



Light of the world -

Blessing over the Sabbath Candles



אֲנֹכִי אֹרֵךְ הָעוֹלָם הַהַלֵךְ אַחֲרַי לֹא יֵלֵךְ בַּחֹשֶׁךְ כִּי־לֹךְ אֹרֵךְ הַחַיִּים:

*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life. - Jesus*

SABBATH CANDLES are lit by the (eldest) woman of the house no later than 18 minutes before sundown on Friday evening (i.e., before Shabbat begins). After kindling the candles, she waives her hands over the flames three times (as if welcoming in the Sabbath), and covering her eyes with her hands (so as not to see the candles burning) says:



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהִיְוֹת אֹרֶךְ
לְגוֹיִים וְנָתַן־לָנוּ אֶת יֵשׁוּעַ מְשִׁיחֵנוּ אֹרֶךְ הָעוֹלָם.

*Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe,
Who sanctified us with his commandments, and commanded us to be a light to
the nations and Who gave to us Jesus our Messiah
the Light of the world.*

*Barukh attah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
asher kiddeshanu bemitzvotav ve-tsivanu lehiyot or
le-goyim v'natan-lanu et Yeshua Meshicheinu or ha-olam.*

At this moment, when the family is gathered together, the woman may offer a silent or verbal prayer on behalf of her husband and children (in generations past, personal prayers in Yiddish called "techinot" were commonly said by Jewish women before doing a mitzvah and on special occasions).

A minimum of two candles are lit corresponding to the two expressions of Shabbat mentioned in Exodus 20:8 ("Zakhor," remember) and Deuteronomy 5:12 ("Shamor," keep or guard). Some women add an additional light with the birth of each child and continue lighting it throughout the years. The candlesticks are often made of precious metal such as silver, and may be family heirlooms.



Transliterated:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

ha'olam me-lekh eloheinu Adonai atah barukh
the universe king (of) our God Lord are you Blessed

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהִיּוֹת אוֹר

or le-hiyot v'tsivanu be mits-votav kid-de-shanu a-sher
a light to be and with his sanctified us who
commanded us commandments

לְגוֹיִים וְנָתַן-לָנוּ אֶת יֵשׁוּעַ מְשִׁיחֵנוּ אוֹר הָעוֹלָם.

ha-olam or meshicheinu yeshua et v'natan-lanu le-goyim
the light of the world our Messiah Jesus () and gave to us to the nations

The Rabbinical Version

Rabbinical Judaism uses this blessing for erev Shabbat candle lighting:



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק
נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe, Who sanctified us with his commandments and commanded us to kindle the sabbath candles.

Barukh attah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher kideshanu bemitzvotav ve-tsivanu l'hadlik ner shel shabbat.

Note: Messianic believers would object that in fact the LORD has not commanded us to light the candles of Shabbat, and, since Jesus is the true Light of the world Who alone gives us true rest, prefer to recite the blessing listed at the top of this page.



Transliterated:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

ha' o'lam me'lekh e'lo'heynu 'Adonai 'at'ah barukh
the universe king (of) our God Lord are you Blessed

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק

le-hadlik v'tsivanu be'mits'vo'tav kid-de'sha'nu 'a'sher
to kindle and with his sanctified us who
commanded us commandments

נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

shabbat shel ner
shabbat of candles

In most cases of *berachot*, the blessing is recited first, followed by the performance of the *mitzvah*. In the case of this blessing, however, the woman lights the candles first, and then pronounces the blessing, since once she has pronounced the blessing, she has accepted Shabbat restrictions upon herself, and therefore would be unable to light the candles afterwards.

Note: A Friday night service called *Kabbalat Shabbat* is normally offered at the synagogue after the candle-lighting time but before the Shabbat meal. From the time the candles are lit until after kiddush is made, one should not eat or drink anything.