

## O.C. *siman* 679 : Chanukah Candle-lighting on the Eve of the Shabbos<sup>1</sup>

### The development of: **Se'if 1**

#### WHETHER THE SHABBOS CANDLE OR THE CHANUKAH CANDLE IS THE ONE TO LIGHT FIRST

The Ramban<sup>o</sup> [to *Shabbos* 23b - the Halachos of the previous *siman*]:

**From the Gemara's words:** "When choosing between the Shabbos 'candle of one's home' and the Chanukah 'candle'<sup>2</sup> - the 'candle of one's home' takes precedence<sup>3</sup>, " I infer that [this is true] even regarding which comes first; i.e. one lights the Shabbos "candle of one's home" before the Chanukah "candle"; for any time one Mitzvah is greater and more frequent ["*tadir*" - see "*Principles*"] than a second - that first one comes before the second.

**However, the Behag's statement on this is:** When one has to light the Chanukah "candle" and the Shabbos "candle", first he lights that of Chanukah and afterwards he lights that of Shabbos. For if he would light that of Shabbos first, it would become *assur* for him to light that of Chanukah, because he would have already accepted upon himself the Shabbos.

**[Still,] that principle is extremely doubtful<sup>4</sup>.** Just the opposite: It's not because it is Shabbos that one lights [Shabbos candles], but rather **because it is not Shabbos yet<sup>5</sup>.**

This disagreement, whether lighting Shabbos candles brings with it an acceptance of the Shabbos, is really a discussion for the Halachos of Shabbos [by O.C. 263:10]. The Tur here leans in favor of the position that it *doesn't* "bring acceptance", and the *Beis Yosef* mentions that this in fact agrees with the words of the Rosh<sup>6</sup>. However, the *Beis Yosef* says that here, in practice, one should avoid the problem (and do what's *definitely muttar*<sup>7</sup>), by simply lighting Chanukah candles first. The *Darkei Moshe* likewise brings that this is the *minhag* [despite the fact that he brings in

<sup>1</sup> This title for the *siman* is found in the *Aruch HaShulchan*<sup>o</sup>. The *Shulchan Aruch* does not use one here. (Rather, he merely calls it "*siman* 679 - which consists of one *se'if*." This is not uncommon for very short *simanim*.)

<sup>2</sup> The word "*ner*" is traditionally translated "candle", but the earlier sources generally do not use the word to refer to solid candles. Rashi explains that in the days of the Gemara, earthenware "lamps" were used; his full description is brought above (671:3).

<sup>3</sup> source's wording: "is greater [in importance]".

<sup>4</sup> source's wording: "so [very] far[-fetched]". (The replacement idiom is an attempt to capture the intent properly in English.)

<sup>5</sup> The Ramban also brings the Gemara (*Shabbos* 35b) which says Shabbos candles are lit "the amount [of time it takes] to fry a small fish" *before* the time one stops doing *melacha*<sup>o</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> The Tur usually adopts the positions of his father, the Rosh. (The *Beis Yosef* also mentions here that the *Ran*<sup>o</sup> and the *Mordechai*<sup>o</sup> hold like the Behag, and that the *Maggid Mishneh*<sup>o</sup> {based on the Ramban and the Rashba<sup>o</sup>} and *Rabbeinu Yerucham*<sup>o</sup> hold like the Rosh.)

<sup>7</sup> The *Beis Yosef* says that everyone agrees that one may light Chanukah candles first if he wants. The *Darkei Moshe* protests: The Rashba [who echoes the words of our Ramban] taught us clearly to do the opposite! [Still, presumably even the *Darkei Moshe* agrees that from *our* point of view (i.e. having a disagreement in front of us with many authorities on both sides), one cannot pay attention to "which Mitzvah is more frequent" (which does not make anything *assur*) in the face of possibly violating one's acceptance of Shabbos. (In fact, we see that the *Darkei Moshe* in *practice* does not object to lighting Chanukah candles first.)]

the Halachos of Shabbos that the only case where it's the *minhag* to be strict about Shabbos candles "bringing acceptance" is with respect to a woman who actually lights them herself].

Accordingly, the *Shulchan Aruch* rules: **On the eve of the Shabbos, one lights the Chanukah "candle" first, and afterwards the Shabbos "candle"**. (The *Rema*'s addition [with details about Friday Chanukah candle-lighting] follows the next subject.)

