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Judaism at Home

WHEN THE ONLY PLACE
JUDAISM CAN THRIVE IS AT HOME



Rest Assured

SUMMARY



I. INTRODUCTION

- Remember the day of Shabbos to sanctify it.
- Even if not much is going on during the week.
- Whether something is an undesired restriction depends on our perception.

II. PREPARING FOR SHABBOS

- There are several *mitzvos* pertaining to Shabbos that make preparation necessary:
 - o *Melachah*: forbidden activities.
 - o *Oneg*: pleasure.
 - o *Kavod*: honor.
- We *seek out* opportunities to *personally* prepare for Shabbos.

When?

- Friday
- Arise early.

What?

- Shop for the items needed for Shabbos. See Appendix for “Your Shabbat Shopping List.”
- Prepare the Shabbos dishes of your choice.
 - o Shabbos recipes can be found at <https://www.chabad.org/93784>.
 - o Some have a custom to taste the Shabbos foods on Friday.
 - o Refrain from eating a full meal on Friday afternoon, lest this diminish our appetite for the Shabbos meal or distract us from Shabbos preparations.

- It is customary to bake challah on Friday. For directions on how to separate challah and recite the blessing, see “Baking Challah” in the Appendix.
- There are also a number of home preparations that are mentioned in the Code of Jewish law:
 - o Cleaning the home.
 - o Making the beds.
 - o Adorning the table with a tablecloth.
- It is also important to take care of the tasks that are off-limits on Shabbos. See “Your Pre- Shabbat Check List” in the Appendix.
- Another category of preparations pertains to personal grooming. The Code of Jewish law mentions the following:
 - o Showering.
 - o Cutting nails.
 - o Taking a haircut, if necessary.
 - o Getting dressed in our Shabbos best.
 - o Some are particular to refrain from wearing anything that they wore during the weekday.
- All of this applies irrespective of whether we will be having company.
- While it is important to ensure that everything is ready for Shabbos, we cannot forget that our mood and disposition must also be in keeping with the Shabbos spirit.
- This segues into the concept of spiritual preparations:
 - o *Mikveh*.
 - o It is desirable to make time on Friday to study the weekly Torah portion.
 - o It is customary to take a few moments on Friday to review one’s behavior during the previous week.

III. SHABBOS CANDLES

Why?

- The sages decreed that everyone must kindle Shabbos candles to last into the evening.
- Candles and oil are the time-honored way of fulfilling this mitzvah.

When?

- Shabbos candles must be lit before sunset.
- Conversely, one shouldn't light the candles too early on a Friday—not more than roughly 1¼ hours before sundown.
- In many communities, the custom is to light the candles eighteen minutes before sunset. This is the candle lighting time that we see on our calendars.
- If candles were not lit before this time, they should be lit during the eighteen minutes until sunset, but not after sunset.
- For the proper candle lighting time for any date and location, go to: www.chabad.org/candlelighting.

Who?

- The mitzvah of lighting Shabbos candles applies to men and women. However, if there is a woman (over the age of bat mitzvah) in a home, she lights the candles for the household.
- When a man is living alone, he should light Shabbos candles. Even when there is a woman in the home, Jewish law encourages the man to actively participate in this mitzvah. For example, he can set up the tray with the candlesticks.
- The Lubavitcher Rebbe initiated a campaign encouraging every Jewish girl to light her own candle.
- Because by lighting Shabbos candles a person marks personal acceptance of Shabbos and may no longer do any of the forbidden Shabbos activities, including striking a match or lighting a candle,

young girls light before their mothers so that she would be allowed to assist them.

What?

- We use wax candles or oil for this mitzvah. All candles manufactured today emit a clean, stable flame and are kosher for lighting.
- The candles should be long enough to burn until nightfall, and ideally, until after the Shabbos dinner.
- The mitzvah can technically be fulfilled by lighting a single candle. However, there are various customs about the number of candles to light. The established custom is for single girls and women to light one candle, and married women to light (at least) two.
- Many women have a custom of lighting one additional candle upon the birth of each child, increasing in light as the family grows.

Where?

