

WHAT IS HALACHA

INTRODUCTION TO WHAT IS HALACHA

Introduction to What Is Halacha

“Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.” Leviticus/Vayikra 19:2

Halacha ("The Way To Go" or "Way to Walk") guides proper Jewish behavior in all aspects of life, each day of our lives--not just in civil laws or court situations. Halacha teaches us how to behave with our families, relatives, and strangers as well as how to fulfill our religious requirements between ourselves and God.

To fulfill our role as a holy people, we imitate God's actions. Examples are visiting the sick, welcoming guests, giving charity, refraining from creative activity on Shabbat, and promoting peace between husband and wife (shalom bayit).

The true reason for following halacha is because God commanded us to do so. We observe halacha to please our Creator and to become spiritually close to Him by doing His will and imitating His actions.

Like the word for the whole body of Jewish "laws," each rule of how to act is called a halacha (plural, halachot).

Where Do Halachot Come From?

Although you will find halachot on this site that were born only a few days or a few decades ago, the body of halacha has been around since before creation. "God looked into the Torah and created the world," says the Zohar, and so we find the Patriarchs followed halacha even before that great law book, the Torah, was given on Mount Sinai four centuries later.

Many halachot are specified in the Written Torah (Jewish Bible). These halachot correspond to fuller and more detailed halachot given orally (Oral Torah) to Moses on Mount Sinai to explain the Written Torah that he received at the same time. Many halachot could not be understood from the Written Torah without the Oral Law (for example, what should be written on a mezuzah scroll?) and many common practices such as making kiddush or what tefilin should look like are to be found nowhere in the Written Torah.

Since the Torah applies to all generations, the Torah specifies that there be wise and learned people to decide how to apply halacha to the situations of the day. Halachot can be found in sourcebooks such as the Mishna, Gemara, their commentaries, Shulchan Aruch, Mishna Berura, and responsa (questions and answers originally sent by letter and now, occasionally, by email or SMS!) of later rabbis.

Sometimes a custom becomes a halacha, sometimes not. For example, the original halacha for tzitzit was that a Jewish man who wears a four-cornered garment must have tzitziyot on each corner. The custom, which has become universally accepted and now has the force of halacha, is that Jewish men wear a four-cornered garment in order to be able to fulfill the commandment of wearing tzitziyot. An example of a custom that did not become a halacha is that some men and boys wear their tzitziyot outside of their shirts and pants.

Levels of Halachot

In halacha, there are three levels of what to follow or observe. They are differentiated on this website by the

following terms:

- “Must”: Halachot that are generally non-negotiable except in extreme situations;
- “Should”: Customs that have been accepted by the entire Jewish world (or major segments of it) and that may be overridden when necessary, sometimes even if not extreme circumstances; and
- “Non-Binding Custom”: Customs that are not universally followed and that do not need to be followed except by people who have the tradition to do so.

THE FIRST HALACHOT

The First Halachot

The first commandment given to the Jewish people as a nation was about establishing the new moon. But, there were three commandments given before that (as written in Bereishit/Genesis):

- P'ru u'rvu (to have children);
- Brit mila;
- Gid ha'nasheh (not eating the sciatic nerve of animals).

CONCEPTS IN HALACHA

COMMANDMENTS (MITZVOT)

COMMANDMENTS (MITZVOT)

Precedence of Mitzvot

A frequently performed commandment generally takes precedence over a less frequently performed commandment, but ONLY:

- Regarding the order in which they are to be performed, and
- If there is no specific reason to do the less frequent one.

If you are only able to do one of several commandments, do the most important one.

EXAMPLE If you can only put on either talit or tefilin, you would put on the tefilin since that is the more important commandment, even though putting on a talit is the more frequently performed one.

ANOTHER Friday before sunset when Chanuka will be on Shabbat--lighting Shabbat candles is done more

EXAMPLE frequently, but we light the Chanuka candles first since if we lit the Shabbat candles first, it would already be Shabbat and we could not light the Chanuka candles at all.

How Much Money to Spend on a Mitzva

You are never required to spend more than 1/5 of your liquid assets on any positive mitzva.

How Far To Go To Do a Mitzva

There is no need to go to different town in order to fulfill a mitzva (a different town can be defined as out of your local business district).

Follow National Law as Enforced

Follow national law as enforced. Halacha requires that national and secular law be obeyed. However:

- If a law exists but is not enforced, it is not considered by halacha to be a valid law.
- If a law states one condition but is enforced only in a different condition, the actual enforced law is the valid one.

EXAMPLE If a posted speed limit is 60 mph, but drivers are actually allowed to drive up to 70 mph, then 70 mph is the valid speed limit.

Unintentional Violation; Receive No Benefit (Psik Reisha...)

Psik reisha d'la nicha lei (halacha whose violation you don't intend and from which you receive no benefit) is not permitted.

EXAMPLE

You open the refrigerator door on Shabbat and the light comes on. This is forbidden on Shabbat and Jewish festivals, even if you don't want or need the light.

However, you may ask a non-Jew to do an action for you that will be psik reisha d'la nicha lei.

EXAMPLE

You may ask a non-Jew to get your jacket from the car on Shabbat or a Jewish festival, even though a light will go on, but only during the daytime; if it is night and the light would be needed to find the jacket, you may not ask.

Fence (Syag) around the Torah

Making a “fence” (“syag”) around the Torah means to avoid activities and situations that might lead to actions that are improper or not allowed by Torah law.

PREPARATION FOR DOING MITZVOT

Intention/Kavana

Mitzvot that are from the Torah (tzitzit, tefilin, sukka, etc.) require having the intention (kavana) to fulfill that commandment. But with many such mitzvot, it is inherent in doing the mitzva that you are doing it for the mitzva and therefore you do not need to have a special intention (for example, you would not put on tefilin to keep yourself warm).

Va'Yehi Noam, L'Shem Yichud, Yehi Ratzon

You do not need to say Va'yehi noam, L'Shem yichud, or Yehi ratzon before doing commandments.

What Is a Mitzva/What Is Halacha

A mitzva is a commandment. A halacha is how to do the mitzva.

Purposes of Commandments/Mitzvot

Commandments/mitzvot (plural of mitzva) have three main purposes:

- Most importantly, to do what we are commanded by God to do;
- To bring us close to God;
- To earn reward for us in the future world (olam ha'ba).

HALACHIC DECISIONS (PSAK)

HALACHIC DECISIONS (PSAK): CHOOSING A RABBI

Asking Multiple Rabbis for Psak

You may not normally ask multiple rabbis for halachic decisions about different questions, but if you do not have a primary rabbi, you may do so.

Shopping Around for Lenient Halachic Decision (Psak)

You may not generally ask different rabbis for their decisions of halacha in order to get the answer you want. You may also not ask a specific rabbi a question based on your expectation that he will give you the answer that you are seeking. But if someone asks you to recommend a rabbi, you may refer him or her to a rabbi who will give the answer that he or she would like to receive.

HALACHIC DECISIONS (PSAK): WHEN YOU MUST FOLLOW

Following a Halachic Decision (Psak) You Requested

You must follow the decision you are given if you asked for a *psak* if the *psak* is more stringent than what you want to do but if it is more lenient, you may still be more stringent than what you were told to do. If the decision affects anyone other than yourself, you may not be more lenient or more stringent but must follow what you were told.

Following a Halachic Decision (Psak) You Overheard

If you didn't ask for a *psak* but just heard someone talking about a *halachic* decision, you may ignore it.

HALACHIC DECISIONS (PSAK): DOUBT (SAFEK)

Defining Doubt (Safek) in Halachic Decision

Doubt in *halacha* (*safek*) refers to when it is impossible to know or determine the situation.

Halachic Stringencies in Doubt

We are stringent in applying laws if we are uncertain about *Torah* commandments.

We are lenient in applying laws if we are uncertain about *rabbinic* commandments.

HALACHIC DECISIONS (PSAK): MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Accidental or Intentional

The ideal and preferred means of observing or fulfilling a *halacha* is called *l'chatchila*. Sometimes the *halacha's* requirements may be fulfilled *b'di'avad* (after the fact) under less-than-ideal circumstances. You may not intentionally do an action at the *b'di'avad* level if you are able to do it at the *l'chatchila* level.

Shalom Bayit or Honoring One's Parents (Kibud Av Va'Eim)

The only type of laws that may sometimes be overridden to help with *shalom bayit* (promoting peaceful family relations) or *kibud av va'eim* (honoring parents) is *rabbinic* law, not *Torah* law. A *rabbi* should be consulted in these cases.

Saving a Life (Pikuach Nefesh)

Human life is valued in Judaism, unlike in some other religions. The *Talmud* says that if someone saves one human life (*pikuach nefesh*), it is as if he or she saved an entire universe. Almost all *halachot* may be overridden in order to save a life; the main exceptions are for Adultery, Murder, and Idol Worship—see [Adultery, Murder, Idol Worship](#) .

EXAMPLE You may drive a car on *Shabbat* or even *Yom Kippur* in order to take a seriously injured or ill person to the hospital. This includes pregnant women who are about to give birth.

Adultery, Murder, Idol Worship

The *Talmud* says that a person must allow himself to be killed rather than violate any of three commandments that may not be violated: adultery; murder; idol worship. Note that in Jewish law, not all types or conditions of killing a person are defined as murder.

Human Dignity (Kavod HaBriot)

Although human dignity (*kavod ha'briot*) cannot override *Torah* commandments, *kavod ha'briot* allows violating some *d'rabanan* laws in order to avoid embarrassment.

EXAMPLES

- Tearing Toilet Paper

SITUATION You need to use toilet paper on *Shabbat* but none is torn.

WHAT TO DO You may tear some toilet paper using any non-standard method or change from the normal way (*shinu'i*), such as not using your hand, or dropping something on the paper.

- Hearing Aid

SITUATION You may speak to someone who uses a hearing aid on Shabbat to avoid embarrassing him or her.

HALACHIC DECISIONS (PSAK): NEW FACTS

Changes in a Halachic Decision Due to New Facts

A *halachic* determination may be voided or changed if factual information is found that contradicts the information on which the *halachic* determination was made (such as incorrect science or incorrect statement of a condition or situation). **However**, you must check with the originator of the *psak* or the original source of information on which the halacha was based.

HALACHIC PRACTICE

CUSTOMS (MINHAG)

CUSTOMS (MINHAG): HOW THEY BECOME HALACHA

Observance of Customs (Minhag)

Any custom that has been accepted by the entire Jewish world or an entire Jewish community becomes halacha; it is then required to be observed by members of that community.

CUSTOMS (MINHAG): ADOPTING

Changing Your Customs (Minhag) in New Community

When moving to a community with customs different from your own, adopt the customs of your new community but ONLY:

- If you intend to stay in that new community, and
- If the entire community follows the same customs.

NOTE An Ashkenazi who moves to a Sefardi community could eat kitniyot on Passover but would have to wake up extremely early for selichot and say them for the month of Elul, so think carefully about the trade-off!

Adopting Customs (Minhag) If You Are Newly Observant (Ba'al Teshuva)

A newly observant Jew (ba'al teshuva) may:

- Follow the customs of the person who teaches him to be religious, or
- Follow the dominant custom in the community, or
- Revert to the customs of his ancestors, if their customs are known.

