



## Parshat Mishpatim

No 1051:

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### STARTING POINT

**"Return it to Him Before Sundown" - by Rabbi Amnon Bazak**

This week's Torah portion, which has many diverse mitzvot, has many places where the simple meaning of a verse is different from the halacha as it is derived by the Midrash. There are dozens of examples in the portion where the commentators note that the sages interpreted a verse for the purpose of halacha in a different way than the simple meaning. One interesting example where this happens is with respect to the law requiring that an object taken as collateral for a loan must be returned to the borrower: "If you take the garment of a colleague as collateral, return it to him before sundown. For this is his only cover, it is the clothing on his skin, in what will he lie down?" [Shemot 22:25-26]. The straightforward interpretation (see Chizkuni and Tanchuma, Mishpatim 10) is that this refers to clothing that is meant for use during the night (the sages call this a "night garment"). The Torah allows the lender to keep the garment during the day, but he must return it to the borrower at night for his use. This law is repeated in Devarim: "If he is a poor man, do not lie down with his deposit. Give the deposit back to him when the sun sets and he will lie in his garment and bless you." [24:12-13].

However, Rashi quotes the Midrash (see Bava Metzia 114b): "During the whole day, you shall return it to him, until the sun sets, and afterwards you can take it back until the next morning comes. The verse is referring to a daytime garment, which is not needed at night." That is, the verse refers to the opposite case – a daytime garment, which must be returned during the day and can be retaken during the night, until morning. This appears to be far from the simple meaning of the verse, and it has been questioned by the Tosafot Ri'd in the Talmud: "This is hard to understand, since it is written, 'this is his only cover, it is the clothing on his skin, in what will he lie down?'" That is, the verse clearly seems to refer to a night garment. Why did the sages ignore the simple interpretation and take the verse to be referring to a daytime garment?

It seems that this is a specific example of a general phenomenon, where the Midrash expands a principle explicitly stated in a verse. Based only on the simple meaning of these verses in Shemot and in Devarim, we might have thought that the prohibition only concerns keeping a night garment, since it is used for lying down, while a daytime garment, which is not used for this purpose, can be kept during the day. The Midrash teaches us that the fact that the Torah mentions only night garments is not meant to restrict the prohibition to such clothing but is rather because the Torah prefers to use "examples from common experience." That is, a night garment is simply a convenient example of the prohibition. Halachically, there is no difference between a night garment and a daytime

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garment, and both must be returned to the owner during the time when they are normally in use.

This shows how to understand the common situation where there is an apparent contradiction between the simple interpretation of a passage and the explanation of the Midrash. The intention is not to present the literal interpretation of the verse, but rather to show how to apply the law, usually by hinting at a broader halacha than what appears in the verse itself.

### SERMON BY A GUEST

**"And These Are the Laws That You Shall Place Before Them" - by Judge Noam Solberg, Magistrate's Court, Jerusalem**

In this article, we will discuss the attempt to incorporate Jewish law within the secular law of the land. Is this something to be desired as an ideal, something to be used as a last resort, or "not to be seen or found" at all (See Shemot 13:7)? Is a combination of the two systems of justice a way to sanctify the secular or rather a secularization of the holy?

In the heat of this debate about religious values, there is also an issue of benefit. There is no better alternative than the Jewish system of justice, an ancient system that has been steadily improved in a melting pot for thousands of years. No comparable system has been so refined and purified, the fruits of intellectual effort, discussions in the Beit Midrash, and practical application in daily life within Eretz Yisrael and in the Diaspora, for many years. The daily routine of the Beit Midrash shows that there is nothing new under the sun, that whatever happened in the past will be repeated in the future. Thus, before we come to argue about the religious value of Jewish law, it is important to take proper note of its beneficial aspects in practical terms.

For example, I served as the judge in a case where the defendant was accused of operating games of chance. A prosecution witness testified that the defendant collected the money from gambling machines and kept them in operating condition, but the defendant denied the charge. I myself had my doubts. The testimony of the prosecution witness did not satisfy me. The defense lawyer claimed that he was not to be trusted, since he himself was a dice player. According to the civil law, the fact that somebody plays games of dice does not invalidate his testimony, but according to the halacha one who plays with dice is not accepted as a witness, as is written in this week's Torah portion: "Do not raise your hand with an evil person, to become a corrupt witness" [Shemot 23:1]. "The reason for this is that such a person is not involved in peaceful productive pursuits...

