

SICHA STORY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



Likkutei Sichos, Volume 17

Tazria, Sicha 3 (*First Sicha of the week*)

- Rabbi Yossi Nemes, Metairie, Louisiana

The Sicha discusses how Shabbos Candles, which bring physical light into the world, illuminate the concealment of Hashem's presence, and make Sholom between Hashem and the world, even more than other Mitzvos – Ner mitzvah.

There is great importance for all Jewish women to light Shabbos candles. The importance of young, unmarried girls lighting Shabbos candles, especially in our times, is emphasized.

Let me light the Candles now!

This story was told by the Rebbe at the farbrengen of 6 Tishrei, 5736 (1975). For an additional story, the Rebbe told at this Farbrengen, go to www.projectlikkuteisichos.org/15chayesara3/ and click on the Sicha story tab.

In England, there was a mother accustomed to lighting Shabbos candles weekly, a very precious tradition to her and her husband. Each Friday, her husband would close his business at 5:00 pm and arrive home before six. At 6:00 pm the mother would light the candles as the table was set for Shabbat. They would then make Kiddush and enjoy a Shabbat meal as a family.

At some point, her daughter heard about the campaign for unmarried girls to light Shabbat candles and she received her mother's permission to do so. When the winter months arrived and sundown was much earlier, the girl eagerly awaited to light the candles as she watched the sun begin to set. She noticed, however, that her mother had

barely started to set the tables and had not even brought out the candle sticks. She asked her mother, "When are we lighting candles?"

Her mother answered, "What do you mean when are we lighting? It will be just like every week, at 6:00 pm, when your father comes back from work."

The daughter sadly looked at her mother and said, "We were told that the time to light the candles is before the sun goes down, as afterward it's already Shabbat, and no longer appropriate to light candles. I would like to light the candles now!"

The mother asked the daughter, "Are you trying to change what we do here at home, waiting for your father to get home at 6:00 pm?"

The daughter responded, "No. I don't want to change you. I just want you to allow me to light now."

As the mother realized this was quite important to her daughter, she reluctantly allowed her to light the candle. When the father came home, he was surprised to see his daughter's candle lit.

The father asked his daughter, "Why did you light before your mother?" The daughter explained to him the whole situation. The father and mother were perplexed about the daughter lighting before the mother.

Over the next week, they looked into this and learned that their daughter was right! The traditional view, that thousands of families in England adhere to, is to light Shabbat candles exclusively before the sun goes down for afterward it is not only not a mitzvah but quite the opposite.

Toward the end of the week, they informed their overjoyed daughter, "This week your mother will light Shabbos candles with you before the sun goes down!"

Both of them, mother and daughter, were now lighting Shabbat candles every week before the sun went down, illuminating their home with the true light of Shabbat.

What caused this beautiful development? A young girl was encouraged to light Shabbos candles and enthusiastically took it upon herself!

Lighting the very last Shabbos candle in the world:

From Chabad.org:

In the 1990s Avremi Berkowitz and a friend were sent under the direction of the Rebbe's Merkos Shlichus program, to visit the faraway Aleutian Islands (Alaska's outer bank southwestern islands), with the sole purpose of bringing the joy and light of Judaism to any Jews that lived there.

After days of searching, they found not one Jew. Despondent, they made one last attempt at the local elementary school. They went to each classroom and asked if there were any Jewish children in the class, and each teacher told them that there were no Jewish children. They entered the very last classroom and asked the teacher if there were any Jewish children there. She immediately answered no.

A girl in the back raised her hand. "Mommy, so we're not the only Jews in the world?!" little Stacy exclaimed to her mother/teacher.

The embarrassed mother quietly and quickly told the rabbinical students that she'd talk to them after class.

The now-revealed mother and daughter sat with the two rabbinical students that afternoon. The mother confessed that she was not very comfortable with her Judaism, or expressing it with her daughter, as they were the only Jews on this island, and it seemed easier to just put it aside. They all talked for a while, the boys offering words of warm encouragement to explore their Jewish identity and especially the woman's mitzvah of lighting Shabbos candles. The mother also bought some Jewish books and Mezuzahs. She then asked the boys to offer some words of encouragement to her daughter, as they had to her.

The rabbinical students left the little girl with this thought: "All around the world, women and girls bring in Shabbat by lighting candles on Friday afternoon, eighteen minutes before sunset. But when they are lighting eighteen minutes before sunset, bringing in Shabbat in Australia, it is not yet Shabbat in Israel, until eight hours later, when the women there light the candles. And then seven hours later, New York lights and brings in Shabbat, and eventually California, and the entire world lights, and brings in Shabbat at different times."

"The very last time zone is at the furthest point on earth, which is the Aleutian Islands. And the Aleutian Islands is the very last place in the world every Friday to have the opportunity to light Shabbat candles! You and your mother have this opportunity-to usher in the light of Shabbat for the entire Aleutian Islands."

"You will also be the very last Jewish girl in the world each Friday, little Stacy, to usher in Shabbat with your Shabbat candle, completing this unifying circle of Sholom to the entire world!"

And with these words, the boys bid farewell to their new Jewish friends on the island.