WEAKENING HALACHIC OBSERVANCE OR RESPECT FOR TORAH

Lowering People's Respect for the Torah (Chilul Hashem)

You may not do any action that causes other people to lessen their observance of, or respect for, the Torah.

EXAMPLE When a person known to be otherwise observant of Jewish law seems to be dishonest in business.

Appearing To Not Uphold the Torah (Mar'it Ayin)

You may not do any action that may cause religious Jews to do something wrong or cause people to think that an observant Jew is doing something forbidden (mar'it ayin). Mar'it ayin is doing something that might lead people to:

- Violate a Torah law by thinking that an observed action that is permissible under special circumstances may be applied to other cases, or
- Think that the person doing the action is violating Torah law (since the observer might not know that the action is actually permissible).

EXAMPLE When a Jew wears a yarmulke and eats raw, kosher vegetables in a non-kosher restaurant, someone who did not know that only kosher food was being eaten might think that:

- All of the food in that restaurant is kosher, or
- The Jew was doing something forbidden (and think badly of the Jew).

If no one can see you, you may do activities that might look like violations of rabbinic laws. If the action is forbidden by the Torah (d'oraita), you may not even do it in private (but you may not actually violate either type of law!).

HIDUR MITZVA/MEHADRIN

Hidur Mitzva/Mehadrin

Almost all mitzvot may be enhanced by:

- Making them beautiful (hidur mitzva), or
- Observing non-required stringencies (mehadrin).

Hidur Mitzva

EXAMPLES

- Women baking challa for Shabbat and Jewish festivals (and separating challa as a remembrance of the challa that was given to the priests/cohanim in the Temple).
- Wearing especially nice clothes and eating special foods on Shabbat and Jewish festivals.
- Using beautiful fragrances, tastes, textures, colors, and artistry in serving God.

Beautiful

EXAMPLES

- Shabbat/Jewish festival table (set with beautiful challa cover, silver, kiddush cups).
- Havdala set and pleasant-smelling spices for havdala.
- Sukka and putting your finest things in it.
- Etrog/etrog case.
- Shofar.
- Seder plate, matza holder, and matza cover.
- Illuminated haggadas (hagadot) and megilas (megilot).
- Chanuka candle-holder (menora, chanukiya).
- Torah scroll written with a fine pen and beautiful script and wrapped in beautiful silks.
- Mezuza covers.
- Ketuba.
- Wimple (to wrap baby in prior to brit mila; then donated to hold the two parts of the Torah together).
- Elijah's Chair/Kisei Eliyahu.
- Synagogues.

- *Chuppa*.

Mehadrin

EXAMPLES

- *Chalav Yisrael*--When consuming milk and milk products, eating or drinking only those items whose production was supervised by religious Jews;
- *Pat Yisrael*—When eating bread, only eating bread baked by Jews (not necessarily by religious Jews);
- *Glatt* meat—When eating meat, eating only meat that had no lesions on the animal's lungs;
- Lighting more than one *Chanuka* candle each night (beginning on the 2nd night) and having more than one person in each house light their own candles.

PRIORITY: CHAVIV AND CHASHUV

Priority: Chaviv and Chashuv

Opinions differ in whether you should give priority in eating to what you like the most (chaviv) or what is most important (chashuv).

Examples

SITUATION You like mangoes. Someone serves a platter with mangoes and dates.

QUESTION Should you first eat a mango (chaviv) or first eat a date (chashuv—due to its being one of the *Five Special Fruits*)?

WHAT TO DO *RMH* usually recommends that people begin eating whichever fruit they prefer; that is, chaviv first.

SITUATION You want to eat both fruit and cake.

WHAT TO DO You may eat the fruit first if you prefer to eat it first, even though the cake is more important.

DISTRACTION

Preparing for an Upcoming Commandment

You should refrain from any activity that will prevent or distract you from doing a commandment (or make you forget to do it), from 30 minutes before the time at which you will need to do that commandment.

Cessation of Intention (*Hesech Da'at*)

“Cessation of intention” (*hesech da'at*) can occur when you get involved in a different action or activity than what you were doing. It is not time dependent.

AGRICULTURE

INTRODUCTION TO AGRICULTURE

Introduction to Agriculture

All of the Jewish festival holidays had an agricultural element to them.

Agricultural laws include Kilayim, Orla, Reishit, Teruma/Ma'aser, Shmita, and Yashan, as well as special laws applying only to fruit trees. Some of these laws still apply today by Torah law (d'oraita) while others, such as First Fruits (bikurim), only apply when the Jerusalem Temple stands and so are not practiced now. Others are observed today as "practice" for when the Temple is rebuilt.

FORBIDDEN MIXTURES (KILAYIM)

INTRODUCTION TO FORBIDDEN MIXTURES (KILAYIM)

Introduction to Forbidden Mixtures/Kilayim

The limits of kilayim keep:

- Individual creations true to themselves, in the way they were created by God, and
- Different, or opposing, spiritual forces governing creation in their own places and within their own bounds.

In the holiness of the Tabernacle or Temple, where opposites were peaceably and constructively resolved, kilayim in the form of sha'atnez was not only permitted but formed the foundation of all main tapestries and two of the High Priest's garments.

NOTE The Shulchan Aruch lists over 120 halachot pertaining to kilayim in planting!

Kilayim-type laws apply today to:

- Animals (not yoking an ox and donkey together; not interbreeding, say, a horse and a donkey to produce a mule),
- Food (not eating milk with meat),
- Clothing - not wearing a garment made of a mixture of linen and wool (sha'atnez), and
- Plants (interplanting, interbreeding, and grafting different species).

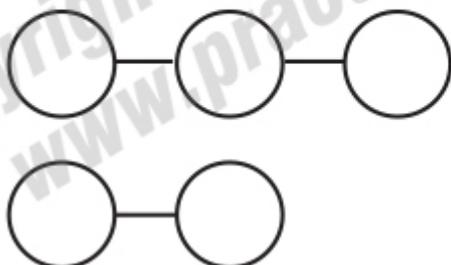
NOTE Vineyards in Eretz Yisrael may only be near fruit trees if:

- A wall divides fruit tree and vineyard, OR
- The vineyard is not a bona fide vineyard. A bona fide vineyard has at least 5 grapevines in at least two rows, with at least two vines in one row and three in the other.

Vineyard

Minimum Kerem: Vineyard of Five Vines in Two Rows

*Note Minimum Row is Two Vines



FORBIDDEN MIXTURES (KILAYIM): ANIMALS

CROSSBREEDING ANIMALS (KILAYIM)

Using an Animal Crossbred by Someone Else

You may not crossbreed animals, but you may use such an animal if it was already crossbred by someone else.

FORBIDDEN MIXTURES (KILAYIM): PLANTS

FORBIDDEN MIXTURES (KILAYIM): PLANTING IN EARTH

Kilayim: Planting in Eretz Yisrael

Do not plant two species of fruit or vegetable plants (and trees) together (“kilayim”) in Eretz Yisrael. The prohibition covers all types of food-producing plants: herbs; vegetables; grains; trees....

EXAMPLE In Eretz Yisrael, do not plant a vegetable with a fruit or grain or one type of vegetable with another type of vegetable, one type of fruit with a different type of fruit, and one type of grain with another type of grain.

FORBIDDEN MIXTURES (KILAYIM): PLANTING IN POTS

Kilayim: Planting in Pots in Eretz Yisrael

Within Eretz Yisrael, you may not plant disparate species in the same pot if the pot:

- Is made of wood or earthenware, or
- Has a hole in the bottom, regardless of the material it is made from.

If the pot does not have a hole in the bottom and if it is made of plastic, glass, or metal, you may plant multiple species together.

Kilayim: Planting in Pots outside of Eretz Yisrael

Outside of Eretz Yisrael, plants in pots are not subject to kilayim laws.

FORBIDDEN MIXTURES (KILAYIM): GRAFTING

Grafting When Kilayim

You may not:

- Graft two trees of different species together (grafting a branch or shoot from one tree onto the trunk of a different type of tree).
- Pay someone else to graft a tree for you, not even a non-Jew.

NOTE You may use such a tree if it was already grafted by someone else.

ORLA

ORLA: GENERAL QUESTIONS

Orla: Which Uses Are Prohibited

You may not use orla fruit for any type of use or benefit (asur b'hana'a); the prohibition is not just for eating.

Orla: Which Fruit Is Orla

Do not eat tree fruit for the first three years of the tree (orla); any tree fruits from the fourth year (neta revai) must be redeemed with a pruta before eating, even outside of Eretz Yisrael.

NOTE It is not possible to redeem netá revai in the old city of Jerusalem!

Orla: Which Part of the Plant Is Prohibited

Only orla fruit is forbidden, but the tree may be used.

Orla: Who Is Prohibited from Growing Orla

Orla applies to fruit grown by both Jews and non-Jews.

ORLA: HOW TO CALCULATE

Orla Planting Deadline

Trees planted at least 45 days before Rosh Hashana (that is, by Tu B'Av) are considered to be one year old on that Rosh Hashana.

How To Calculate When Orla Is Over

You may eat tree fruit if the tree's buds appeared after Tu B'Shvat of the fourth year. This may be a span of only 2.5 years if the tree was planted on or before Tu B'Av (at least 45 days before Rosh Hashana):

1st Year Tu B'Av to Rosh Hashana #1

2nd Year Rosh Hashana #1 to Rosh Hashana #2

3rd Year Rosh Hashana #2 to Rosh Hashana #3

4th Year Rosh Hashana #3 to Tu B'Shvat

EXAMPLE A fruit tree planted on Tu B'Av, Aug. 15, 2011, will be one year old 6 weeks later, on Rosh Hashana, Sept. 29, 2011. By Rosh Hashana, Sept. 5, 2013, the tree will have completed three years and it enters its fourth year. Buds that appear on or after Tu B'Shvat, Jan. 15, 2014, and turn into fruit will be netá revai and may be redeemed and eaten.

Orla: Doubt about Tree Age in Eretz Yisrael

Do not eat fruit from a tree growing in Eretz Yisrael if you are not certain about the age of a tree that might be three years old or less.

Orla: Doubt about Tree Age outside of Eretz Yisrael

You may eat fruit from a tree growing outside of Eretz Yisrael if you are not certain about the age of a tree that might be three years old or less.

Orla: Transplanted Trees

If a tree (whether younger or older than 4 years) is transplanted but did not have enough soil on its roots to live for several years, restart counting orla from zero.

ORLA: INDIVIDUAL FRUITS

Orla: Grapes outside of Eretz Yisrael

Outside of Eretz Yisrael, only grapes (not other types of "tree" fruit) need to be redeemed in the fourth year of their growth in order to eat them.

NOTE We are lenient in using commercially grown grapes due to doubt as to the grapevines' ages.

Orla: Papayas in Eretz Yisrael

Papayas grown in Eretz Yisrael may not be usable, since papaya trees don't normally live for four years.

NOTE There is a difference of opinion as to the blessing over eating papaya—borei pri ha'eitz or borei pri ha'adama.)

FIRSTS (REISHIT)

INTRODUCTION TO FIRSTS (REISHIT)

Introduction to Firsts (Reishit)

Jews thank God for His blessings by giving Him the “first” (reishit) of various products (as well as a tenth/ma'aser of agricultural and other wealth).