The *Mishnah Berurah* writes that if in practice someone already lit Shabbos candles first, then what to do next is different for men and women: A woman should not light Chanukah candles any more at that point [since it's the *minhag* in general to consider her to have accepted Shabbos (as mentioned)]; rather, she should tell someone else to light for her. (He explains that this other person says the main *bracha*, "...to light a Chanukah candle", but the rest she can say herself [for she is certainly not less than "one who sees" {*Sha'ar HaTziyun* - see above 676:3, and see above 675:3 where the *Mishnah Berurah* brings a slightly different ruling}].) On the other hand, if a man lit the Shabbos candles, we follow the strict Halacha according to most authorities [that he has *not* accepted Shabbos], so he can light the Chanukah candles afterwards by himself. (In the *Sha'ar HaTziyun*, he says this is despite the disagreeing of the *Taz*<sup>o</sup>; but that even *he* may mean to say that a man who *regularly* lights Shabbos candles [such as if he has no women in his home] is considered like a woman in this respect [i.e. he also is included in the above *minhag*].)

The *Ben Ish Chai*<sup>f</sup> [*Vayeishev* II (Halachos of Chanukah) 20] clarifies some practical details:

Since the husband lights the Chanukah candles, and the wife lights the Shabbos candles, one might think that with such an arrangement - the Shabbos candles could be lit first [since the one accepting Shabbos is not the one who will be lighting for Chanukah afterwards]. Nevertheless, the wife should still wait. However, if time is running out for lighting the Shabbos candles, and it's the seventh or eighth night of Chanukah (so it will take the husband a while to finish lighting), then she can light Shabbos candles as soon as the husband has lit *one* Chanukah candle.

[The *Ben Ish Chai* himself says the reason that the Shabbos candles should come first is a mystical one. On the other hand, the *Binyan Shlomo*<sup>o</sup> (responsum 53) explains that since the husband is also representing the wife in her fulfillment of the Chanukah lighting, it should not be done when she has already accepted Shabbos. However, the *Shulchan Aruch* in the Halachos of Shabbos (O.C. 263:17) says "some hold" that it's *muttar* for one Jew who has already accepted Shabbos to have another Jew (who has not) do *melacha*<sup>h</sup>! So the *Pri Yitzchak*<sup>o</sup> (2:8) points out that the position of the above-mentioned Behag is in fact that once Shabbos candles are lit, *melacha* is *assur* for the *entire household*<sup>f</sup>; so it still makes sense that "initially" the husband should light the Chanukah candles first, to take his position into account *fully*.]

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<sup>8</sup> This can be seen clearly from some of the sources brought by the *Beis Yosef* in the Halachos of Shabbos (263:10).

## SAYING A BRACHA OVER THE FRIDAY AFTERNOON CHANUKAH CANDLE-LIGHTING

The *Beis Yosef* brings the *Terumas HaDeshen*<sup>9</sup> (102), who points out that although the main time for the Mitzvah starts only after nightfall; nevertheless, even while it's still daytime, the lighting is considered a "proper beginning" for the Mitzvah (since here it's *impossible* to light at night)<sup>9</sup>, so one can say a *bracha* then.

Accordingly, the *Rema* adds: **[Furthermore,] one says the *bracha* on them just like on a weekday, even though one is lighting while "the day is yet great" [i.e. long before nightfall].**

The *Mishnah Berurah* points out that much of this has already been clarified above (672:1), while discussing the "flexibility" of the "beginning of the time of the Mitzvah." Accordingly, he reminds us: (1) One can only light with a *bracha* from "*plag haMincha*" and onwards (which means one and a quarter "relative hours" [i.e. one relative hour = one-twelfth of the daylight hours] before the time "when the stars come out"; and (2) One has to put in enough oil (at least for the single candle which is the basic obligation) to last until the regular "end of the lighting time" (and he repeats what he said in the *Bi'ur Halacha* there, that this means until a half hour after the "when the stars come out", no matter how early one usually lights). [See there about what to do if one already lit with less oil than that, and above (673:2) about what to do if the candles go out before the onset of Shabbos.]

The *Mishnah Berurah* adds (in the name of the later authorities) that "initially" it is proper to pray *Mincha* before lighting [because it looks a little bit self-contradictory to first light - relying on the possibility to "consider it already night" - and then to pray *Mincha* afterwards (*Sha'ar HaTziyun*<sup>10</sup>)].