- Set the candles on a metal tray in a location that is out of the reach of young children and clear of flammable objects.
- The candles should ideally be visible from the table on which the Shabbos meal will be eaten, so that those enjoying their meal can benefit from their glow.

How?

- It is customary to light the Shabbos candles while dressed in Shabbos clothing.
- It is appropriate to place some money in a charity box before lighting the Shabbos candles.
- Light the candle(s).
- Do not extinguish the match, but let it burn down on the metal tray upon which the candles are standing.
- Circle your hands over the flames and toward yourself three times.

- Cover your eyes with your hands and recite the blessing. See “Lighting the Candles” in the Appendix.
- While your eyes are still covered, take a moment to silently pray for whatever your heart desires.
- Open your eyes and say “Shabbat Shalom” or “Good Shabbos” to all who are present.

IV. KABOLAS SHABBOS

- On Friday evening, we introduce *Maariv* with a series of prayers called *Kabolas Shabbos*.
- P. 154 (in the Kehot, Hebrew-English Siddur): We begin with the recitation of six chapters from Psalms, corresponding to Sunday–Friday.
- P. 157 - Before reciting the psalm corresponding to Shabbos, we sing *Lechah Dodi*, welcoming the Shabbos with great joy.
- P. 158 - Following *Lecha Dodi*, we recite the Psalm that was recited each Shabbos in the Temple, followed by the Psalm that was recited there each Friday. This concludes *Kabolas Shabbos*, which is followed by *Maariv*.

V. THE SHABBOS MEAL

A. SHALOM ALEICHEM

- P. 176 - We first sing “*Shalom Aleichem*,” a seventeenth-century poem by an unknown author.
- Angels accompany us at this time.
- There are four stanzas to this song. In the final stanza (p. 177), we say “May your departure be in peace.”

B. EISHES CHAYIL

- P. 177 - The next step is the singing of *Eishes Chayil*, “a woman of valor,” which is from the last chapter of King Solomon’s book of Proverbs.

- Throughout the generations, many Jewish men would praise their wives using themes and verses from this song.
- *Aishes Chayil* is read at this point to tap into the feminine energies of Shabbos.

C. KIDDUSH

Why?

- The Hebrew word “*zachor*” has two meanings: to remember and to mention.
- Kiddush can be found in a siddur; it can also be printed out before Shabbos from www.chabad.org/258650.

How?

- The core of the Kiddush mandate is a verbal proclamation. Our sages enacted that this be recited over a cup of wine to underscore its significance. If one cannot drink wine, grape juice can be used as a substitute.
- The Kiddush cup should hold at least three fluid ounces. The custom is to use a fancy goblet designated for mitzvos.
- The two challahs, discussed below, should be present at the table under a cover.
- Fill the cup with kosher wine (or grape juice), and then pour a bit more so that it overflows the brim.
- Rise.
- Hold the cup in your right (or dominant) hand. On Friday night, glance at the Shabbos candles and take in the Shabbos light as you start saying the Kiddush.
- There are two paragraphs to recite (discussed below), with the blessing of *Hagafen* in between. Glance at the wine in the cup when you say the wine (*hagafen*) blessing.
- After concluding the Kiddush, drink at least 1.5 ounces from the cup.

- If there are other family members or if guests are joining you for your Shabbos meal, you can recite the Kiddush aloud, and all who wish to be included in your recitation of Kiddush should answer “Amen” after the blessings are recited. After Kiddush, it is customary to share a sip of the Kiddush wine with all present.

The Liturgy

- P. 179 - We begin *Kiddush* by reading the passage about Shabbos from the beginning of Genesis.
- We then recite *Hagafen*, preceded by *Savri Maranan*.
- The last part of *Kiddush*—which is in fact its core component—is the blessing in which we express our gratitude to Gd for giving us the gift of Shabbos.

D. TWO LOAVES

Why?

- Jewish law states that Kiddush is not valid unless it is immediately followed by a meal.
- Bread is the food by which Jewish law distinguishes between a snack and a meal.
- We use two loaves, to remind us of the manna.
- This is also the reasons for covering the challah during *Kiddush*.
 - Another reason we cover the bread during *Kiddush* is to “save it from its shame.”
 - Obviously, challah does not have feelings, but our sages wanted to impart a lesson to us.
- It is important for us to recall the miracle of the manna specifically on Shabbos.

