

2. Preparing for Shabbat

דִּינֵי הַכְּנָה לְשַׁבָּת

1. The fourth of the Ten Commandments states, “Remember the Shabbat day to keep it holy” (*Shemot* 20:8), which means, among other things, remember to sanctify Shabbat every day of the week. In this regard, the Gemara (*Beitzah* 16a) relates that Shammai, if he chanced during the week upon some food which he considered a delicacy, would buy it in honor of Shabbat. We too should find similar ways of sanctifying Shabbat even during the week.

You should arise early on *Erev Shabbat* in order to obtain what is needed for Shabbat. You may shop even before *tefillah* on Friday morning provided that it does not prevent you from praying with a *minyan*.¹ It is preferable to buy the necessities in honor of Shabbat on Friday, but whatever requires preparation you should buy on Thursday. When

1. **Shopping for Shabbat Before *Tefillah*** Although you generally should not attend to personal needs before the morning prayers, you may shop then for Shabbat, since providing for Shabbat is considered a *mitzvah* and not a personal need. You should, however, be careful to recite the *Shema* in the proper time. In the event that what you need for Shabbat will not be available by the time the congregation finishes the *tefillah*, you may pray privately. Even though praying with a *minyan* is of great importance and should not be dismissed lightly, having food to enjoy for Shabbat is considered by some to be a Torah law, and it therefore takes precedence over *tefillah betzibbur* when the two absolutely conflict.

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buying something for Shabbat, you should say “*lichvod Shabbat*, It is in honor of Shabbat.”

One of the practices instituted by Ezra is to wash and launder your clothes on Thursday, so that they will be ready to wear in honor of Shabbat. This activity should not be left for Friday, as you must then attend to the more immediate needs in preparation for Shabbat.

2. Even if you employ people who can prepare everything for Shabbat, it is still a *mitzvah* to take part in some way in the Shabbat preparations, thereby honoring it in person.² This was done by the great rabbis of the Talmud, as recorded in *Shabbat* 119a. For example, Rav Chisda used to cut up the vegetables; Rabbah and Rav Yosef would chop wood; Rav Zeira would kindle the fire; Rav Nachman would put the house in order, bring in the utensils needed for Shabbat and clear away those used during the week. You should follow their example and not regard it as beneath your dignity to do these things, for it is your own honor to honor Shabbat.

3. It is a prevailing custom among Jews to bake *challot* in honor of Shabbat.³ Those who eat bread baked by a non-Jewish baker on weekdays should be careful to eat Jewish baked bread on Shabbat.⁴ And even if you eat only bread baked by a Jewish baker on weekdays as well, you should try to have bread baked in the home in honor of Shabbat, so that the woman of the house may perform the *mitzvah* of taking *challah* from

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2. **Preparing for Shabbat** When the days are short, or the hour is late, it is especially incumbent upon everyone to help prepare for Shabbat in order to avoid any violation of Shabbat later on.
 3. **Challot Are to Be Baked on Erev Shabbat** The Shabbat *challot* should be baked on *Erev Shabbat*, that is, on Friday, or, when the days are short, on Thursday night, if necessary. This idea is based on the procedure followed regarding the *lechem hapanim* (show-bread) which was prepared on *Erev Shabbat* and placed on the *shulchan* in the *Beit HaMikdash* on Shabbat.
 4. **Challot to Be Baked by a Jew** The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Yoreh De'ah* 112) cites both stringent and lenient opinions regarding the *kashrut* status of bread baked by a non-Jew; the lenient position allows it if it is baked for commercial sale rather than for a particular person. For those who adopt this position, it is nonetheless considered *kavod* Shabbat to be stringent with the *challot* for the Shabbat meals. If need be, however, bread baked by a non-Jew may be used for the Shabbat meals, and even for *Kiddush*.

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the dough when baking.⁵ Some have the custom to bake three loaves, a large one, a medium-sized one, and a small one. The medium-sized loaf is for the evening meal, the large one is for the daytime meal (to show that Shabbat day is given precedence when it comes to honoring Shabbat), and the small loaf is for the third meal (*Seudah Shelishit*).