Rav Moshe Feinstein<sup>9</sup> [*Igros Moshe* O.C. 4:62] discusses exactly when one should in fact light:

When discussing the Friday Chanukah lighting, one might think that it's better to light significantly close to sundown (which is the earliest time for weeknights [see above 672:1]). However, none of the authorities make any distinction, which indicates that in fact there is no difference between lighting right after "*plag haMincha*" and lighting later. It's true that some of them hold that we calculate "*plag haMincha*" from "when the stars come out", and according to *that* position "*plag haMincha*" is just before the sun disappears. Still, even those authorities would certainly say the same thing about the other position; i.e. that *if* we calculate "*plag haMincha*" from when the sun disappears - *then* it's perfectly fine to light Chanukah candles one and a quarter [relative] hours before the sun disappears.

<sup>9</sup> The *Terumas HaDeshen* compares this to cooking for one's parents, which is not the *fulfillment* of the Mitzvah (for *that's* not until they eat), but nevertheless (in *Yevamos* 6a) is still considered enough of a "proper beginning of a Mitzvah act" to override Shabbos [according to that Gemara's assumption that honoring parents overrides Shabbos] if that's what the parent requires. [See also above (673:2) concerning "if on Friday afternoon before the onset of Shabbos the candles went out," which revolves around this same *Terumas HaDeshen*.]

<sup>10</sup> The *Sha'ar HaTziyun* adds that it seems this should only really be a problem if it's a long time before sundown. [A question: if the Chanukah lighting relies on "considering it already night", then shouldn't the Shabbos candles have to be lit *before* then (i.e. the *opposite* of the previous subject's ruling)? Also, shouldn't *Mincha* have to be even before "*plag haMincha*" itself, as the *Mishnah Berurah* writes in the Halachos of Shabbos (by 267:2) about praying *Ma'ariv* early on Friday afternoon?]

After all, given that it's impossible to light on Friday night at the same time as on a weeknight, and of course every Chanukah has always had to have at least one Shabbos, consequently it makes sense to say that the Sages instituted a special time for Friday night.<sup>11</sup> And since the Gemara did not specify exactly what portion of the late afternoon they chose, we therefore conclude that it starts with "*plag haMincha*" since we already find that to be the relevant period for Shabbos candles and for early *Ma'ariv*, etc.

However, I hold that the intended time is specifically *shortly* before lighting Shabbos candles. Therefore, if someone wants to accept Shabbos at the earliest possible time (i.e. right after "*plag haMincha*") for whatever reason, then there's no need at all for him to delay that in order to light Chanukah candles later, and he can simply light Chanukah and Shabbos candles at the very beginning of the period; but if he's not lighting Shabbos candles until later *anyway*, and he's planning to continue doing *melacha* for a while, then why should he be lighting Chanukah candles significantly earlier? (Still, since this point is not found in the authorities, I can only say that one should be stringent with it "initially"; but if someone *did* light Chanukah candles very early and Shabbos candles late, then "after the fact" he need not put out the Chanukah candles in order to re-light them just before lighting Shabbos candles.)

[Note: This approach does not seem to fit with the reasoning of the above *Sha'ar HaTziyun* - that the "early" lighting is because of "considering it already night". Another point: The *Luach Eretz Yisrael* says that although the local *minhag* is to light Shabbos candles *forty* minutes before the sun disappears, nevertheless on Chanukah all the candles are lit starting at *twenty-five* minutes before the sun disappears, "because in most cases, the Chanukah candles are small, and they need to burn for a half hour at night." Finally: The *Gra* here favors the position of the Rashba (which we quoted above {672:1}), that even on Friday, one can only light "before sundown" (i.e. *shortly* beforehand).]

Rav Yaakov Chaim Sofer<sup>°</sup> [*Kaf HaChayim*, O.C. 671 n79] adds a few points concerning *Mincha*:

Another reason that "initially" *Mincha* should be before lighting is that *Mincha* corresponds to the afternoon "*Tamid*" offering, and the Chanukah candles commemorate the miracle which was performed with the Menorah, *which was lit after that offering*. However, there is basis for saying that one should not let this issue force him to pray *Mincha* at home alone; rather, if the only way he can pray *Mincha* with the congregation is if he lights first, he should do that.

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<sup>11</sup> R. Moshe Feinstein emphasizes that his approach is the *opposite* of that of the Rashba [quoted above (672:1)], who "proved" that "sundown being the earliest time" must be flexible - from Friday night! [Incidentally, the *Chasam Sofer*<sup>°</sup> (6:7) touches upon our subject, and it seems that his words can actually be read either way.]