How?

- Before the Kiddush, place two whole and uncut loaves of challah on the table. (Whole rolls, matzah slices, or pita breads may also be used.)
- Cover the challah loaves until after the Kiddush is recited. Beautiful “challah covers” are available at Judaica stores and online for reasonable prices, but a cloth or napkin does the job as well.
- “Unveil” the challah loaves only after the Kiddush, demonstrating that they—as well as the entire meal—are in honor of the Shabbos whose presence and holiness you just acknowledged.
- After the Kiddush, ritually wash your hands.
- Lightly score the top of one of the challah loaves with a knife before reciting the blessing.
- Recite the *Hamotzi* blessing. The text can be found in the appendix, titled “The Two Loaves.”
- Slice the loaf that you scored, dip a piece of the bread in salt, and enjoy!
- After you take a piece for yourself, slice pieces of challah for all present.
- It is not necessary to eat both challah loaves; if only one is consumed, you can put the second one away for the next meal.

E. THE MEAL

- The key to the Shabbos meal is to eat foods that are pleasurable. Historically, Jews have regarded fish and meat as particularly pleasurable.
- However, there is no obligation to eat these foods if one dislikes them.
- Some deeper symbolism of eating fish on Shabbos:
 - Constant providence.
 - Fish invokes the spirit of Shabbos—above the realm of possible sin and evil.
- Ashkenazi Jews usually eat gefilte fish on Shabbos:
 - It used to be more economical.

- o Handling the inedible portion.
 - o Symbolizes the need to internalize.
- After concluding the meal, we recite the Grace after Meals.

VI. CONCLUSION

- The body must experience Shabbos on its own terms, in ways that are consistent with its basic nature.
- We eat lavishly on Shabbos, *all the while consciously knowing that this is in honor of Shabbos*, and then Shabbos has indeed reached every part of our beings.

YOUR SHABBAT SHOPPING LIST

Your Shabbat shopping list will largely depend on the menu you create, depending on your particular taste. The traditional Friday night meal includes fish, soup, and a meat or chicken course. The Shabbat day meal is similar, with the main course including *cholent* or *chamin*, a warm stew that simmers overnight. All this, however, is contingent on one's personal palate.

The following are universal items that are needed in order to create the Shabbat experience:

Basic:

- o Candles or tea lights (for Shabbat candles and *Havdalah*)
- o Kosher wine or grape juice (for Kiddush and *Havdalah*)
- o Three loaves of challah (or, for a small crowd, challah rolls)
- o Salt (in which to dip the challah)
- o Aromatic spices, such as whole cloves (for *Havdalah*)
- o A prayer book or Shabbat table guide that contains the texts of Kiddush and *Havdalah*, and the Shabbat meal liturgy

And then enhance the experience:

- o Fresh flowers
- o Stylish candlesticks (Get creative! Anything from the traditional silver candlesticks to floating candles in a crystal dish with flower petals, marbles, and mirrors)
- o An elegant Kiddush cup
- o A nice challah cover, cutting board, and knife
- o A pressed white tablecloth
- o Fine dishware, glassware, flatware, and napkins
- o A braided *Havdalah* candle

YOUR PRE-SHABBAT CHECKLIST

HOME-RELATED TASKS:

- o Make beds
- o Wash dishes and counters, and tidy up kitchen
- o Sweep and mop floors
- o Vacuum carpets
- o Wash, fold, and put away laundry
- o Pick up Shabbat clothing from the dry cleaners
- o Polish shoes
- o Set the Shabbat table and arrange the Shabbat candles
- o Check the pockets of all clothing you will be wearing on Shabbat to ensure that they are empty
- o Set the lights, air conditioners, and heat the way you'd like them to remain for the duration of Shabbat
- o If your refrigerator or freezer has a light that goes on when the door is opened, unscrew the light bulb

Note: You can use electronic timers to schedule lights and certain appliances (such as air conditioners) to go on and off on Shabbat at preset times.

