

## Candle-lighting and Plag ha-Mincha

The latest one may light Shabbat or Yom Tov candles is by sunset known as Sheki'at ha-Chamah or Sheki'ah for short. Technically Shabbat then comes in at sunset, which during the summer months can be as late as 9:30pm.

As it is highly inconvenient to sit down to one's Shabbat Meal that late at night it is a wide spread practice to take Shabbat in early during the summer months. For women Shabbat begins with candle lighting whereas for men it begins when they recite Lekhah Dodi in synagogue.

From After Pesach It is the practice in our community for women to light Shabbat candles at 7:30pm.

However, during several weeks in June and July it is Halakhicly too early to light at 7:30pm.

This is because one may not bring in Shabbat before what is known as *Plag ha-Mincha* (meaning half way between the starting time of late afternoon prayers and nightfall.) From Saturday 7 June *Plag ha-Mincha* is at 7:31 and it gets steadily later through to the end of June peaking at 7:40 when it then gradually falls back to 7:30 by 16 July.

In order to ensure that Shabbat is not brought in too early and to make it as easy as possible to remember without having to adjust the time by several minutes each week, candle lighting will be fixed at 7:40pm from 13 June through 11 July.

There will be no adjustment to the timing of Mincha or Kaballat Shabbat for it is highly unlikely that Lekha Dodi will be recited before 7:40pm.

Rabbi Dr Naftali Brawer