Just as such people are used to lying as their normal practice and this does not make them feel any shame, so they feel that they will not be shamed by lying about other matters. In addition, they do not recognize the problems of other people, and they do not have any mercy for them, to make sure that they will not lose their money." [Meiri, Beit Habechira]. This advice was clearly relevant to the prosecution witness, but what could I do as long as the testimony was valid in the court of law?

The solution to my problem was related to the fact that the weight to be given to any testimony is a matter left completely to the discretion of the judge. I felt that in spite of the difference between the secular law and halacha in both the source of the authority and the practical consequences, the reasoning itself remained valid. The same reason that was used in the halacha to declare the witness invalid could be used in civil court to decrease the weight given to the testimony, and in the end it was possible to free the defendant because of a reasonable doubt.

As it happens, the accused had a criminal record (a "pauper in mitzvot"), but this should not be taken into account in deciding guilt or innocence, corresponding to the verse in this week's Torah portion, "Do not distort the trial of your pauper when he has a grievance" [Shemot 23:6]. This is an important principle with which every modern system of justice is blessed. In addition, the accused was an Arab, and we have been commanded to uphold the modern principle of equality, in accordance with the "archaic" command, "There shall be one system of justice, a stranger and a resident will be the same" [Vayikra 24:22].

This is but one example out of thousands. It is of course necessary to keep in mind the Divine source of Jewish law, as opposed to the human roots of every other system of justice on earth. In addition, the detailed laws are often different. However, integrity demands that we must make use of this hidden treasure, which is truly priceless. For the time being, the outcome of the controversy between the two systems of justice is a tie. On the other hand, from the point of view of advantage to be gained nobody can deny that much good can be obtained from the Jewish system of justice.

## **TORAH, SOCIETY, AND GOVERNMENT**

### **Friction Between Religious and Secular Courts - by Rabbi Uri Dasberg**

Here is a quote from a verdict written by the Justice of the High Court, Elyakim Rubenstein (High Court of Justice 9734/03): "I do not think that Rabbi Daichovsky should feel as bitter as what seems to be expressed in his article (Secular and Religious Courts – Areas of Friction)..." Just what is it that causes Rabbi Daichovsky to be angry?

The law in Israel recognizes two systems of courts. One, the rabbinical court system, is responsible for administering the laws of marriage and divorce. When this was decided by the Knesset, the intent was clearly not simply to make such momentous decisions as who would be given the honor of leading the blessings at the wedding ceremony or what to do if one letter of a divorce document is missing. In the case of divorce, the laws

are intricate and complex, and they involve many legal questions. There are times when the affair begins with a disagreement about shared property, continues with questions of where the children will live and the level of child support, and recently has even included claims for damages by the wife against her former husband. Since the secular courts have been given the mandate to deal with financial matters, often one of the couple (not always the wife) rushes to a secular court to make a civil claim, also including matters that should have been brought before a rabbinical court. It then becomes the task of the civil court to decide if this "linking" happened as a result of innocence or not.

As is well known about the Israeli civil courts, the judges are convinced that "everything can be judged in their court." They therefore feel that they can invalidate rulings by the rabbinical courts, decide on matters for which expertise is needed in the Talmud and the commentators who followed (note that a rabbinical court judge learns for more than twenty years, literally studying day and night. They even invalidate judgments because one of the judges was replaced after he retired from the court (the same thing happens in civil court, but evidently there the rules are different).

Here is a specific example. In one case, the rabbinical court decided to accept a father's request to have custody of his son from his former wife. As noted above, custody is one of the matters related to divorce under the authority of the rabbinical courts. But the mother went to a civil court and demanded to be allowed to take the child out of the country. The court ruled that this was no longer a matter of "custody" but had become an issue of "emigration" and that it therefore came under civil jurisdiction. This opened the way for legal kidnapping of children, taking them abroad.

Isn't Rabbi Daichovsky, a judge in the rabbinical High Court in Jerusalem, right to be upset about such matters?

Reference: Rabbi Shlomo Daichovsky, "Techumin," volume 24, pages 51-70

## **MOUNT MORIAH**

### **Mount Sinai and Mount Moriah - by Rabbi Yitzchak Levy, Yeshivat Har Etzion**

(1) Moriah – Sinai – Moriah

The holiness of Mount Moriah began with the time of creation, continued with the sacrifices brought by Adam, Kayin, Hevel, and Noach, and then on to the binding of Yitzchak. After the binding, the site is not mentioned any more, not in relation to the forefathers or to any of Yaacov's children.