FOOD-RELATED PREPARATIONS:

Before Shabbat, place all food that will be served warm—such as soup, chicken, or *cholent*—on the stovetop. A *blech* (thin sheet of metal, probably available at your local Judaica store) or a folded piece of aluminum foil should separate the food from the fire or heating element. If you are using an electric cooking pot, place a layer of foil between the outer cooker and the inner pot (this is not necessary if the electric cooking pot has only one setting, i.e., only an on/off switch).

Fill an urn with water and heat it until it is boiled (make sure that the urn's dispensing mechanism is not electronically operated); or boil a kettle of water and place it on the *blech*.

SELF-PREPARATIONS:

- o Bathe or shower
- o Groom hair and nails
- o Apply makeup and/or perfume
- o Get dressed in your Shabbat best.

BAKING CHALLAH

When used in daily conversation, “challah” refers to the braided loaves of bread traditionally eaten on Shabbat and Jewish holiday meals. In Talmudic and rabbinic literature, however, challah usually refers to the small portion of dough that we separate from the total dough before we bake any bread, in fulfillment of the biblical directive (Leviticus 15:21), “From the first portion of your dough, you shall give a gift to G-d.”

Originally, this challah portion was given to a *kohen*, a priestly descendant of Aharon who served in the Temple, a practice that will resume in the Messianic Era with the rebuilding of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. For various reasons, priests today are not permitted to eat challah—but neither are we. So, instead, we burn the small piece of challah.

Though today most people buy bread from bakeries (kosher bakeries also separate challah from the dough), Jewish women have traditionally embraced the custom of baking challah loaves in honor of Shabbat, allowing them the opportunity to perform the special mitzvah of separating challah on a weekly basis.

Why?

Separating challah reminds us that all we possess—our material possessions as well as our talents—are G-d-given. As such, we always designate part of what we were given and devote it to a G-dly purpose—whether in the form of charity, volunteer work, or devoting time to studying Torah and doing *mitzvot*.

What?

We separate challah from batches of dough that are made from at least forty-three ounces of wheat, rye, barley, oat, or spelt flour.

How?

1. After kneading the dough, before shaping it into loaves, place the dough in a single pan or bowl and say:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָיִי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַפְרִישׁ חֻלָּה.

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, asher kidishanu bimitsvotav, vitsivanu lihafrish challah.

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to separate challah.

2. Separate a small piece (approximately one ounce) and say, "This is challah."
3. Wrap the challah in foil and burn it in a broiler, grill, or oven. (The charred bread may be discarded.)
4. This blessing is only recited if there's at least fifty-nine ounces of flour in the batch. Otherwise, separate *challah*, but don't recite the blessing. Similarly, only recite the blessing if water comprises most of the liquid in the dough.

LIGHTING THE CANDLES

“And G-d blessed the seventh day” (Genesis 2:2).

With what did He bless it? With the Shabbat candles (Midrash, *Bereishit Rabah* 11:2).

Shabbat candles must be lit before sunset. Because it is never wise to wait until the last moment, it is customary to light the candles at least eighteen minutes before sunset. The candles should be lit no earlier than approximately 1¼ hours before sunset (a bit longer than that in the summer, a bit shorter in the winter).

It is very important not to light candles after sunset; doing so would constitute a desecration of the holiness of Shabbat.

For the proper candle-lighting time for any date and location, go to **www.chabad.org/candlelighting**.

Follow the steps outlined earlier, pp. 4–6. Recite the following blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָיִי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל
שַׁבָּת קֹדֶשׁ.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, asher kidishanu
bemitsvotav, vetsivanu lehadlik ner shel Shabbat kodesh.*

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Who has
sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to kindle
the light of the holy Shabbat.

TWO CHALLAH LOAVES

At the Shabbat meals, the *hamotsi* blessing is recited on two loaves, commemorating the double portion of manna that fell in the desert every Friday—in honor of Shabbat. For directions on how to serve the challah loaves, see above, pp. 8–9.

Recite the following blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָיִךְ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, hamotsi lechem
min ha'arets.*

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Who brings forth
bread from the earth.