“First” applies to:

- First-Born/Petter Rechem
 - First-born male children/petter rechem (redeemed with money; see [Introduction to Pidyon HaBein](#)).
 - First-born male kosher domestic animals (calf, lamb, kid)/petter rechem (in Temple times: sacrificed on altar; now, permanent holy status--see [Selling Mother Animal before Birth of Petter Rechem](#)).
 - First-born male donkeys/petter rechem chamor (redeemed with sheep/goat; holiness of both the donkey and the sheep or goat then disappears).

- Dough/Challa

In Temple times, given to cohen; now, see [When To Separate Challa \(Hafrashat Challa\)](#).

- First Fruits/Bikurim

In Temple times, the Jew (man or woman) brought the bikurim fruits to the area between altar and Temple building; only the man said the

- First Shearing/Reishit HaGeiz

Portion of sheep's wool (reishit ha'geiz) (given to cohen).

NOTE All of the above have holy status except for the wool and the human petter rechem.

REISHIT: KOSHER DOMESTIC ANIMALS

PETTER RECHEM

Selling Mother Animal before Birth of Petter Rechem

SITUATION The first-born male baby of a female kosher domestic mammal or of a female donkey, if completely owned by a Jew, is a petter rechem (which may not be used for any purpose).

WHAT TO DO Before the mother has her first baby, sell part of her to a non-Jew so the firstborn will not be wholly owned by a Jew and, if male, will not become a petter rechem. Rabbinic guidance is recommended!

REISHIT: PIDYON HABEIN

TERUMA/MA'ASER

TERUMA/MA'ASER: WHICH PRODUCE TO SEPARATE

TERUMA/MA'ASER: LOCATION

Teruma/Ma'aser: Location: Grown in Eretz Yisrael

Teruma and ma'aser laws only apply to produce grown in Eretz Yisrael.

TERUMA/MA'ASER: TYPES OF PLANTS

Teruma/Ma'aser: Types of Plants: Herbs

Separate teruma and ma'aser on herbs grown in Eretz Yisrael.

TERUMA/MA'ASER: OWNERSHIP

Teruma/Ma'aser: Ownership: Separating Hefkeir Produce

“Ownerless” (hefkeir) fruit does not require having teruma and ma'aser separated even after it has been brought into your house.

Teruma/Ma'aser: Ownership: What Is Hefkeir Produce

Halachically ownerless (hefkeir) fruit is fruit that will not be collected or picked by or for the owner, whether the fruit is:

- Still on the tree or fallen on the ground.
- Growing on public grounds or privately owned property.

TERUMA/MA'ASER: QUANTITY

Teruma/Ma'aser: Quantity: On How Much To Separate

Separate teruma and ma'aser on any amount of produce grown in Eretz Yisrael.

Teruma/Ma'aser: Quantity: How Much Is Teruma Gedola

Teruma gedola is 1/50th of the total food. But today, since the cohen does not eat it, we remove a smaller amount.

TERUMA/MA'ASER: WHEN TO SEPARATE

Teruma/Ma'aser: When To Separate: Not on Shabbat

You may not separate teruma and ma'aser on Shabbat since it is “fixing” the food by making it usable.

Teruma/Ma'aser: When To Separate: Cooking Outside

SITUATION You cook, outside, fruit from a privately owned tree in Eretz Yisrael.

WHAT TO DO You must separate teruma and ma'aser if you bring the cooked fruit indoors.

TERUMA/MA'ASER: HOW TO SEPARATE

PROCEDURE FOR SEPARATING TERUMOT AND MA'ASROT

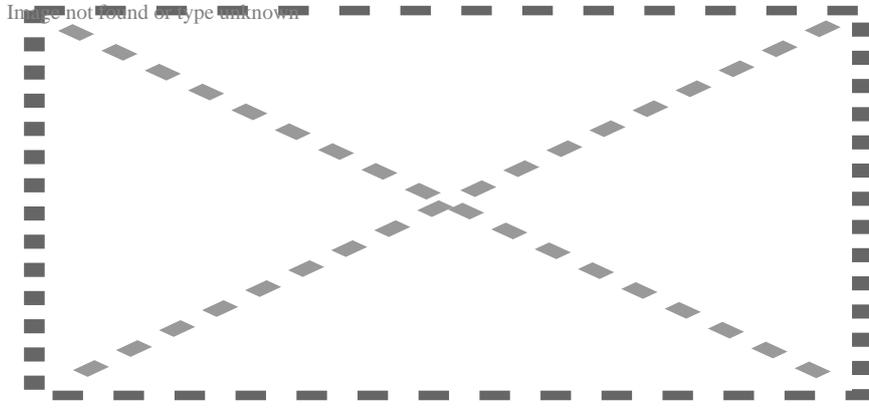
Procedure for Separating Terumot and Ma'asrot

(from [kashrus/kk-medi-terumos.htm](http://www.star-k.org/kashrus/kk-medi-terumos.htm)"><http://www.star-k.org/kashrus/kk-medi-terumos.htm>, used with permission)

Post this document in a conspicuous place.

NOTE The coin you are using for the separation must be in front of you (for the ma'aser sheini).

1. Break or cut off more than one hundredth of the food and set it aside (for teruma and terumat ma'aser).
2. Say the following (either in Hebrew or English):



Yoteir me'echad me'me'a she'yeish kahn harei hu teruma gedola be'tzad tzefono. Oto echad me'me'a she'yeish kahn ve'od tish'a chalakim k'moto be'tzad tzefono shel ha'peirot harei hu ma'aser rishon. Oto echad me'me'a she'asitiv ma'aser rishon asuy terumat ma'aser, uma'aser sheini b'dromo, u'mechulal hu ve'chumsho al peruta be'matbei'a sh'yichidita lechilul ma'aser sheini ve'revai. Ve'im tzarich ma'aser ani ye'hei ma'aser ani bi'dromo. Im hu revai ye'hei mechulal hu ve'chumsho al peruta be'matbei'a she'yichidita le'chilul ma'aser sheini ve'revai.

(Im ma'aser minim harbei tzarich le'hosif) "kol min al mino."

Translation

(If there is a food of one type that requires separation) Whatever is MORE than one hundredth of this food shall be teruma on the north side of the piece that I have set aside. The one hundredth that is left in the piece I have set aside plus nine other pieces the same size on the north side of the food shall be ma'aser rishon. That same one hundredth in the piece I set aside that I have made ma'aser shall be terumat ma'aser.

Furthermore, I am proclaiming ma'aser sheini to be in effect on the south side of the food, and I am redeeming it and its fifth on a pruta (smallest amount of money recognized by the *Torah* for most purposes) of this coin which I have in front of me. If this food needs ma'aser ani, the ma'aser ani shall take effect on the south side of the food.

If this food is subject to the laws of neta revai then it and its fifth shall be redeemed on a pruta of this coin that I have in front of me.

If there is a food of more than one type, add each type of food for its type.

3. Wrap the broken or cut-off piece in plastic and discard.
4. The coin--dime or coin of greater value--must eventually be disposed of in such a manner that it will not be used.
5. The food may now be eaten.

If you do not want to say the long version, you may say this shorter version, after having separated a piece larger than 1% of the total food:

All separations and redemptions shall take effect as is specified in this Star-K document outlining the Procedure for Separating Terumot and Ma'asrot, Tithes and Redemptions, which I have in my possession.

Whether saying the long or short version, only a little over one hundredth of the food will not be permitted to eat; all the rest may be eaten. Even though the tithes constitute over one fifth of the food, one is permitted to eat most of the tithes oneself, even though he may not be a Cohen or a Levi. Under no circumstances will it suffice merely to break off a piece of the food and throw it away. The aforementioned instructions must be strictly followed. The laws of the tithes apply to everyone, including the Cohen and Levi.

IMPORTANT

You must say the blessing *lehafrish trumot u'ma'asrot* if you know the produce definitely needed to have *teruma* and *ma'aser* taken; it was definitely:

- Grown on Jewish-owned land in *halachic Eretz Yisrael* and
- Had not yet had *teruma* and *ma'aser* taken from it.

BUT you must not say the blessing if the produce might have:

- Not been grown on Jewish-owned land in *halachic Eretz Yisrael*, OR
- Already had *teruma* and *ma'aser* separated.

NOTE The State of Israel is not the same as *halachic Eretz Yisrael* (that area of *Eretz Yisrael* owned or conquered by Jews during the Second *Temple* period).

More on Teruma/Ma'aser

For more on *teruma* and *ma'aser*, including a short form of the text, see [kashrus/kk-medi-terumos.htm" target="_blank">Star-K article](#)

Teruma/Ma'aser: Bal Tashchit

Teruma that is separated and destroyed is not considered to be a violation of *bal tashchit*, since it is done to fulfill a commandment/*mitzva*.

SHMITA

INTRODUCTION TO SHMITA

Introduction to Shmita

Every seventh year, fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes grown in *Eretz Yisrael* are subject to the laws of “*shmita*,” which entail letting the land rest.

Holiness of *Shmita* Produce

Fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes, etc., grown in *Eretz Yisrael* holiness. This holiness determines how we may treat fruit during *shmita*, including how to eat it and how to dispose of it.

Which Produce Is Subject to *Shmita* Laws?

All fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes that grow in *Eretz Yisrael* are subject to *shmita* laws. However, since there is a *rabbinic* decree that we may not eat vegetables and grains (called “*sfichin*”) that grow in *Eretz Yisrael* during *shmita* year, we will mainly be discussing fruits.

NOTE Vegetables, grains, and legumes that are not raised in *halachic Eretz Yisrael* are never subject to *shmita* laws. So if a fruit or vegetable was grown outside the borders of Second *Temple* period *Eretz Yisrael*, you may eat that fruit or vegetable with no *shmita* concerns. Such areas may include much of the southern part of the State of Israel, including the Arava and southern Negev all the way to Eilat, land south of Gaza, etc. Some people include the Golan. Many people also include any land currently “owned” by Arabs.

Plants grown off the ground or inside a house are also not subject to *shmita*.

When Is *Shmita*?

The next *shmita* year will be observed beginning *Rosh Hashana*, September 2014.

SHMITA: FRUIT

Shmita: Fruit: Otzar Bet Din

SITUATION You may not sell shmita fruit in the normal manner.

WHAT TO DO An otzar bet din can be set up to distribute fruit and pay the farmer for his work on distributing. The otzar bet din then distributes the fruit to the public and gets reimbursed for the expenses.

Shmita: Fruit: Who May Eat

Shmita produce is ownerless and free for use by anyone.

Shmita: Fruit: How To Eat

You may eat fruit of the shmita year in Eretz Yisrael, but only in the normal way for eating that fruit.

Shmita: Fruit: How To Dispose Of

You may not put shmita peels, cores, and other waste parts into the garbage (unlike teruma, you may not double-bag them and put them in the garbage). You must put them aside to rot before disposal.

Shmita: Canned Fruit from Eretz Yisrael

You may not buy canned fruit or other produce from Eretz Yisrael (even in later years) if the produce grew during a shmita year (except through an otzar bet din). This may be a problem with exports from Israel.

SHMITA: GRAIN AND VEGETABLES

Shmita: Grain and Vegetables: Benefiting From

You may not use grain and vegetables grown in Eretz Yisrael from a shmita year in any way (and no benefit may be derived from them).

SHMITA: PLANTS

Watering the Ground during Shmita

In Eretz Yisrael, you may not pour water on the ground during a shmita year if plants will benefit.

Spitting Seeds During Shmita

In Eretz Yisrael, you may spit seeds on the ground during a shmita year as long as they are inedible.