After the redemption from Egypt, the nation of Yisrael witnessed a great revelation at Mount Sinai, culminating in the giving of the Torah and receipt of the Ten Commandments. Afterwards, the Tabernacle was built, and the nation began its way back to Eretz Yisrael and Mount Moriah. At the same time, Bnei Yisrael was transformed from individual people into a nation. They began to crystallize into a nation at the foot of Mount Sinai and continued in this process until they entered the

land. Once they arrived in the land, the renewed arrival at Mount Moriah depended on their ability to establish a permanent kingdom, as a completion of the transformation into a nation. This finally took place only in the days of David and Shlomo.

The revelation at Mount Moriah at the time of the binding shows the unique character of the site, and the fact that it then became hidden teaches us that finding it anew requires dedication and our progressive evolution as a people.

## (2) The Relationship Between Mount Sinai and Mount Moriah

The last Mishna of the tractate of Taanit comments on the verse, "Go out and look, daughters of Zion, at King Shlomo, look at the crown his mother made for him on his wedding day and on the day of his heart's joy" [Shir Hashirim 3:11]. "His wedding day – this refers to the giving of the Torah. The day of his heart's joy – this is the construction of the Temple, let it be rebuilt quickly, in our day." There is a clear parallel between the giving of the Torah and the building of the Temple. The second set of Tablets was given at Mount Sinai on Yom Kippur, the same date when the first Temple was dedicated on Mount Moriah. The wedding day is the day of the heart's joy. The giving of the Torah was a direct preparation for building the Temple, and the construction of the Temple fulfilled the covenant between the community of Yisrael and the Almighty, and established that this would be His home.

The relationship between the Torah and the Temple can be seen in many other ways. The Torah is kept in the holy Ark; there is a Torah scroll in the Temple courtyard; the event of the giving of the Torah is repeated in the "Hakhel" ceremony every seven years in the Temple; Bnei Yisrael meet the great men of the generation in the Temple; and the fear and respect that was characteristic of the giving of the Torah is a model for the required fear of the Temple.

According to the Midrash, "What is the source of the holiness of Sinai? Rabbi Yossi said, it was torn away from Mount Moriah, just as a piece of bread can be torn away from dough, from the place where Yitzchak was bound. The Almighty said: Since your father Yitzchak was bound at this site, it is fitting and proper that his sons should receive the Torah there." [Midrash Tehillim 68]. There is an internal correspondence between the two mountains, Sinai and Moriah, and the giving of the Torah which began at Sinai continues on Moriah.

## (3) The Differences Between Mount Sinai and Mount Moriah

Aside from the similarities of the two mountains, there is one important difference between them. Sinai was holy only during the revelation, and when this was over the sanctity expired. "Rabbi Yossi said: It is not the place of a man which causes him to be respected, rather a man gives honor and respect to his place. This is what we could see at Sinai: As long as the Shechina remained there, the Torah commanded, 'Let neither the sheep nor the cattle graze near that mountain' [Shemot 34:3]. When the Shechina left, the Torah declared, 'When the Shofar blast was heard, they could climb the mountain' [19:13]." [Taanit 21b]. The same was true of the Tabernacle. When it was

moved, the sanctity of its former site expired, and the holiness moved to the new site.

As opposed to this, the sanctity of Mount Moriah is permanent. The site was set aside as a place for Divine revelation from the time of creation, and once it had been revealed and the Temple was built in the time of Shlomo its sanctity remains for all eternity. This is even true now that the Temple has been destroyed. "The sanctity of the Temple and of Jerusalem is because of the Shechina, and the Shechina does not leave the place."

There are two possible ways to explain the difference between the eternal sanctity of Mount Moriah and the one-time holiness of Mount Sinai: (1) The revelation at Sinai was a noble event, a one-time occurrence in the history of mankind, and it left no impression on the physical geographical site. The revelation at Mount Moriah, on the other hand, is not as noble, but it leaves an impression on the surrounding physical world. (2) At Mount Sinai, the initiative for the revelation and the contents stemmed completely from the Almighty. Human participation consisted of listening to G-d's words, receiving the Torah, and internalizing the revelation. As opposed to this, in the Temple there is a need for human partnership, not only in the construction ("Let them make a Temple for me, and I will dwell within them" [Shemot 25:8]) but also in searching for the site ("Pursue His dwelling, and go there" [Devarim 12:5]).