4. You should prepare meat and fish, good food⁶ and good wine, and other delicacies according to your means. It is desirable to eat fish at every Shabbat meal,⁷ but if you find it harmful or do not care for it, you need not eat it, for Shabbat is meant to bring pleasure and not discomfort.

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5. **Mitzvah of Challah Entrusted to Women** One of the *mitzvot* especially entrusted to women is the *mitzvah* of taking *challah*, a certain percentage of the dough, when baking (see *Bamidbar* 15-21). Jewish women have traditionally considered this a great privilege, and many are accustomed to bake *challot* for Shabbat in order to be able to perform the *mitzvah* of taking *challah*. However, *challah* is not separated unless more than about two and a quarter pounds of dough is produced. If more than about five pounds of dough is produced, *challah* is separated with a *berachah*.
6. **Eating Hot Food on Shabbat** You should try to have hot food to eat on Shabbat in fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of *Oneg Shabbat*. It is customary among Ashkenazim, in particular, to have *cholent*, a dish consisting usually of meat, beans, barley, and potatoes, cooked on *Erev Shabbat* and kept on the fire overnight to be served hot on Shabbat. The Sefardim likewise prepare hot food for Shabbat. The Rabbis advocated this practice in order to counter the false views of the Karaite sect and others, who mistook the Torah's directive to "kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Shabbat day" (*Shemot* 35:3) to mean that you may not even leave a fire lit before Shabbat to burn on Shabbat. This understanding constitutes a denial of the *Torah Shebe'al Peh* (Oral Law) which teaches that this is permitted. Although it is indeed forbidden to light a fire, or to cook on Shabbat, one may nevertheless benefit from light and heat, and enjoy a hot meal, if prepared and kept warm in a permissible manner. Shabbat is to be celebrated as a day of joy, in keeping with the words of the prophet, "And call the Shabbat a delight" (*Yeshayahu* 58:13).
7. **Eating Fish at the Shabbat Meals** It is customary to eat fish at the Shabbat meals, especially at *Seudah Shelishit*. There are different reasons for this custom. *Benei Yisachar* (*Ma'amar HaShabbatot* 1:11, 3:16) points out that the fish were blessed on Thursday of creation, mankind was blessed on Friday, and Shabbat was blessed the next day. The union of all three (that is, man eating fish on Shabbat) thus creates a "threefold blessing," and in the spirit of the words of *Kohelet*, "a three-fold cord is not quickly broken" (4:12). Another symbolism draws on the fact that fish do not close their eyes or blink; similarly we beseech *Hashem* who "neither sleeps nor slumbers" (*Tehillim* 121:3) to protect us in the merit of our *Oneg Shabbat*.

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The house should be put in order; the beds made, and the table covered with a tablecloth which should remain on the table the entire Shabbat day. Some are accustomed to placing two cloths on the table.⁸ The silverware should be polished and the dishes set out in honor of the Shabbat. One should rejoice in the coming of Shabbat, and consider how assiduously he would go about setting the house in order if he were expecting the arrival of a dear and esteemed guest; how much more so, then, in honor of the arrival of the Shabbat Queen.

Some are accustomed to make a meat pie or stuffed meat for the Shabbat evening meal.⁹ One should taste the Shabbat food on *Erev Shabbat*.

5. Even someone of modest means should make Shabbat a day of delight. Such a person should, if necessary, be frugal during the week so that he or she will have sufficient funds with which to honor Shabbat. It is even permissible to borrow in order to provide for Shabbat. Of such a person, *Chazal* say, “The Holy One, blessed is He, said to Israel: My children, borrow on My account and celebrate the holiness of the day, and trust in Me and I will repay” (*Beitzah* 15b). This is true, however, as noted by *Tosafot* there (s.v. *levu*) only of someone who reasonably believes that he or she will be able to repay the loan. To someone who has to borrow beyond his means and will be unable to repay, the advice of *Chazal* is, “Treat your Shabbat like a weekday (that is, be content with weekday fare) rather than be dependent on other people” (*Shabbat* 118a). Nevertheless, if possible, everyone should try to prepare something special, however little, such as some small fish or the like, in honor of Shabbat. If someone received food intended for Shabbat, it should be eaten on Shabbat and not left for a weekday.