SHMITA: WINE

Buying and Using Shmita Wine

You may not buy wine from grapes grown in Eretz Yisrael during a shmita year unless you buy it from an otzar bet din. Even if you do buy from an otzar bet din, it is not recommended to buy shmita wine since you:

- May not waste even one drop,
- Must use it only in the normal way, and
- May not dispose of the residue in the bottle until it has become unpotable.

YASHAN

INTRODUCTION TO YASHAN

Introduction to Yashan

Only yashan grain should be used. Yashan means one of the Five Grains that was planted at least three days before Passover and has now passed the first day of chol ha'moed of Passover. Grain planted after one Passover that has not passed the first day of chol ha'moed of the following Passover is known as "chadash."

Grains Subject to Yashan

Wheat, barley, oats, rye, and spelt are subject to yashan.

Where Yashan Applies

Yashan applies to grain grown anywhere in the world.

NOTE Although yashan is from the Torah, some people outside of Eretz Yisrael are lenient about yashan with regard to grain that was grown outside of Eretz Yisrael.

YASHAN: HALACHOT

When Grain Becomes Yashan

You may use grain as “yashan” after the first day of chol ha'moed Passover. "After" means the third day of Passover in Eretz Yisrael and the fourth day outside of Eretz Yisrael.

Yashan and Matza

Matza is normally made from winter wheat and so does not normally have a question of being chadash.

FRUIT TREES: SPECIAL LAWS

FRUIT TREES: BLESSING OVER BLOSSOMS

When To Say Blessing over New Fruit Blossoms

The first time each year that you see blossoms on an edible-fruit tree, say the blessing “shelo chisar ba'olamo davar...” It may be anytime throughout the year, not only in Nisan. If you live in a region in which fruit trees blossom all year round, you should say “shelo chisar”... in Nisan after you see some new blossoms.

NOTE You may say the blessing on a single tree, even though the blessing says “trees” (plural).

FRUIT TREES: REMOVING

Laws on Removal of Fruit Tree

You may not remove a fruit tree that is still producing fruit, even

- For lumber,
- If the tree is diseased,
- If a replacement tree would yield more fruit.

EXCEPTION A fruit tree may be uprooted or cut down if it is not producing at least 46 oz. (2 lbs., 14 oz.-- about 1.3 kg) of fruit each year.

Removal of Productive Fruit Tree

To remove from your property a fruit tree that produces at least 46 oz. of fruit each year, you must sell the tree to a non-Jew. The non-Jew may then remove it.

ATTIRE

INTRODUCTION TO ATTIRE

Introduction to Attire

Various types of attire are considered appropriate for men, single women, married women, and children to wear in public. The standards vary somewhat due to location and era.

ATTIRE: SLEEPING COVERED

Sleeping Covered

A person should be covered with something when sleeping. This may either by a sheet/other bedding or by a garment that is worn.

NOTE This is a good practice and is expected but is not a halacha. It is part of modesty (tzni'ut) between people and God.

ATTIRE: GETTING DRESSED

Dressing in a Certain Sequence

Dressing in a certain sequence, such as putting on your right sock before your left sock, is proper behavior.

ATTIRE: BLESSINGS/TORAH/PRAAYER

Attire: Blessings and Torah Study

The minimum attire required for saying blessings or studying Torah is shorts for men and a covered torso for women. But more of your body may need to be covered due to location and circumstances. For example, if men are in view, women's tzni'ut rules take over since they are more restrictive.

Attire: Man's Head Covering for Prayers or Torah Study

Wearing a hat for prayer (for men) is formal wear that shows honor to God. Men do not need to wear a hat but must have some type of head covering when saying blessings, when praying, or when studying holy texts (this is halacha). If a man said a blessing or prayer without a head covering, b'di'avad, it is OK and he does not need to repeat the blessing or prayer.

Attire: Amida

See Attire for Amida.

Praying in Bare Feet on Stone Floor

See Praying in Bare Feet on Stone Floor.

Attire: Men's Prayer near Immodestly Dressed Woman

See Men's Prayer near Immodestly Dressed Woman.

Attire: Women's Prayer near Immodestly Dressed People

See Women's Prayer near Immodestly Dressed People.

ATTIRE: SHA'ATNEZ

Attire: Sha'atnez: Sheep Wool with Linen

You may not wear clothing made by combing/felting, spinning, and/or twisting/weaving lamb's or sheep's wool with linen. You may also not wear a garment made of two pieces—one wool and one linen—that have been sewn together. Even one thread of wool or linen with the other material is forbidden (there is not batel in 1/60th for sha'atnez).

NOTE The acronym sha'atnez stands for shu'a, tuvi, nuz—three steps in processing wool and linen fibers.

ATTIRE: WOMEN AND MEN

ATTIRE: WOMEN'S/MEN'S (BEGGED ISH)

Attire: Wearing Other Gender's Clothing

Clothes that are worn by both genders may be worn by either gender, even if they were intended to be worn by just one gender. So women may wear clothes that have been made and intended for men (begged ish) if women wear those garments, too. There are some exceptions--consult a rabbi.

Attire: Men Wearing Women's Clothing

Men may not wear women's clothing.

Attire: Women Wearing Men's Clothes

A woman or girl may not wear men's clothes (begged ish), even:

- if for a different purpose than what men use them for, and
- if not for the purpose of looking like a man.

Attire: Woman Wearing Talit for Warmth

A woman should not use a talit to keep warm, even

- if there is no other garment in the synagogue and
- if she is listening to a Torah class.

Attire: Pistols and Other Weapons

Pistols and other weapons are considered to be men's attire (begged ish), but they may be worn or carried by women if in any place where there is danger.

ATTIRE: MIXED SWIMMING

ATTIRE: WOMEN

ATTIRE: WOMEN: TZNI'UT

Attire: Tzni'ut Guidelines for Women

To dress tzenu'a, women should:

- Cover torso to elbows and to knees;
- Cover collarbones (and hair, if married).

Also, the garments must not cling tightly to the woman's body.

NOTE If there are no men nearby (visible), women do not need to wear tzanu'a attire, including when swimming.

NOTE It is an act of piety to always dress tzenu'a, and is preferable always to dress tzenu'a when feasible.

Attire: Women: Tzni'ut: Lifeguard

If no female lifeguard is available, a male lifeguard may guard and women do not need to wear special tzanu'a attire. There is no difference between using a Jewish or non-Jewish male lifeguard.

Attire: Women: Socks or Stockings

Women wearing skirts below their knees do not need to wear socks or stockings, unless that is the custom in their community.

NOTE Custom is defined by how people who follow halacha dress, not by how non-religious people dress, even if the non-religious are the majority of a community.

Attire: Women: Open-Toed Sandals

Women may wear open-toed sandals if that is customary in their community.

Attire: Women's Blessings: Mikva

When women say blessings in the mikva, their bodies are covered by the water, which takes the place of clothing for that purpose.

ATTIRE: MARRIED WOMEN: HEAD COVERING (KISUY ROSH)

Attire: Married Women: Hair-Covering Guidelines

Married women should cover their hair when they leave their "chatzeir," which may mean house, yard, or domain. Married women should not appear in public without covering their hair.

NOTE It is an act of piety for married women to always cover their hair. (For extenuating circumstances, consult a rabbi for exceptions).

NOTE A married woman may have her hair exposed as long as its area is less than 1 square tefach (3.5" x 3.5", or about 9 cm x 9 cm). To measure this, add up all exposed hair to get a total area, flattened to two dimensions, as if it were a silhouette. It is an act of piety for married women to completely cover their hair.

To measure braided or bunched-up hair or hair in a pony tail, simply measure the cross-sectional area as it is. You do not need to measure the hair as if it were spread out flat.

When wearing a baseball-type hat, hair may be exposed on all sides, as long as the total exposed hair is less than 3.5" X 3.5."

To wear a "kipa sheitl," you may wrap your real hair around the sheitl, but only up to a total of 3.5" x 3.5."

Attire: Married Women: Hair Cuts

A Jewish woman may have her hair cut by any hairdresser, including men, whether Jewish or not, and there is no problem of his seeing her uncovered hair.

Attire: Married Women: Doctors

A married woman may allow her doctor to see her hair uncovered if necessary for treatment or examination.

Attire: Married Women: Hair Covered during Prayer

A married woman is not required by halacha to have her hair covered when praying alone, but the custom is for her do to so.

ATTIRE: WOMEN: PRITZUT

Attire: Women: Pritzut Even If Completely Covered

Pritzut is a deviation from the norm for people's attire, even if completely covered (or not properly covered!).

EXAMPLE A woman wearing a leotard and tights may be violating pritzut even if her body is completely covered, depending on where she is.

Attire: Women: Pritzut and Neighborhood Customs

Deviation from the accepted standard for attire (pritzut) may apply even to customs such as are followed in certain neighborhoods, and visiting women must conform to the local standards while there.

ATTIRE: GIRLS

ATTIRE: GIRLS: TZNI'UT

Attire: Girls: Age for Modest Dress

Girls should dress modestly from the age of gil chinuch, when they can understand the concept of why to dress modestly. This may start at 6 years old but may be older depending on the girl. Consult a rabbi.

NOTE The requirement that girls dress modestly from gil chinuch includes girls' wearing bathing suits around adult males.

ATTIRE: MEN

ATTIRE: MEN: TZNI'UT

Attire: Men: Tzni'ut: Guidelines

Tzni'ut for men: Men must at least wear shorts. For men, tzanu'a attire when swimming is a bathing suit.

ATTIRE: MEN: HEAD COVERING (KISUY ROSH)

ATTIRE: MEN: WHEN TO COVER HEAD

Attire: Man's Head Covering Indoors

It is customary for men to wear a head covering always, even indoors. This is a custom, not a halacha. When praying or saying blessings or studying Torah or when in a synagogue or bet midrash, men must wear a head covering.

ATTIRE: MEN: WITH WHAT TO COVER HEAD

Sleeve/Hand as Man's Head Covering

You may use your sleeve or someone else's hand (but not your own hand) to cover your head to say a blessing if you are not wearing a head covering.

Mesh Man's Head Covering

Wearing a mesh head covering (kipa) is OK if the threads cover more area than the spaces.

Size of Man's Head Covering

Minimum head covering (kipa) size should be large enough to be considered a head covering: a 3-inch diameter would be reasonable.

ATTIRE: MEN: HEAD COVERING: HOLINESS

Kipot Have No Holiness

Kipot (*yarmelkas*, skullcaps) do not have any holiness (kedusha).

ATTIRE: MEN: HEAD COVERING: PLACEMENT

Men's Head Covering on Top of Head

Wear a head covering (kipa) on top of the head, not over the ear as some men do.

ATTIRE: MEN: HEAD COVERING: PRAYER

Wearing Hat for Prayer

For details on men's wearing a head covering for prayer, see [Attire: Man's Head Covering for Prayers or Torah Study](#)

ATTIRE: MEN: TZITZIT

TZITZIT: VALUE

Tzitzit: Continuous Mitzva

Tzitzit have protective value; wearing them provides a continuous mitzva throughout the day and even at night (but only when wearing a garment which is primarily worn during the daytime).

TZITZIT: HOW TO WEAR

Tzitzit: Hanging Out

Wearing tzitzit hanging out of your clothes is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

TZITZIT: WHEN TO WEAR

Tzitzit: At Which Age To Wear

Boys begin to wear tzitzit as follows:

Custom: When the boy is toilet trained and knows how to say the blessing.