Perhaps this should also be linked to another important difference between the two mountains. At Sinai, the revelation was only to Bnei Yisrael, while Mount Moriah is meant in the end to be a revelation of the Kingdom of G-d for the entire world. In all of these respects, Mount Sinai serves as an initial step, leading eventually to Mount Moriah.

## A LESSON FOR THE CHILDREN

### The Raven Who Was a Mimic - by Rabbi Yikhat Rozen, Merkaz Neria, Kiryat Malachi

Why does the raven jump around in a way that almost seems to be a frenzied dance?

One time a raven saw how a dove walked, in a very majestic way: straight and upright, a perfect example of pomp and royalty. The raven was very impressed by this way of walking. The raven looked at itself and saw that it walked in a normal way, without the glorious royalty of the pigeon, and he was very jealous.

Immediately, the raven flew off to a secret place and began a regimen of training, in order to copy the dove's way of walking. The first time it tried, it fell down and rolled over, the second time it hit a fence and collapsed, and this continued on the third and fourth times. But the raven would not give up. He practiced and practiced, failing time and again, but he continued with his attempts. In the end, he succeeded in walking in an upright manner that was somewhat reminiscent of the walk of the dove.

The happy raven left his hiding place and appeared among his friends, the other birds. He began to strut around in his new style, expecting to hear excited applause. But what really

happened? Instead of applause, what he heard was loud mocking. "What happened, raven, did you break your legs? ... Did you get boards stuck in your legs? ..." And a young chick asked, "Uncle raven, why are you walking in such a funny way?" Many birds from all over the world gathered together at the site, in order to look at the raven and make fun of his funny walk.

At first, the raven made believe he did not hear the mocking, and he continued in his proud and upright way to the river. And then he saw his reflection in the water. He looked a few times and he saw that this type of walk really did not suit him. The flock of birds that was following him and the louder and louder sounds of laughter put the raven to shame. He understood that there was no reason for him to imitate the dove. What he must do was to give up his idea and accept himself as he was, not to try to become somebody else.

Quietly, the shamefaced raven flew back to his hiding place. He had made a decision – he must return to his old way of walking. However, the earlier practice sessions had been too successful! The poor raven was not able to return to his previous habit, he could only continue to walk in a way similar to the dove. He tried again and again, he practiced over and over. In the end he succeeded in giving up the "dove walk" – but he failed in his attempt to return to the old way that he had walked, as a raven. He would take one step and rock, another step and rock, and he was not able to walk in a normal way.

The raven had forgotten his old way of walking, and he had also forgotten how to walk like a dove...

Since that time, the raven walks in an unusual dance, reminding us of the fate that awaits anybody who tries to abandon his own characteristics and to imitate practices and customs that do not really suit him...

(Source: Treasures of the Midrash, page 35)

## THE WAYS OF THE FATHERS (Pirkei Avot)

### Chapter 5 - by Rabbi Yehuda Shaviv

Mishna 19: "If love depends on something else, when the other factor ends the love will end; if it does not depend on other factors, it will never end. What love depends on something else? An example is the love of Amnon for Tamar. What love does not depend on anything else? This is the love between David and Yehonatan."

This Mishna is a turning point in the format of the current chapter. Up to now, each Mishna was based on a number: ten, seven, and four. Starting with this Mishna, the format is to give a pair of opposites. Rabbi Avraham Azulai tried to explain in "Ahava B'Taanugim" that this decreasing sequence continues, "The number then decreases to three, 'Everybody who has these three traits...' [Mishna 22]." However, there are several "interruptions" in this decrease from four to three. In one way, the sequence does continue, since there are four Mishnayot that give a pair of opposites: Love (depends on something else or not); Controversy (in the name of heaven or not); One who benefits the public or causes them to sin; and the pupils of Avraham as opposed to the pupils of Bilam.

In each of the four Mishnayot, the contrast is illustrated with people from the Tanach. (This is true except for Mishna 20, which brings Hillel and Shamai as an example of a controversy in the name of heaven. Wasn't it possible to find a relevant example in the Tanach? As we explain below, this example was given on purpose.) It is interesting to note that this first Mishna, 19, opens with the negative side (dependent love), while the others begin with the positive side of the contrast.