8. **Covering the Table with Two Cloths** The table should be covered throughout Shabbat. Those who place two cloths do so in order that the table not be left bare even when the tablecloth is removed to be shaken out.
9. **Eating a Meat Pie** Although you should create a Shabbat menu that caters to your tastes, it is important to be aware that many of the traditional Shabbat foods have deep roots and symbolism. The meat pie (*pashtida*), for example, which consists of meat covered by layers of dough, is in remembrance of the manna which was covered by dew from above and below, and a double portion of which was collected for Shabbat.

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6. You should not do any work on a regular basis on *Erev Shabbat* in the late afternoon (the time known as *Minchah Ketanah*), that is, starting from about two and a half hours before sunset. But if it is work of an incidental nature, it is permitted. When the work is required for Shabbat, you are permitted to work even later. A poor person who wants to earn enough to cover his Shabbat needs may work all day Friday, just as on Chol HaMoed. Giving another Jew a haircut, even if it is done professionally and for pay, is permissible all day Friday, as it is apparent that it is being done for the sake of Shabbat. Shops and businesses should be closed at least one hour before Shabbat.¹⁰

7. During the last quarter of the day on Friday, you should refrain from eating a regular meal,¹¹ even if you usually have one at that time on weekdays. A special meal, of the sort which one does not usually have on weekdays, is not permitted at any time on Friday,¹² even in the morning, even if it is a *seudat mitzvah*, provided that the *seudah* can be held another day.¹³ However, a *seudat mitzvah* that must take place that day,

10. **Closing Shop Early Before Shabbat** Shops and businesses should be closed at a reasonable hour, in order to allow enough time for people to go home and prepare for Shabbat, so as to avoid any violations. The stipulation here of “one hour before Shabbat” is therefore to be understood to mean one hour before *Kabbalat Shabbat*, which is recited about an hour and a half before nightfall. The actual closing time would then be at least two and a half hours before nightfall.
11. **Refraining from Eating a Meal Before Shabbat** You should refrain from eating a regular meal on *Erev Shabbat* after nine *halachic* hours (*sha’ot zemaneyot*) of the day, which is the equivalent of the last quarter of the day. The hours are, in this regard, calculated according to the amount of daylight during each particular day (see *Magen Avraham, Orach Chaim* 233:3). In the winter, however, when the day is short, it is best not to eat a regular meal even before that time, so as not to spoil your appetite for the Shabbat meal.
12. **Not Having a Special Seudah on Friday** You should not have a feast (*seudah*) or a special meal on Friday, as you may neglect to prepare properly for Shabbat as a result of being preoccupied with the feast. Moreover, a festive meal on Friday detracts from the honor that is to be accorded Shabbat.
13. **Purim on Friday** One of the *mitzvot* of Purim is to eat a large and festive Purim *Seudah*. When Purim falls on Friday, there are two methods to accommodate the *Seudat Purim* and the *Seudat Shabbat* which is to take place after nightfall. Rema (*Orach Chaim* 695:2) writes that the *Seudat Purim* should take place in the morning, so that it will not interfere with the *Seudat Shabbat* at night. However, some people

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such as on the occasion of a *berit milah* or a *pidyon haben*, is permitted.¹⁴ Nevertheless, it is proper even in such cases to make the *seudah* earlier in the morning and not to prolong the meal, and certainly not to eat to excess, so that the Shabbat meal may still be eaten with an appetite.

8. Every week on Shabbat morning, one *parashah* of the Torah is read in synagogue. Accordingly, it is required that every individual read the *parashah* privately beforehand, finishing it by the time the congregation finishes reading it in public. You may begin reading it on Sunday, since the congregation already began reading the next week's *parashah* at *Minchah* on the previous Shabbat afternoon. It is preferable, however, to read it on Friday afternoon.¹⁵ The procedure is to read the text of the Torah twice and the *Targum*, the Aramaic translation, once, that is, the *parashah* should be read twice in its entirety, and then its *Targum*,¹⁶ followed by a single verse in order to conclude with a reading from

have the practice of combining the two meals in the following way. You can begin your *Seudat Purim* in the afternoon, and once Shabbat arrives, you interrupt your meal by covering all the food on the table, and then make *Kiddush*. Making *Kiddush* mid-meal transforms the Purim *Seudah* into a Shabbat *Seudah*. If you eat bread after dark, you say both *al hanisim* and *retzei* in *Birkat Hamazon*. (See *Sefer Piskei Teshuvot* 695:6.) As this latter option is more complicated than the former, rabbinic counsel should be sought before Purim.

