



Parshas Vayakhel 5765

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*Is one supposed to accept Shabbos before sunset?*

The answer is in the affirmative, and the source is an interesting one.

The *gemora* in *Rosh Hashana* 9a cites the *possuk* that commands us to fast on Yom Kippur (*Vayikra* 23:32). The referenced words of the *possuk* are *בתשעה לחודש בערב*, where on the one hand it appears that the fast day takes place on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei, but on the other hand the *possuk* says *בערב*, which means that it only commences on the 10<sup>th</sup> at night. The *gemora* learns from this that one must begin fasting a bit before the 10<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei. This concept is known as *מוסיפין* – adding to the holy day by sanctifying part of the adjacent weekday and is called *תוספת שבת*.

The *gemora* continues to prove that this applies to Shabbos and Yom Tov as well, i.e. one must add to the Shabbos by sanctifying the Friday preceding Shabbos and one must add to the weekday preceding a Yom Tov.<sup>1</sup> We should note that although the *Rambam* holds that *מוסיפין* מחול על קודש only applies to the actual fasting on Yom Kippur and not to Shabbos and Yom Tov, many *Rishonim*<sup>2</sup> hold, as stated, that it applies to Shabbos and Yom Tov as well.

*How we do practically apply this halacha?*

<sup>1</sup> See the *M"B* 261:19.

<sup>2</sup> The period of the *Rishonim* refers to *Rabbis* who lived approx. from the years 900-1400, such as *Rashi*, *Rambam* and *Tosefos*.

The application of this *halacha* requires that one must refrain from performing *melacha*, as if it is Shabbos, even though it is not yet Shabbos. Prior thereto, we must know that there are several opinions amongst the *Rishonim* as to when Shabbos begins. The *Mishna Berura* points out<sup>3</sup> that many *Rishonim* hold that Shabbos begins when the sun dips below the horizon and consequently from this point onwards, one may not violate the Shabbos in any form.

Accordingly, if we are to add to the Shabbos and refrain from *melacha* it must be done before sunset, as from sunset onwards we must refrain from performing *melacha* even if we did not add to the Shabbos from our own aspirations.

Therefore one must accept Shabbos **before** sunset. The *Mishna Berura* says<sup>4</sup> that a few seconds are not enough for *תוספת שבת* and it appears that one should add a few minutes for *תוספת שבת* (this is done verbally or mentally, as explained later) and refrain from *melacha* from that point onwards.

[Even without the mitzvah of *תוספת שבת* there is a problem with sunset in various locations. This is because of difficulties in calculating the exact time of sunset when, as in some cases, mountains obscure the sun and other halachic considerations.

Accordingly one should refrain from *melacha* prior to the last minute. Similarly, daytime *halachos* should be performed a few minutes

<sup>3</sup> *Simon* 261:23.

<sup>4</sup> *Simon* 261:22.

before sunset in order to avoid this problem].

*How does one "accept" Shabbos early?*

One should accept the Shabbos verbally and say "I hereby accept upon myself the holy Shabbos or "הריני מקבל עלי שבת קודש", or one should at least say this mentally. It is also known that if one says בואי כלה in the *lecha dodi*, or if one says מזמור שיר ליום השבת one accepts the Shabbos, because one mentions the Shabbos in these verses.<sup>5</sup> The accepted custom is that the lady of the house accepts Shabbos with her candle lighting even though she lights some time before sunset.

*What am I to do if mincha is davened in my shul close to Shabbos?*

Since one should accept the Shabbos some time before sunset, one must make sure to *daven mincha* early enough to conclude the *sh'moneh esreh* before sunset and subsequently accept the Shabbos. It may happen the *chazzan* is still in the middle of the repetition, but each individual should accept the Shabbos immediately after the private *sh'moneh esreh* if it is close to sunset. One cannot accept the Shabbos before *mincha*, because many opinions hold that subsequent to accepting the Shabbos one may not *daven* the weekday prayer.<sup>6</sup>

*My shul davens mincha five minutes before sunset and as a result I conclude my sh'moneh esreh after sunset. This obviously prevents me from accepting Shabbos, so what am I to do?*

It is advisable to *daven mincha* early and conclude *mincha* before sunset and accept the Shabbos. Some poskim<sup>7</sup> allow *davening mincha* on one's own in order to accept Shabbos on time. However this ruling has

<sup>5</sup> *M"B simon* 261:41 and *SS"K* 46:3.

<sup>6</sup> See *M"B simon* 263:33 and *SS"K* 46 and footnote 28.

<sup>7</sup> *SS"K* 46:5 and footnote 26.

not been accepted in many communities. One should nevertheless try at least to accept Shabbos mentally before sunset and by thinking "from now I accept the holy Shabbos".

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Vort on the Parsha

The שם משמאל writes that his illustrious father, the *Avnei Nezer*, said that a Jew must continuously have two signs of his Jewishness. During the week one has the *B'ris Milah* and *Tefillin*, and on Shabbos one has the *B'ris Milah* and *Shabbos*. Both these concepts are distinguishing signs of *Am Yisrael*.

He explains that the necessity of having these two signs is because it is known that in order to return a lost item one must provide "signs" – *simanim* that the item is indeed his. Two signs are considered a perfect *simon* and excellent proof that the lost item does indeed belong to the claimer.

We too are required to bear two *simonim* in order not to get lost. It is with these two *simonim* that we can continuously remember *Hashem Yisborach* and through them we will hopefully not lose ourselves to the mundane world.

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Food For Thought

*If I accepted Shabbos before sunset, may I instruct a fellow Jew to perform a melacha?*

*What am I to do if I need to do a melacha and I have already accepted Shabbos?*

*If I accepted Shabbos and I then remembered that I have not yet davened mincha, what is the halacha?*

Answers coming be"H next week.

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**Note:** The purpose of this series is intended solely for the clarification of the topics discussed and not to render halachic decisions. It is intended to heighten everyone's awareness of important practical questions which do arise on this topic. One must consult with a proper halachic authority in order to receive p'sak.