Halacha: When the boy knows that two tzitzit go in front and two in back.

Tzitzit: At Night or While Sleeping

Tzitzit should be worn day and night but not during sleep. (The commandment is to wear tzitzit only during the day, but they still provide protection at night.)

NOTE Men (and boys) wear a talit katan even after dark but only on clothes which are primarily worn during the daytime), due to doubt as to whether tzitzit are required at night.

Tzitzit: When Hot

You do not need to wear a talit katan at any time when you would not wear a shirt, such as if it is too hot or if you are too sweaty. If you wear a shirt, you should also wear a talit katan.

Tzitzit: Interference with Activity

You do not need to wear tzitzit if they will interfere with an activity such as swimming, scuba diving, or gymnastics (and, for me, hanging upside down on a flying trapeze!).

TZITZIT: WHAT TO WEAR

Tzitzit: What To Wear: Which Garments Require Tzitzit

A garment or cloth requires tzitzit if:

- Worn by a male 13 years old or above,
- Contains at least 51% natural fibers (cotton, wool, silk, etc.), and
- Has four corners in which two corners are normally behind you and the other two are normally in front of you while wearing it (A shawl will not normally need tzitzit).

NOTE It is the widespread custom to begin wearing tzitzit at the age of *chinuch*—typically about three years old but this can vary by child.

Tzitzit: Knots and Wraps

Tzitzit strings have five knots separating four wraps of strings. This applies to tzitzit whether on a talit katan or talit gadol. The minimum length for tzitzit strings:

- From the first to fifth knots—at least 4 inches;
- From the fifth knot to the bottom (lower end) of the strings—at least 8 inches.

The wraps go around the entire bunch of strings as follows:

- At top but below the first knot: 7 times
- Below the second knot: 8 times
- Below the third knot: 11 times, and
- Above the bottom knot: 13 times

NOTE The total of the wraps' *gematria* values (7+ 8+ 11 + 13 = 39) equals the *gematria* values of Hashem (one of God's names) Echad (is One), as follows:

Hashem (spelled: yud, heh, vav, heh) = 26

Echad (spelled: alef, chet, daled) = 13

Hashem + Echad = 26 + 13 = **39**

Tzitzit: Shamash

The purpose of a shamash on tzitzit is to have a string long enough to make wraps.

Tzitzit: Placement

Like all tzitzit, tzitzit on a talit gadol should hang over the side edge of the talit and not hang down from the bottom.

NOTE They are still kosher even if they hang straight down, b'di'avad.



The tzitzit should hang down along the vertical border (screen left/model's right side)

TZITZIT: CHECKING

TZITZIT: HOW TO CHECK

Tzitzit: For What To Check

Torn

In checking tzitzit, determine:

- Are any loops torn?
- Are 8 strings visible on each corner?

If you cannot see 7 strings due to one or more having been torn off, consult a rabbi.

Tangled

There is no problem if tzitzit are tangled. However, to untangle them:

- Is a superior way to fulfill the mitzva, and
- Allows you to easily check them to see if there are 8 tzitziyot.

Frizzy

If any tzitziyot are so frizzy that the individual tzitziyot cannot be distinguished, they are invalid (pasul).

NOTE To prevent frizziness during laundering, wrap the tzitziyot tightly in a rubber band before drying them in a dryer, or hang them to dry.

NOTE

- If the hanging end of a tzitzit string breaks below the lowest knot, the string is kosher.
- If more than one string breaks, or if one string breaks above the lowest knot, consult a rabbi since the tzitzit may not be kosher.

TZITZIT: WHEN TO CHECK

Tzitzit Checking: Before Blessing

You are not required to check tzitzit on a talit katan or talit gadol each day.

REASON We assume, based on the norm (chazaka), that the tzitzit are OK.

But it is a good idea to check them before saying the blessing over them each day.

Tzitzit Checking: Shabbat and Jewish Festivals

Do not check tzitzit on Shabbat or Jewish festivals.

REASON If there is something wrong, you might untangle them and thereby untie a knot, which is prohibited from the Torah.

TZITZIT: BLESSINGS

Tzitzit: Blessings: When To Say

Only say the blessing on tzitzit during the day.

Tzitzit: Blessings: Tish'a B'Av

On Tish'a B'Av, say a blessing on tzitzit in the morning as always.

TZITZIT: KISSING

Tzitzit: Kissing: Morning Shema

When saying morning shema, kiss the tzitzit when saying the words:

- “tzitzit” in the shema, and
- “emet” and “la'ad” in paragraph following the shema.

These are non-binding customs, not halacha.

Tzitzit: Kissing: Night Shema

Don't kiss tzitzit when saying the shema at night.

TZITZIT: HOLDING

Tzitzit: Holding: Morning Shema

Holding all four tzitziyot when saying the shema in the morning is not required, but it is customary to do so.

TZITZIT: PREVENTING FRAYING

Tzitzit: Preventing Fraying

You may tie knots in the ends of tzitzit strings to prevent fraying.

TZITZIT: DISPOSAL

Tzitzit: Disposal: How To Wrap

To dispose of items used for mitzvot (tashmishi mitzva) such as tzitzit or etrog, you may wrap in one layer of plastic and throw it into dry garbage, or wrap in two layers of plastic and throw it into wet garbage.

Tzitzit: Cut-Off End Disposal

You may cut off (shorten) tzitzit strings before the first time they are used and throw away the pieces without covering them. Once tzitzit strings have been worn, you must wrap them before disposal as above.

Tzitzit: Garment Disposal

Garments for talit katan and talit gadol have no special holiness (kedusha). But once used for a mitzva, the garments—like the tzitziyot themselves--must be wrapped before disposal, as above.

TALIT KATAN

TALIT KATAN: SIZE

Talit Katan: Size

The minimum size for the garment of a talit katan is large enough to wrap your torso in, in front and in back: 17 inches (43 cm) wide and 17 inches (43 cm) long, from the top edge to bottom edge and so the total minimum dimensions will be 17 inches wide by 34 inches long. The optimal size is 24 inches wide and 24 inches long on each side (resulting in dimensions of 24 inches by 48 inches).



The minimum width for a talit katan is 17 inches

TALIT KATAN: MATERIAL

Talit Katan: Material

A talit katan (or a talit gadol) must be made from at least 51% natural fibers.

TALIT KATAN: MARKING

Talit Katan: Marking Front and Back

A talit katan do not need to be marked with a front and back, but some people have a custom to do so.

TALIT KATAN: BLESSINGS

Talit Katan: Blessings: Shema if You Wake Up Early

SITUATION You wake up early and want to say shema (in case you return to sleep and might miss the latest time to say morning shema).

WHAT TO DO

- You need to wear only a talit katan (not a talit gadol).
- Say the blessing al mitzvat tzitzit, even if you normally would later put on a talit gadol and therefore would not normally say that blessing over a talit katan.

Talit Katan: Blessings: Shabbat or Jewish Festival Talit Katan

SITUATION You switch to a special talit katan right before Shabbat and Jewish festivals.

WHAT TO DO You do not need to say another blessing over the special talit katan if to switch:

- Is your normal intention (even if you did not specifically intend to switch when you put on your talit katan that morning), or
- Is NOT your normal intention but you did intend to switch later that afternoon.

You must say another blessing if to switch:

- Is not your normal intention and you also did not intend to switch when you put on the *talit katan* that morning.

TALIT (GADOL)

TALIT GADOL: DESCRIPTION

Talit Gadol: Size

The minimum size for a *talit gadol* is so you could put it over your head and wrap your body in it (even though this is not how you must wear it!).

Talit Gadol: Material

A *talit gadol* (or a *talit katan*) must be made from at least 51% natural fibers.

Talit Gadol: Color

A *talit* should be primarily white. Here are some details:

- A *talit gadol* should be either all white or white with black stripes. Avoid a very colorful *talit* that makes the white part look insignificant.
- Blue stripes used to be used: as with *techelet*, the blue reminds us of the sky, of God's throne (*kisei ha'kavod*), and of God.
- Even though the *talit* was originally supposed to have blue stripes, it is not the custom today to use blue stripes.
- Black stripes have no significance or importance.

Talit Gadol: Tzitzit Placement

Like all *tzitzit*, *tzitzit* on a *talit gadol* must hang over the edge of the *talit* and not hang down from the bottom (see diagram).



The tzitzit should hang down along the vertical border (screen left/model's right side)

TALIT GADOL: WHY

Talit Gadol: Mitzva

Men wear a *talit* as a *mitzva* (wearing a four-cornered garment in order to wear *tzitzit*).

Talit Gadol: Form of Honor

It is a form of honor for the congregation for the leader to dress up (some congregations have the custom of requiring the leader to wear a jacket for mincha for this reason). A talit is usually the form of dressing up for all men during prayer services.

Talit Gadol: Humility

When a person speaks directly to God, it is very important to demonstrate humility. Since the Talmud says that covering one's head is a form of humility (and that learned Jews/talmidei chachamin used to cover their heads), men who wear a talit for prayer should ideally use it to cover their heads whenever they wear it, but the minimum is during the amida.

TALIT GADOL: WHEN TO WEAR

Talit Gadol: Amida

A talit is required only when saying the amida prayer, but the universal custom (for men who wear talitot!) is to wear the talit during the entire shacharit service.

NOTE A talit is worn for shacharit, musaf, and all day and night on Yom Kippur; it is not commonly worn for mincha or ma'ariv (except on Yom Kippur).

Talit Gadol: Prayer Leader during Amida Repetition

A prayer leader should be especially careful to cover his head when saying the reader's repetition of the amida. A hatless prayer leader covers his head with the talit gadol during the private amida (also during the public amida and repetition). If wearing a hat, he does not cover his head with the talit.

Talit Gadol with Talit Katan

Wear a talit gadol even though you are already wearing a talit katan, as a means of honoring the prayers.

Talit Gadol: Married Men

Once a man has been married, he must wear a talit when saying shacharit and musaf, even if he becomes widowed or divorced.

Talit Gadol: Mincha

When wearing a talit at mincha Torah reading--such as for an aliya, hagbaha, or glila--you do not need to wear it until after kedusha, but some people have that custom.

TALIT GADOL: BLESSING

Talit Gadol: Which Blessing

The blessing over putting on the talit gadol is lehit'ateiph ba'tzitzit.

Talit Gadol: What the Blessing Covers

Saying the blessing on a talit gadol, while intending to cover all other talitot (whether talit katan or talit gadol), will cover:

- All talitot that you already put on.
- All talitot that you will put on later that day.
- If you go out of whichever building you are in when you say the blessing on your talit, you must say a new blessing if you put on a talit (even the same talit) in a different building.

EXCEPTION You may intend for the blessing NOT to cover other talitot.

EXAMPLE You say the blessing over your talit gadol on the morning preceding Yom Kippur. You may intend for your blessing not to cover the talit gadol that you will put on just before Kol Nidrei.

NOTE If you don't have a talit gadol, say al mitzvat tzitzit over your talit katan.

NOTE If you remove your talit gadol, go to a different building, and put the talit gadol on again, you DO say a new blessing.

Talit Gadol: Placing Talit on Head

Placing the talit gadol over your head while saying the talit blessing is a halacha, but wearing it on your head any other time is a custom.