14. **A *Seudah* on Friday for a Delayed *Berit* or *Pidyon Haben*** A *seudah* for a *berit* or a *pidyon haben* is held on *Erev Shabbat* even if the occasion was delayed and did not take place at the normally appointed time.
15. **Reviewing the Torah Portion by Shabbat Morning** Some *poskim* consider it equally meritorious to start the review at the beginning of the week. In fact, it was the custom of the Gaon of Vilna to read a part of the *parashah* and the *Targum* daily after the morning service and to conclude it on *Erev Shabbat*. If you did not conclude the review of the weekly *parashah* before Shabbat, you should try to do so on Shabbat morning before going to the synagogue. Someone who is pressed for time can fulfill the obligation of reviewing the *parashah* by reading in the synagogue along with the reader, and then reading the *parashah* a second time, together with the *Targum*, at home.
16. **Procedure for Reviewing the Weekly Torah Portion** The procedure recommended by some *poskim*, and often followed, is to read each Biblical verse twice and then the *Targum* of that verse. This would conform to the practice in times past, when the Biblical portion read at the synagogue service was translated into Aramaic by the *meturgeman*, the translator, one verse at a time. Either procedure is acceptable. Some permit reading the Torah portion, followed by the *Targum*, then the Torah

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the Torah. You should try not to interrupt your reading with conversation. It is customary to read the week's *Haftarah* (the portion from the Prophets) as well.¹⁷ Some are accustomed to recite *Shir HaShirim* (Song of Songs) afterwards. One who has a *Chumash* which does not contain the *Targum* should read the text twice and then read the *Targum* when it becomes available. Everyone should also study Rashi's commentary on the *parashah*. If you are not capable of understanding Hebrew, you should read the portion and a commentary in translation in a language that you understand in order to know the contents of the *parashah*.¹⁸

9. You should go into Shabbat having bathed, with your nails trimmed and hair groomed in honor of Shabbat.

10. *Erev Shabbat* is designated for more, however, than becoming physically clean and groomed. For example, you should take time on *Erev Shabbat* to examine your conduct and repent, and resolve to amend all the wrongs which you may have committed during the week, because *Erev Shabbat* embodies all the weekdays, just as the eve of Rosh Chodesh (which is also set aside for introspection and *teshuvah*) embodies the whole month.¹⁹

portion again. The Torah portion should be read in the traditional cantillation of the verse. One who is able should preferably do the reading from a Torah scroll.

17. **Reviewing the *Haftarah*** The *Haftarah* to be reviewed is the one assigned to be read on that particular Shabbat. Therefore, on special weeks such as Rosh Chodesh, *Parashat Zachor*, etc., you should read the special *Haftarah* designated for that Shabbat. The purpose of reviewing the *Haftarah* is so that if you are called to the Torah for *Maftir* you will be able to read it fluently.
18. **Reading *Targum* and Rashi's Commentary** The *Targum* is considered the most authoritative translation and commentary on the Torah. It is said that the translation now known as *Targum Onkelos* was given at Sinai (see *Beit Yosef to Orach Chaim* 285). For this reason, the Talmud (*Berachot* 8a) and the classical *poskim* speak exclusively of *Targum Onkelos* in regards to the *mitzvah* of reviewing the weekly *parashah*. In the present day, however, most people are not able to understand the Aramaic in which *Targum Onkelos* is written. In light of this, Rashi's commentary is considered a substitute for *Targum*. Therefore, if you cannot understand *Targum*, you can discharge your obligation to review the weekly *parashah* by learning Rashi instead.
19. **Repentance on *Erev Shabbat*** *Erev Shabbat* is comparable to *Erev Rosh Chodesh*, which is like a day of atonement for transgressions you may have committed during the preceding month (see *Mishnah Berurah* 417:4). According to Jewish tradition, the

