



Lighting the Candles at ‘Home’

The Magen Avraham (263:15) cites a practice that women who were going to use the *mikvah* on Friday night would light candles in the adjoining *shul*. This practice is no longer followed (Mishnah Berurah 263:21) because the *hadlaka* must be in one's home, a location that meets the halachic definition of *beito*. The Mishnah Berurah elaborates on this requirement based on the principles gleaned from the Gemara in Eruvin (72b-73a), which discusses the definition of *beito* in reference to the *dinim* of *ערוכי חצרות* and *תחום שבת*. The location labeled as *beito* for the purposes of *hadlakat neiroi Shabbat* would also be relevant for the proper location in which to light *neiroi Chanukah*.

The Gemara discusses the location of one's *mekomo d'irah* (place of residence), citing a *machloket* between Rav and Shmuel as to whether it is determined by *mekomo pitha* (the place of eating) or *mekomo lina* (the place of sleeping). The Gemara explains that, in fact, either the *mekomo pitha* or the *mekomo lina* could at times be labeled as *beito*. If one of the locations is used *beikviut* (on a permanent basis), and the other only on

a temporary basis, the former would constitute one's *mekomo d'irah*.

Similarly, if one has two homes, but one home is more comfortable than the other, the more comfortable home would be the one classified as *beito*. Therefore, the *beit* of *yeshiva* students who would sleep in the *yeshiva* dormitory but would eat their meals in the homes of community members, where they felt relatively uncomfortable, would be the dormitory in which they slept.

The *machloket* between Rav and Shmuel refers to a case in which both homes are equally permanent and equally comfortable. In that case, we follow the opinion of Rav that the *mekomo pitha* is the primary residence and would be the proper location in which to light.

A further criterion used to determine which residence should be labeled as *beito* would be which residence is more private. If one residence is clearly more private than the other, the private room would have the status of *beito*, even if it is the *mekomo lina*, not the *mekomo pitha* (Mishnah Berurah 263:29). Therefore, *yeshiva* students who share a dormitory room should light *neiroi Chanukah* in that relatively private room, and not in the public dining room used by all the students (Igrot Moshe, Yoreh De'ah, chelek 3, 14:5).

If one finds himself in a different city than the other members of his family, he must perform *hadlakat neiroi* himself, even if his wife lights candles in his family's house (Orach Chaim 263:6). His wife's *hadlaka* in a different city does not constitute a *hadlaka* in *beito*, since he is not *metzuraf* (connected) to that house at this time.¹

The primary purpose of *hadlakat haneiroi* for Shabbat is to illuminate the room in which the *seuda* will take place (Rama 263:10). However, if this is not possible, such as in the case of guests in a hotel who are unable to light in the dining room, we hold that the *hadlaka* is acceptable even if done in a different room than the one in which the *seuda* will be eaten (Magen Avraham 263:21).

In this case, the *hadlaka* should be done in the hotel room (using an incandescent bulb). It is not proper to light in a public room set aside for *hadlakat neiroi*, since that room does not have the status of *beito*; it is not the *mekomo pitha* or the *mekomo lina*. [This practice is very problematic for another reason as well. Since there are many candles being lit in such close proximity to each other, it is unclear if there is any illumination gained from such a *hadlaka*.]

If one lights in his home, but the candles will not continue to burn until the conclusion of the *seuda* he is partaking of at a different location, such that no benefit will be gained on Shabbat from the *hadlaka*, the *mitzvah* will not have been fulfilled (Shulchan Aruch 263:9). In such a case, one should light in his home using electric bulbs or long-lasting candles, which will remain lit until he returns to his home.

Adapted from Rav Schachter on the Moadim.

¹ See B'Ikvei HaTzon, pp. 117-123.

Rabbi Hershel Schachter is Rosh Yeshiva and Rosh Kollel at Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University.