Rabbi Yitzchak Abarbenel links the issues of love and controversy in these two Mishnayot with the previous Mishna. "Those who sit before wise men learning Torah will sometimes agree with their views, so that the result will be love... and sometimes there will be controversy between them..."

Mishna 20: "Every controversy that is in the name of heaven will continue to exist, while every controversy that is not in the name of heaven will cease to exist. What is an example of a controversy in the name of heaven? This is the disagreement between Hillel and Shamai. What is not in the name of heaven? This is the disagreement of Korach and his community."

Here again we are given two opposites, one positive and the other negative. A controversy in the name of heaven is a positive thing, as can be seen from the fact that it will remain forever.

On the other hand, to declare that a controversy is a positive thing is somewhat problematic, and the fact that it "will continue to exist" does not seem to help matters much. As has been noted by the Rashbatz, "There can be no doubt that the existence of a disagreement is bad, as we have been told, based on the initials of the word 'machloket' – an injury (makah), anger (charon), a failure (likui), and annihilation (kelaya).

Evidently, the positive aspect of a controversy is that it serves to stimulate clarification and discovery of the truth. This will only be true if the two sides are interested not in personal prominence but in finding the truth. This is in fact the type of disagreements that was so common in the Talmud (especially in the Talmud Bavli, whose sages made extensive use of the technique of attack, as is written, "the learned men of Babylon, who are bitter to each other in matters of halacha" [Sanhedrin 24a]). The sharp disagreements in the Talmud did not interfere with the basic atmosphere of friendship and unity. With respect to Beit Hillel and Beit Shamai, we have been taught that "they treated each other with friendship and respect, to fulfill the verse, 'love truth and peace' [Zecharia 8:19]." [Yevamot 14b]. A controversy that stems from true mutual love does not diminish the basic peace of the participants. On the other hand, a controversy that is rooted in personal issues and does not have any basis of peace will not lead to a better understanding of the truth.

## LAND OF MY BIRTH

### Black Saturday - by Zev Wallack

In the years 1945-46, the "Hebrew Movement of Rebellion" combined the activities of three underground movements in Eretz Yisrael, the Hagana, the Etzel, and Lechi. They all

gathered their forces in order to fight the British authority in the land, which even after the terrible Holocaust continued to block the immigration of the large number of refugees and refused to allow the population of the settlements to increase. The movement performed a number of daring exploits, the most prominent one being the "Night of the Bridges." In this wide ranging operation, almost all of the major bridges within the land were blown up at the same time.

The British were astounded by the impressive military capability shown by the Jewish force, and they decided to suppress it with a brutal show of force. They made plans for an unprecedented operation, named "Broadside," with the following explicit objectives:

- (1) To destroy the Palmach, the striking force of the Hagana, which was responsible for the most destructive raids, performed in coordination with the Eitzel and the Lechi.
- (2) To leave the Hagana defenseless by putting the leaders of the Jewish Agency suspected or known to have links with the Hagana in prison.
- (3) To discover documents that would serve as proof of the illegal actions of the Jewish Agency and would reveal the activities of the Hagana.

After midnight on Friday night of the Torah portion of Korach 5706 (29 June 1946), 17,000 British soldiers performed raids throughout the land, backed up by tanks and armored cars. A curfew was declared in most of the Jewish cities and in 27 settlements. About 2,700 people were brought to prison camps in Rafiach, Latrun, and Atlit.

The British found large stores of weapons at Kibbutz Yagur. Two strangers, who had acted as guests of the kibbutz but were really agents of the British secret service, discovered where the Hagana's largest hidden caches of weapons were stored. The search uncovered about 300 rifles, 100 mortars, 5,000 hand grenades, and 400,000 bullets. There was a minor comfort in the fact that a British officer had given advance warning about the raid, so that most of the Palmach fighters managed to escape from the kibbutz and hide in the forests and caves of the Carmel.

In Tel Aviv, the British did not succeed, for two reasons:

- (1) The local Hagana forces were ready. They took into account that after the large operation performed by the Rebellion Movement they could expect a serious reaction. The leaders changed identities and moved around, and they also prepared a hiding place for the command posts and destroyed suspicious documents.
- (2) The Hagana staff in Tel Aviv received advance warning about the large scale search operation planned by the British. In the time that was available, the officers managed to move to hiding places that had been prepared in advance.