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11. You should try to have fine clothes as well as a nice *tallit* to wear in honor of Shabbat, as it is written, “And you shall honor it” (*Yeshayahu* 58:13), which *Chazal* explained to mean: “Your garments for Shabbat should not be the same as those for weekdays” (*Shabbat* 113a).²⁰ Even while away on a trip, a cruise, or in the park during the afternoon, you should wear your *bigdei Shabbat*, because your special attire for Shabbat is worn in respect for the Shabbat itself.

12. As stated earlier, it is a *mitzvah* to have good food, including hot food, on Shabbat. The laws of preparing hot food on Shabbat are quite involved and intricate. For a detailed discussion of preparing hot food on Shabbat and on *Erev Shabbat*, see Part II, *Melachah* 11 (Cooking), paragraphs 12-15 and notes in particular.

13. Shortly before Shabbat begins, you should inquire of everyone involved in Shabbat preparation if all is set for Shabbat. The Mishnah (*Shabbat* 11:7) mentions that you should ask them specifically about two things, whether the appropriate *eruvim* are in place and whether the *challah* portion has been separated from the dough,²¹ and should

ends of cycles are often times of introspection. It is thus fitting to turn your thoughts to repentance on *Erev Shabbat* in preparation for communion with *Hashem* on the holy day of Shabbat.

20. **Wearing Shabbat Clothes** If possible, you should have a complete change of clothing for Shabbat. Someone of modest means should try to wear at least one special garment by which to be reminded that it is Shabbat. It is not necessary, though it is commendable, to have special shoes for Shabbat. You should, however, polish your shoes for Shabbat. Wearing Shabbat clothes is a very important and tangible way of creating the spirit of Shabbat in the home. Shabbat clothes are thus not reserved for synagogue only; they should be worn the entire day. There exists a misconception that avoiding *melachah* is the only binding element of Shabbat, while the positive commandments are optional. This is not true. Although not as quantifiable as avoidance of *melachah*, wearing Shabbat clothes for the entire day is essential to the pursuit of creating a positive Shabbat environment. Changing into weekday clothes after returning home from *shul* only reinforces the notion that Shabbat is equated with synagogue. In actuality, Shabbat is in its entirety a day of bonding with *Hashem*, and as such, should be treated with the respect that *bigdei Shabbat* accords the day, for the entire day.
21. **Forgetting to Take Challah Before Shabbat** Inquiry about the *challah* portion is meant to serve as a reminder. In practice, however, if you forgot to separate the *challah* portion before Shabbat you may eat the bread nonetheless and then take *challah* after

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then remind them to light Shabbat candles. You should also caution everyone to stop whatever work is prohibited on Shabbat. In our day and age, you might include other questions, such as whether the lights in the house are set properly, whether the house alarm is set on a mode of operation appropriate for Shabbat, whether the lights are off in the refrigerator, whether the bathrooms have sufficient tissues, etc. The preparations which need to be taken care of on *Erev Shabbat* have a way of introducing stress into a home, especially on the short winter Fridays. You should therefore be mindful to go about Shabbat preparations in a gentle and pleasant manner.²²

18. You must examine your clothing on *Erev Shabbat* before dark to be sure that there is nothing stuck to them and that there is nothing in the pockets. This should be done even where there is an *eruv* and it is permissible to carry, because the pockets may contain items that are *muktzeh* which may not be handled on Shabbat.

Shabbat from what is left over. This procedure may be followed in countries outside *Eretz Yisrael* (see *Yoreh De'ah* 323:1), making this reminder no longer necessary. In *Eretz Yisrael*, however, it is not permitted to eat the bread if *challah* was not taken; this reminder is thus very important.

22. **Cultivating a Spirit of Peace and Love in the Home** Avoiding contention and quarreling in the family on *Erev Shabbat* is essential to cultivating a spirit of peace and tranquility that should pervade the home (*shalom bayit*) on Shabbat.