Talit Gadol: Replacing One You Removed by Choice

Do not say a new blessing when you replace a talit that you chose to take off, with the intention of putting it back on (such as removing it to go to the bathroom).

Talit Gadol: Replacing One that Fell Off

Say a new blessing when you replace a talit gadol that fell off your body completely (not just if it slipped off one shoulder).

Talit Gadol: Blessing when Borrowed for Aliya/Prayer Leader

If you borrow a talit, such as for an aliya or to serve as prayer leader, it is not customary to say a blessing on it.

NOTE If you want to say a blessing on a borrowed talit, ask the owner to “give” it to you as a gift, which you will later give back as a gift.

Talit Gadol: Blessing on Loaned or Borrowed

Do not say a new blessing when you put back on your talit gadol that you loaned someone if you are at the same prayer service.

Talit Gadol: Blessing between Bar'chu and Amida

SITUATION You began shacharit on your way to synagogue and are between bar'chu and the amida when you arrive. You have not yet put on a talit.

WHAT TO DO

- Put on a talit immediately.
- Say the blessing on the talit after you finish the amida.

Talit Gadol: Blessing over Public Talit

You may say the blessing on a public talit gadol available at the synagogue, even though it is not your talit.

REASON It is assumed that the talitot at synagogues are there to be used by anyone.

Talit Gadol: Blessing Once Married

Once a man is married and wears a talit gadol, he stops saying the blessing on tzitzit on his talit katan; it is covered by the blessing on his talit gadol.

TALIT GADOL: HOW TO PUT ON

Talit Gadol: Putting on in Morning

To put on a talit in the morning:

- Say the blessing *lehit'ateiph ba'tzitzit*.
- Put the garment over your head and down to your nose.

- Gather the two tzitziyot from the right side and the front one from the left side and swing them over your left shoulder (you do not need to bunch up the talit before doing so).
- Wait for at least 2 ½ seconds and say the appropriate verses (see a siddur for the text).

TALIT GADOL: HOW TO CARE FOR

Talit Gadol: Folding, Rolling, Hanging

You do not need to fold a talit after using it; you may roll it or hang it up. The only requirement is that you take care of it and don't crumple it or treat it disrespectfully.

ATTIRE: BELT

Belt/gartel with Robes

You only need to wear a belt/gartel (for saying blessings, prayer services and for studying holy texts) if:

- You are wearing an open and loose garment such as a robe (or other toga-like garments) and
- You are not wearing any undergarments.

NOTE The belt separates upper from lower parts of your body and this requirement is not normally relevant for Western attire. If it is your family tradition, you should follow that. There may also be a kabalistic reason to wear one.

ATTIRE: SHOES

Leather or Synthetic Shoes in Halacha

In Jewish law, only leather shoes are considered to be “shoes” for purposes of the Nine Days, mourning, Yom Kippur, shiv'a, or ritual impurity. Non-leather shoes may normally be worn during those periods.

BLESSINGS/BRACHOT

SEE ALL BLESSINGS

See All Blessings

To see all blessings, see [Blessings & Prayers](#).

INTRODUCTION TO BLESSINGS (BRACHOT)

Introduction to Blessings/Brachot

Blessings as Thanks

We say blessings as thanks to God for the good we receive from Him; this is a form of acknowledging and expressing gratitude (hakarat ha'tov).

Having an appreciation for the physical world and the beauty and goodness in it is a means of relating to God through Creation. People can maintain a continual awareness of, and relationship with, God by saying blessings:

- Before and after eating,
- After waking in the morning,
- At various types of life experiences, and
- In many other situations.

Blessings Formulations

Some blessings begin with Baruch ata adonai only; some blessings continue with eloheinu melech ha'olam. The shorter blessings come at the end of long (compound) blessings.

REASON There is no mention of malchut at the end of a blessing.

How To Say Blessings

When saying blessings or prayers, it is generally best to say the words of the blessing or prayer out loud since doing so can help you to concentrate on what is being said. (The main exception is the amida prayer.) Normally, you should stand while saying blessings before doing a mitzva, unless the mitzva is done while seated (in which case you sit when saying the blessing).

REASON So there is no delay between saying the blessing and doing the mitzva.

NOTE Although there is not necessarily any need to stand while doing mitzvot, many mitzvot are done while standing due to the nature of the mitzva or for convenience.

If you find you have made an error in saying a blessing or prayer, you may correct your error without having to repeat any previous parts if you do so within 2.5 seconds of having made the error.

NOTE Blessings (brachot) and Prayers (tefilot) are in separate sections in this website, even though prayers have blessings within them.

BLESSINGS: CATEGORIES

Three Main Categories of Blessings

There are three main categories of blessings:

1. Enjoyment (birchot nehenin), such as on foods and scents.
2. Praise and Thanks to God (shevach v'hoda'a), such as when saying she'hecheyanu, on seeing mountains and the sea, or when good happens to us.
3. Commandments/Mitzvot (birchot mitzva), such as reading the Torah, using the lulav, or lighting Shabbat candles.

BLESSINGS: GENERAL RULES

BLESSINGS: DOUBT (SAFEK) WHETHER YOU SAID

If Doubt Whether You Said a Blessing (except for Birkat HaMazon)

If you are not sure if you said ANY blessing in ANY category, don't repeat it.

EXCEPTIONS

- Birkat ha'mazon.
- You may also include the first blessing over reading the Torah (Asher bachar banu mi'kol ha'anim.)

Even the blessing for mezonet is not an exception.

REASON The only blessing commanded in the Torah is birkat ha'mazon (some say also the blessings on the Torah); all others are from Chazal.

If Doubt Whether You Said Birkat HaMazon

Say birkat ha'mazon if:

- You are not certain that you said birkat ha'mazon, and
- You were satiated from your meal.

NOTE You are considered to be “satiated” after eating food if you no longer have an appetite.

If Doubt Whether You Said Blessings on Torah Study

If you are not certain that you have said any of the morning blessings on studying Torah (from la'asok b'divrei Torah to notein haTorah), you should not say them later. But when you say “ahava raba” before the morning shema, you may intend it to cover such blessings; then after the amida, you should say some Torah verses (psukim).

BLESSINGS: SAYING FOR SOMEONE ELSE

Blessings: For Someone Else: Mitzva/Birchot Mitzva

You may say any blessing on a mitzva—such as kiddush, hallel, Torah—for another person, even if you have already fulfilled the mitzva for yourself, as long as that other person is required to do that mitzva.

EXAMPLE Girls (12 years old and more) and women must fulfill all of the positive commandments of Shabbat including kiddush. So even after they have already said kiddush for themselves, they may say kiddush for other Jews, including adult men.

EXCEPTION You may not say birkat ha'mazon for someone else.

Blessings: For Someone Else: Pleasure/Birchot Neheinin and Praise-Thanks/Shevach V'Hoda'a

You may say these blessings for someone else only if you also need to say the blessing for yourself:

- Blessings for Enjoyment (“birchot neheinin”—such as for food or drink), and
- Blessings of Praise and Thanks (shevach v'hoda'a--such as on rainbows or seeing large mountains)

BLESSINGS: ANSWERING AMEN

Blessings: Answering Amen: What To Hear

When someone is saying a blessing on your behalf, you may say amen as long as you have heard at least:

- The first six words of the blessing; and
- At least a few words of substance in the middle of the blessing; and
- The complete final line.

EXAMPLE For the al ha'michya blessing, you must hear:

- The first six words,
- Al ha'michya, and
- The final blessing line.

BLESSINGS: CORRECTING A MISTAKEN BLESSING

Correcting a Mistaken Blessing

If you make a mistake when saying any blessing or in any prayer, you may correct it within 2.5 seconds by simply saying the correct blessing.

NOTE If you did not correct the blessing within 2.5 seconds, see next halacha:

Retracting a Blessing after Third or Fourth Word

If you start an incorrect blessing:

- If you have said the third word (God's name), say lamdeini chukecha.
- If you have already said the third syllable of the fourth word (elohei...), say Yisrael avinu mei'olam v'ad olam.

- If you said more than the third syllable of the fourth word, say Baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed.

BLESSINGS: HOW MANY TO SAY

100 Blessings on Weekdays

Try to say 100 blessings a day. This is easy on weekdays since *Ashkenazim* say about 89 blessings just in the prayer services.

NOTE Saying 100 blessings each day is a halacha drabanan.

100 Blessings on Shabbat and Jewish Festivals

On Shabbat and some Jewish festivals, you might want to fulfill some of the quota for making 100 blessings by:

- Eating extra fruit or other foods,
- Hearing and saying amen to the blessings over the:
 - Torah reading,
 - Reader's repetition of the amida for shacharit and musaf, and
 - Haftara by the maftir.

BLESSINGS: TYPES

BLESSINGS: MORNING (BIRCHOT HASHACHAR)

Morning Blessings (Birchot HaShachar)

In the morning blessings, say she'asa li kol tzarki even if you are not wearing shoes (even on Tish'a B'Av morning).

BLESSINGS: FOOD

BLESSINGS: FOOD: GENERAL RULES

FOOD WHEN NO ONE WILL BLESS

Food When No One Will Bless: Feeding

You should feed a poor Jew, even if he or she won't say a blessing on the food. If a Jew is not poor, you should not give him or her food unless he or she (or someone else--it could be yourself) says a blessing on it for him/her.

NOTE If someone else says the blessing for the poor person, the person saying the blessing must also eat some of that food.

Food When No One Will Bless: Selling

You may sell food to Jews even if they will not make a blessing over it (you may of course sell to non-Jews since they are not required to say a blessing on it!).

FOOD FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA)

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA): GENERAL RULES

FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): PRIORITIES

Fore-Blessings (Bracha Rishona): Priorities

You must say the blessing which was designed to be said on each type of food. *B'diavad*, a lower level blessing will still cover the food.

From lowest to highest level, here are the food fore-blessings:

- *She'hakol*,
- *Borei pri ha'adama*,
- *Borei pri ha'eitz* (on common fruits),
- *Borei pri ha'eitz* (on the *Five Special Fruits*)

NOTE You will only say *borei pri ha'eitz* ONCE to include both common fruits and also special fruits that you will eat at one sitting,

- *Borei minei mezonot*,
- *Borei pri ha'gafen*, and
- *Hq'motzi lechem min ha'aretz*.

Fore-Blessings (Bracha Rishona): Which Level To Say

In general, say the highest-level fore-blessing (*bracha rishona*) on a food.

NOTE As some foods get processed by cooking or by other means, they qualify for a higher-level blessing.

EXAMPLES

- Raw, rolled oats only merit the fore-blessing of *she'hakol*. But once the oats are cooked, the blessing of *borei minei mezonot* applies.
NOTE Raw oats could get the fore-blessing *borei pri ha'adama*, since they grow directly in the earth. But because oats are not normally considered edible when raw, they get demoted to *she'hakol*.
- A raw grape or raisin gets the blessing of *borei pri ha'eitz*. But once made into wine or grape juice, it merits *borei pri ha'gafen*.

FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): MINIMUM MEASUREMENTS

FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): MINIMUM QUANTITY

On How Much Food To Say Fore-Blessing (Bracha Rishona)

Always say one of the six fore-blessings (*bracha rishona*) before eating, as long as you expect to get enjoyment or benefit from whatever you ate, even when eating:

- Less than a minimal quantity (minimal *shiur*), or
- Eating a small (*kolshehu*) amount of food.