At three o'clock in the morning, the British army surrounded the city of Tel Aviv and began to conduct house to house searches. Nechemia Brosh, who was an announcer for the underground radio, described the experience:

"Our hiding place was in the Reading power station, across the Yarkon River. There we had a small radio, which we could use to contact two or three places in the city... The next morning we were able to establish very good contacts by courier, with the help of the British... They announced that shift changes in the power station would only take place under their supervision. Every truck... that carried (Jewish) workers who had finished their shift and brought their replacements would be accompanied by a guard of British soldiers. We used this truck for our own purpose, traveling all day around the city with (secret) messages to and from the high command of the Hagana."

In Jerusalem, British soldiers and police broke into the Jewish institutions and conducted searches of the archives of the Jewish Agency. Many of the Jewish leaders were arrested, including Moshe Shertok (Sharet), Rabbi Fishman (Maimon), and David Remez. Also arrested were mayors of some of the cities, including Yisrael Rokach from Tel Aviv, Avraham Karinitzi from Ramat Gan, and Oved Ben-Ami from Natanya.

Yigal Yadin, who was the head of operations of the Hagana at the time and later became chief of staff of the IDF, told the following to Dr. Uri Milstein:

"On Black Saturday I was on leave. We received a command to destroy the archives of the Hagana... In Jerusalem, the command was observed faithfully ... When the order was received, I took every scrap of paper that I had, including the love letters that I had written to my wife from military courses, and we burned them in the garden. To this very day I am very sorry about this loss."

Black Saturday, as could be expected, gave rise to angry reactions. This can be seen in the following declaration published by the underground:

"Great Britain has declared war on the nation of Yisrael! The nation of Yisrael will fight back! The Jewish rebellion will continue! The Jewish underground stands strong in its service to the nation... Yagur, which has been destroyed, will be rebuilt. Long live free Aliyah! Long live the Jewish State!"

## THE CHAIN OF HALACHA

### Where Should a Guests Light Candles? - by Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon, Rabbi of Southern Alon Shevut and a teacher in Yeshivat Har Etzion

A married couple who is visiting (and sleeping) in their parents' home: According to the principles we have discussed in the past few weeks, the couple is not obligated to light candles, because their parents have them in mind when lighting. In addition, in their room they will usually have electric lights (either in the room itself or by lights from outside the room), and they are therefore not required to light candles in the room. The conclusion is that this couple is not obligated to light candles at all.

In spite of this, many women have taken on the practice of lighting candles in the dining room, next to the candles lit by the hostess. The reason for this is that there is a special significance

to lighting near the place of eating in that this adds honor and joy to Shabbat even if some light already exists. Even though the woman is not obligated to light, many women have a custom of lighting at every opportunity, even when they are not really obligated.

Thus, when a couple is a guest in their parents' house, the wife should expressly have in mind not to be included in the lighting of the household. She can then light in the dining room and recite her own blessing.

Why is the woman permitted to recite a blessing? After all, there already are candles in the room, and additional candles do not add to the honor or joy of Shabbat. For this reason, according to the Shulchan Aruch, she should light without reciting a blessing (263:8). The RAMA, on the other hand, writes that several women can light and recite a blessing in one room. Here is the text of the halacha:

"When two or three households eat in one place, some say that each one should recite a blessing on its own candlesticks, but others have doubts about this. Since one should be wary of reciting an unnecessary blessing, it is best that only one recites the blessing. NOTE (by the RAMA): We, however, do not follow this practice."

The Mishna Berura explains that even though some light already exists in the room, every additional light adds a new measure of joy. "Every time some light is added, this provides peace and added joy, spreading light in each and every corner." Especially today, when all the women usually light, there is special significance and added joy when each family lights its own candles.

In summary: According to the strict requirement of the law, a couple that visits another home is not obligated to light their own candles, but women have taken on the practice of always lighting, even if they are not really obligated. They should therefore explicitly have in mind not to accept the lighting by the hostess and they can then light candles in the dining room. A Sephardi woman should not recite a blessing if candles have already been lit in the room.

A couple in a hotel: In principle, they should light candles in their room, since this is the equivalent of their own house (263:6; Mishna Berura 29). However, if there is a danger of fire, they should light in the dining room. In this case, the Ashkenazi custom is for all the women to recite the blessing, while the Sephardi custom is for only the first woman to recite it. Thus, it might be best for a Sephardi woman to light an electric lamp or a flashlight in her room, so that she can recite the blessing (a light with a filament, not a fluorescent lamp). An Ashkenazi woman lighting candles in the dining room should also have in mind the electric lights in her room.

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