

Hakirah Volume 8; Summer 2009.

Answer to the Letter of Prof. Marc B. Shapiro to the Editor of Hakirah.

Dear Editor

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to respond to Prof. Shapiro. Concerning my article in the last edition of Hakirah, Prof. Shapiro says that I erred in saying that to satisfy *mehadrin min ha-mehadrin* “According to Maimonides, on the first evening each person present lights one candle, on the second evening, two candles, and so on.” Prof. Shapiro asserts that Rambam’s position is “that the head of the household lights for everyone, not that each person lights for himself” and attributes my “mistake” to an incorrect gloss in Rema which in standard texts incorrectly attributes the idea of individuals lighting to Rambam. In support of his position he cites R’ David of Newardok who suggests that it would be an unnecessary benediction if one of those present would make the benediction and light his own candle(s).

I would point out that my statement of Rambam’s position is offered by: R. Moses Isserles (Rema) in Darkei Moshe on Tur (whom Prof. Shapiro himself cites); Taz (whom I cited in footnote 1 of my article) **and, on a very concise but clear way**, Gra in Biur ha-Gra on Sh. Ar. O. H. 671.2. Although Prof. Shapiro may want to argue the point, the fact that many of the greatest Ashkenazi poskim agree with this position implies that it certainly cannot be categorized as an “error ... that should be corrected, as it is a fairly common mistake.”

J. Jean Ajdler, Civil Engineer, Brussels.