EXAMPLES

- Say a fore-blessing before you taste food you are cooking.
- Say a fore-blessing before you taste a tiny amount of honeysuckle nectar.

EXCEPTION Do not say a fore-blessing on water that you drink with medicine.

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA): TIME LIMIT

Until When May You Eat without a New Fore-Blessing

You may continue eating without saying a new fore-blessing--without a time limit--as long as you are not involved in some other activity that distracts you from eating (*hesech da'at*).

Example

SITUATION You are eating and take a break to do work for your business or read a magazine article that involves your concentration.

WHAT TO DO You may not continue eating unless you say a new fore-blessing.

NOTE This is true whether you became full at any time or not.

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA): FOOD CATEGORIES

One Fore-Blessing (Bracha Rishona) per Food Category

Your fore-blessing covers all other same-category foods that you will eat at the same time (same sitting), if:

1. They are in front of you when you say the blessing, OR
2. You intend your blessing to cover all other same-category foods that you own and will eat at the same sitting--even if they are not in front of you when you make the blessing.

NOTE You do not need to state your intention out loud, just think it. If you usually have this intention but you forgot on an occasion, you do not need to say new blessings on the subsequent foods of that type that you already own.

Examples in Your Home

- You say she'hakol over two kinds of she'hakol foods on your table. The blessing also covers a third she'hakol food in your refrigerator and a fourth in your pantry that you know you own.
- You say she'hakol and are eating an omelette when a visitor brings you a gift of chocolates: you must say a new she'hakol blessing before eating the chocolates.

NOTE Anytime your spouse is serving you food, it is assumed that your initial fore-blessings will cover all food that you will eat.

Examples outside Your Home

- Guest at Someone's Home
Whenever you are a guest at someone else's house, it is assumed that whatever foods you will eat, will be covered by your initial fore-blessing as long as they are in the same category.
- Attendee at Kiddush or Wedding
If you say she'hakol over fish at a kiddush or wedding, the blessing covers all she'hakol foods in the room.
- Diner in Restaurant
If you have made an order in a restaurant, all ordered foods will be covered by your first fore-blessing(s). However, if you later order more food, even if the fore-blessings are the same, you must still say a new fore-blessing.

FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): HAMOTZI AND DESSERTS

Fore-Blessings (Bracha Rishona): HaMotzi and Desserts

For details on HaMotzi and desserts, see [Which Foods HaMotzi Covers](#).

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA): IDENTIFIABLE PRODUCE

Which Fore-Blessing (Bracha Rishona) on Identifiable Produce

Say borei pri ha'eitz or borei pri ha'adama for foods made of identifiable pieces of fruit or vegetables.

NOTE Even if you know the ingredients in a prepared food--such as grated apples--you must see identifiable pieces in order to say a specific blessing (borei pri ha'eitz, borei pri ha'adama...).

If no ingredients are visually identifiable, you must say *she'hakol* (or possibly *borei minei mezonot*).

EXAMPLE Say *borei pri ha'adama* on a potato *kugel* with coarsely ground potatoes; if the potatoes are pulverized, say *she'hakol*.

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA): WHEN NOT THIRSTY

Fore-Blessing (Bracha Rishona) When Drinking To Prevent Thirst

Do not say a blessing on water that you drink before you are thirsty in order to prevent thirst later.

Fore-Blessing When Drinking To Swallow Pill

Do not say a blessing if you drink water in order to swallow pills.

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA): FORGETTING

Fore-Blessing If Forgot Whether You Said After-Blessing

SITUATION You ate some food and do not remember whether you had said the after-blessing. Now you want to eat or drink more food:

WHAT TO DO Depends on if what you want to eat or drink is water:

- Not Water:
 - If the food or drink had been in front of you when you had said the blessing before, do not say it again.
 - If the food or drink was not in front of you and was also not available to you when you said the first fore-blessing, say a new fore-blessing.
- Water (after having drunk water earlier in the same place):

If you are not certain whether you had said the after-blessing and even if you definitely did NOT say the after blessing, do not say a new fore-blessing.

REASON Water is always considered to be in front of you (in the water pipe).

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA): INCORRECT BLESSING

Incorrect Fore-Blessing (Bracha Rishona) If Food Is/Is Not before You

SITUATION You say the incorrect blessing over food in front of you but you also have a food in front of you that does fit the blessing.

WHAT TO DO You may eat the food covered by your actual blessing, and then say the correct blessing for the food you originally intended to eat.

NOTE You may not go into a different room to find food that qualifies for the incorrect food blessing. You should instead say *Baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed* as soon as possible.

NOTE There is no specific time limit beyond which you may no longer say *Baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed*.

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA): CHANGING LOCATION

Fore-Blessing (Bracha Rishona): Changing Location

The fore-blessing (*bracha rishona*) must be said where you eat. However, sometimes you may begin eating in one domain and continue eating in another domain. A domain may be any physically limited area (car, house, restaurant, office building) or the outdoors (highway, park, etc.). Once you left the first place, you are considered to have had an interruption of thought (*hesech da'at*) and are no longer eating that original snack or meal.

Whether you say a new fore-blessing depends on your intention when you said the fore-blessing:

- Do not say a new fore-blessing if you had intended to go to the second place, as long as the food at the second place is in the same food categories as what you already blessed on at the first place.
- Say a new fore-blessing if you had not intended to continue eating in the second domain, even if you had planned to return to that first place and continue eating.

EXCEPTION You do not need to make a new fore-blessing if:

- You return to the first place and even one person who was eating with you is still there, OR
- You had eaten bread or mezonot and then left but had not said the after-blessings of birkat ha'mazon or al ha'michya, even if no one is left from before.

REASON Since you are required to say birkat ha'mazon or al ha'michya, you are still considered to be continuing your meal.

NOTE As long as you are under the same roof, do not say new blessings on food at the new place (such as when switching seats or even rooms in a restaurant).

EXCEPTION Even if you washed your hands and said ha'motzi at the first place, say a new blessing on food that would have required a new blessing at the first place, such as new wine or any dessert other than mezonot.

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA) IN VAIN (BRACHA L'VATALA)

Making a Conditional Fore-Blessing (Bracha Rishona)

To avoid making a blessing in vain (bracha l'vatala), you may intend a fore-blessing to cover all other foods of that category that you will eat at the same time.

NOTE You may make the condition:

- Each time you eat, or
- Once and intend it to apply to all future instances.

NOTE You then do NOT say new fore-blessings on these new same-category foods.

FORE-BLESSING (BRACHA RISHONA): LIQUID FROM FOODS

Fore-Blessing (Bracha Rishona): Liquid from Food

When you have said a fore-blessing on one type of food, such as borei pri ha'adama on vegetables, you do not need to say she'hakol on the liquid that remains after having eaten the solid vegetables.

REASON The fore-blessing covers all components, even if they are not the same classification.

NOTE If you ate the vegetables, said the after-blessing, and then later came back and drank the liquid, you would need to say she'hakol.

THE FOOD FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): SPECIFICS

I. HAMOTZI

HAMOTZI: WHICH FOODS GET HAMOTZI

HaMotzi on Bread Made of the Five Grains

Wash the One-Time Method and say ha'motzi on bread made of the Five Grains (wheat, rye, oats, barley, or spelt), even if you will not eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) within four minutes.

NOTE Say the blessing al netilat yadayim on washing hands **ONLY** if you will eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of bread within four minutes.

NOTE If you eat less than 1.3 fl. oz. of bread of the Five Grains, do not say birkat ha'mazon or any other after-blessing.

FORE-BLESSING: BREAD-LIKE FOODS

Fore-Blessing: Bread or Mezonot

To be halachically considered “bread,” the item must have been baked and have air holes in it. To determine whether a food made of the Five Grains qualifies as bread (ha'motzi) or mezonot (borei minei mezonot), decide whether the food had been made to be eaten as a meal or as a snack. If it was made to be:

- Bread (that is, for a meal), say ha'motzi.
- Mezonot (but you will eat a full meal), say ha'motzi.
- A snack, say borei minei mezonot.

NOTE Some foods may qualify as either ha'motzi or mezonot (such as pizza).

NOTE If at least 20% of a bread's flour is from one of the Five Grains, say a fore-blessing of ha'motzi on the bread (and birkat ha'mazon afterward, if you ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. within four minutes).

NOTE Whether the bread/mezonot was made with fruit juice instead of water may not affect its blessing, since the blessing is determined by its intended use. Mezonot rolls on airline flights may still require the blessing of ha'motzi if you eat them as part of a meal.

NOTE Since it does not have air holes, wheat tortillas get the blessing of mezonot and not ha'motzi.

NOTE The fore-blessing on stuffing made of bread or a bread kugel is mezonot if none of the pieces are 1 fl. oz. or larger.

Fore-Blessing: Small Amount of Pizza/Other Bread-Like Mezonot

SITUATION You will eat less than 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of pizza or other bread-like mezonot within four minutes.

WHAT TO DO Wash your hands using the One-Time Method, but do not say al netilat yadayim. Then say borei minei mezonot.

Fore-Blessing: Sprouted Wheat Bread

For the fore-blessing on sprouted wheat bread, say:

- Ha'motzi if the grains are more like wheat grains than sprouts.

NOTE If the sprout still has any part of the original grain, excluding the husk, it is still considered to be grain and the fore-blessing is ha'motzi.

- *She'hakol* if the grains were sprouted in water without soil.

Fore-Blessing: Bread/Cakes of Only Rice Flour

Bread or cakes made of only rice flour may not be used for any meal requiring eating bread and saying birkat ha'mazon. The blessing is borei minei mezonot, not ha'motzi.

Fore-Blessing: Bread/Cakes of Rice Flour and Mezonot Flour

In a bread containing rice flour, if at least 20% of the flour is from one of the Five Grains, say the fore-blessing of ha'motzi (after-blessing: birkat ha'mazon).

In a cake containing mostly rice flour, if at least 20% of the flour is from one of the Five Grains, say a fore-blessing of borei minei mezonot (after-blessing: al ha'michya).

Fore-Blessing: Unbaked Dough

For the fore-blessing on cooked (but unbaked) dough, see [Fore-Blessing: Cooked Dough/Pasta](#).

Fore-Blessing: Bulgur Wheat/Tabouli

The fore-blessing on bulgur wheat (such as tabouli) is borei minei mezonot.

HAMOTZI: WHICH FOODS HAMOTZI COVERS

Which Foods HaMotzi Covers

Ha'motzi always covers all food eaten as part of a meal, except wine and any non-mezonot desserts such as fruit, on all days (not just on Shabbat or Jewish festivals).

Desserts that HaMotzi Does Not Cover

Non-mezonot dessert foods (which often have a sweet taste) are not normally eaten with bread. Say fore-blessings on desserts at a meal (for which you have already said ha'motzi and eaten bread) only on:

- Fruit from “trees” (borei pri ha'eitz),
- Fruit from the ground (borei pri ha'adama), such as melons and strawberries, and
- Specialty items (she'hakol), such as ice cream.

HAMOTZI: WASHING HANDS

HaMotzi: Washing Hands: When To Wash

Before eating bread, you must always wash your hands.

NOTE If you do not plan to eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of bread within four minutes, wash but do not say the blessing al netilat yadayim.

