all the world, as the ancient Midrash says, “Keep the mitzvah of the Shabbat lights, and I will show you the lights of the times of Moshiach.”

When to Light

The Shabbat candles are lit 18 minutes before sunset every Friday evening. Married women light at least two candles; many add a candle for each child. A girl in her mother's house should light only one candle-out of respect for her mother. Drop a few coins in a charity box before lighting.



How to Light

First light the candles. Then spread your hands around the flames and draw them inward three times in a circular motion. With this you are accepting the sanctity of Shabbat. Now cover your eyes and recite the following blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שַׁבַּת קֹדֶשׁ.

Here's how it sounds:

Baruch Atah Ado-nai E-loheinu Melech ha'olam,
ashair kid'shanoo b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanoo le-had-lik
ner shel shab-bat ko-desh.

Here's what it means:

Blessed are You, G-d our Lord, King of the universe, Who has made us holy through His commandments and has commanded us to kindle the lights of the holy Shabbat.

Uncover your eyes and behold the Shabbat lights.

The time of lighting is a special time to pray for children, health and sustenance. These prayers are readily accepted since they're carried above on the wings of such a great mitzvah.

Candles are also lit for each night of Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, the festival days of Sukkot, Passover and Shavuot. See your prayer book for the appropriate blessings.

Caution: *Shabbat (and Yom Kippur) candles must be lit before sunset. It is a desecration of Shabbat to light candles after sunset.*

Note: *When lighting after the onset of a festival, a preexisting flame must be used to light the candles since it is prohibited to create a new fire by striking a match or lighter, etc. However it is permissible to use or transfer fire from a flame burning continuously since the onset of the festival - such as a pilot light gas or a candle flame.*



For instructions and a schedule for your location, visit: www.mitzvahcampaigns.org/shabbat



Just one Mitzvah can change the whole world

10 Mitzvah Campaigns

לעולמי נשמת הררה ר' צבי הירש בן פרץ ע"ה