HaMotzi: Washing Hands: Finding Water

To find water for washing hands before eating bread:

- You must travel or walk up to 18 minutes away to find water.
- If you are already traveling, you must continue up to 72 minutes (in the direction in which you are going anyway) to find water.
- If you still cannot find water, cover your hands with any type of separation (gloves, sheet of plastic, bag, foil, or some other object) to keep your hands from directly contacting the bread.

HaMotzi: Washing Hands: Finding 4 fl. oz. Container

SITUATION You do not have a washing cup of at least 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) and you need to wash hands after sleeping or before eating bread.

STATUS You may not substitute a smaller washing container (such as a 2 fl. oz./59 ml cup) and use it twice.

WHAT TO DO You must travel up to 18 minutes away to get such a container when needed.

NOTE If you have a spigot that is less than 12 inches above the ground, you may open the spigot and let at least 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) flow out, close the tap, reopen it, and repeat.

HaMotzi: Washing Hands: Procedure

To wash for ha'motzi, use the One-Time Method, see [How To Wash Hands the One-Time Method](#).

HaMotzi: Being Touched by Unwashed Hands

SITUATION Someone who has not yet washed touches your hand after you have washed your hands, said al netilat yadayim, and dried your hands.

STATUS

- If his/her hand is dry, there is no problem of transferring impurity.
- If his/her hand is wet, this may have transferred ritual impurity to your hand.

WHAT TO DO

- If his/her hand is wet, touch a normally covered part of your body and then rewash your hands and say the blessing on washing hands.

NOTE If you have already said ha'motzi, don't repeat the ha'motzi blessing.

HaMotzi: Speaking after Washing

SITUATION You washed your hands in order to eat bread. You spoke before saying *hamotzi*.

WHAT TO DO You do not need to wash your hands again.

You do not need to say the blessing on washing hands again.

HaMotzi: Forgot To Wash

SITUATION You said ha'motzi without having washed your hands first.

WHAT TO DO Up until the time you say *birkat ha'mazon*, you must interrupt your meal and wash your hands.

NOTE Say al netilat yadayim ONLY if you will still eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of bread afterward; if you will eat less than 1.9 fl. oz., wash without a blessing.

HAMOTZI: LIFTING THE BREAD

HaMotzi: When To Lift the Bread

When saying ha'motzi, lift the bread when saying God's name. This is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

HAMOTZI: INTERRUPTED MEAL/HESECH DA'AT

Washing Your Hands for Interrupted Meal

SITUATION You said ha'motzi, ate any amount of bread, interrupted your meal and forgot about it, and now wish to resume your meal and eat more bread.

WHAT TO DO Wash your hands again and say the blessing on washing hands.

NOTE There is no time limit for this; whenever you forget about the meal, you must rewash before eating more bread. However, you do not say ha'motzi if it is within the allowed time to say *birkat ha'mazon*.

HAMOTZI: SHABBAT

HaMotzi: Shabbat

For *HaMotzi* on Shabbat, see Shabbat: Two Loaves (Lechem Mishneh).

II. BOREI MINEI MEZONOT

BOREI MINEI MEZONOT: GENERAL RULES

Introduction to Borei Minei Mezonot

Say the fore-blessing borei minei mezonot on non-bread foods if:

- Grain
The Five Grains (wheat, rye, oats, barley, or spelt) make up at least 20% of the food's flour volume, AND
- Cooking Method
Food is cooked or baked, AND
- Meal or Snack
You intend to eat the food as a snack and not a meal.

NOTE If you intend to eat a full meal that includes mezonot of a cake-like or bread-like texture, say ha'motzi.

For basing the fore-blessing on the main or preferential ingredient in a food mixture and/or saying two fore-blessings, see Fore-Blessings (Bracha Rishona): Food Mixtures: Main

BOREI MINEI MEZONOT: WHICH GRAINS

FORE-BLESSING: WHICH GRAINS: NON-FIVE GRAINS: IN WHOLE OR IN PART

Fore-Blessing: Which Grains: Non-Five Grains: In Whole or In Part

Say the fore-blessing borei pri ha'adama (not borei minei mezonot) on cooked or baked foods:

- If the Five Grains make up less than 20% of the food's flour volume, OR
- If made of non-Five Grains, such as corn, millet, or quinoa.

NOTE Rice is an exception; see next entry.

Fore-Blessing: Which Grains: Non-Five Grains: Rice

Rice (including rice bread and rice pasta) gets the fore-blessing borei minei mezonot, but not the after-blessing of al ha'michya (after-blessing: borei nefashot), even if you ate an entire meal of rice.

Fore-Blessing: Which Grains: Non-Five Grains: Tortillas

For corn tortillas (most tortillas are corn tortillas), say the fore-blessing she'hakol (after-blessing: borei nefashot).

For wheat tortillas, say the fore-blessing borei minei mezonot (after-blessing: al ha'michya).

FORE-BLESSING: WHICH GRAINS: NON-FIVE GRAINS: MEZONOT/NON-MEZONOT COMBINATIONS

Fore-Blessing: Which Grains: Mezonot/Non-Mezonot Combinations: Ice Cream Cone

The fore-blessing for ice cream cones depends on which part you prefer to eat:

SITUATION 1 You like the ice cream more than the cone and would eat it without the cone.

WHAT TO DO Say the fore-blessing of she'hakol.

NOTE She'hakol covers the cone.

After-blessing

- Borei nefashot if you eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup--including cone, if you eat the cone) within four minutes.
- No blessing if you eat less than 1.3 fl. oz. in four minutes.

SITUATION 2 You like the cone and the ice cream equally.

WHAT TO DO Say borei minei mezonot (this will cover the ice cream).

After-blessing

- Al ha' michya if you eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup of ice cream plus cone) within four minutes.
- No blessing if you eat less than 1.3 fl. oz. in four minutes.

SITUATION 3 The cone is sweet and you ALSO like the ice cream as much as the cone.

WHAT TO DO

- Say she'hakol on the ice cream.
- When you get to the cone, add borei minei mezonot.

After-blessing

- Borei nefashot.
- Also say al ha'michya if the cone totaled at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) and you ate it within four minutes.

Fore-Blessing: Which Grains: Mezonot/Non-Mezonot Combinations: Pie

Normally, for a pie say:

Fore-Blessing

Fore-blessing of borei minei mezonot, even if it contains less than 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of flour.

After-Blessing

To say the after-blessing, al ha'michya, you must eat a total volume of at least 1.3 fl. oz.--even if the flour was a minority of the ingredients.

However, if you prefer the filling to the crust (if you would not eat the crust by itself), say the appropriate fore-blessing over the filling, such as:

- She'hakol (after-blessing: borei nefashot), or
- Borei pri ha'eitz (after-blessing if on more than 1.3 fl. oz. of the Five Special Fruits--figs, dates, grapes, or pomegranates: al ha'eitz).

Fore-Blessing: Which Grains: Mezonot/Non-Mezonot Combinations: Turkey with Bread Stuffing

SITUATION You will eat bread stuffing with turkey. The bread stuffing has at least one chunk of bread at least 1.3 fl. oz. in volume.

WHAT TO DO Wash and say ha'motzi. If you eat at least 1.3 fl oz of the stuffing, say birkat ha'mazon afterward.

SITUATION You will eat bread stuffing with turkey. There is NOT at least one chunk of bread at least 1.3 fl. oz. in volume.

WHAT TO DO Do not wash and say ha'motzi, and do not say birkat ha'mazon (unless you eat enough to constitute a full meal). However, if you enjoy the stuffing as much as the turkey or will eat some stuffing by itself, say borei minei mezonot.

BOREI MINEI MEZONOT: WHICH COOKING METHODS

FORE-BLESSING: COOKED DOUGH

Fore-Blessing: Cooked Dough/Pasta

Bread must be baked in order to say ha'motzi on it ; dough that was cooked by any method other than baking (such as pasta) gets the fore-blessing of borei minei mezonot.

NOTE Even if you eat enough to constitute a meal, you still say al ha'michya afterward.

FORE-BLESSING: FRIED BREAD BATTER

Fore-Blessing: French Toast

See Bread/Mezonot: Mixtures with Other Foods.

FORE-BLESSING: RAW OR COOKED GRAINS

Fore-Blessing: Raw or Cooked Grains: Porridge/Oatmeal

If oatmeal is porridge, say borei minei mezonot (after-blessing, al ha'michya).

Fore-Blessing: Raw or Cooked Grains: Rolled Oats/Muesli

If rolled oats are eaten without cooking (such as in raw muesli), say borei pri ha'adama (after-blessing, borei nefashot).

Fore-Blessing: Raw or Cooked Grains: Granola

On granola, since it is cooked (baked), say borei minei mezonot (after-blessing, al ha'michya).

Fore-Blessing: Raw or Cooked Grains: Granola Bars

On granola bars, say borei minei mezonot (after-blessing, al ha'michya).

FORE-BLESSING: CAKE BATTER

Fore-Blessing: Raw Cake Batter

Before eating raw cake batter, say she'hakol (after-blessing: borei nefashot).

BOREI MINEI MEZONOT: INTENDED AS MEAL OR SNACK

Fore-Blessing: Bread-Like Crackers

Fore-blessing for Ryvita and other bread-like crackers :

- Ha'motzi if they are normally eaten as a meal—even if you eat only a small amount. The after-blessing is birkat ha'mazon as long as you ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) within four minutes.

NOTE If you ate less than 1.3 fl. oz. or took more than 4 minutes, do not say any after-blessing.

- Borei minei mezonot if normally eaten as a snack (after-blessing: al ha'michya).

SITUATION Crackers are normally eaten as a snack, but YOU eat it as part of a meal.

WHAT TO DO Say ha'motzi (after-blessing, birkat ha'mazon).

Fore-Blessing: Bread Sticks

Bread sticks are intended to be eaten as a snack, so say borei minei mezonot and not ha'motzi (after-blessing, al ha'michya).

Fore-Blessing: Crackers

Over crackers, say the fore-blessing borei minei mezonot (after-blessing, al ha'michya).

III. BOREI PRI HAGAFEN

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN: WHICH FOODS

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN: WHAT IT COVERS

When To Say Borei Pri HaGafen

Say borei pri ha'gafen on wine or grape juice, whether at a meal with bread or not.

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN: MIXED DRINKS

Borei Pri HaGafen: Mixed Drinks: Wine/Grape Juice Mixed with Water

Say borei pri ha'gafen on drinks of wine or grape juice mixed with water if at least 1/7th of the total volume is wine (or grape juice) but the mixture but also still be considered to be wine or grape juice.

Borei Pri HaGafen: Mixed Drinks: Wine/Grape Juice Mixed with Non-Water Liquids

Say borei pri ha'gafen on mixtures of wine (or grape juice) with beverages other than water, as long as the final mixture would still be considered to be wine (or grape juice) by most people in your area.

NOTE If the mixture is at least 50% wine (and maybe even at greater dilutions), it will normally be considered borei pri ha'gafen.

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN: IN SUCCESSION WITH SHEHAKOL

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN*: AFTER SHEHAKOL

Borei Pri HaGafen*: After SheHakol

SITUATION You said she'hakol on a non-grape beverage, drank the beverage, and then want to drink wine (or grape juice).

WHAT TO DO Say borei pri ha'gafen before drinking the wine (or grape juice).

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN*: BEFORE SHEHAKOL

Borei Pri HaGafen*: Before SheHakol: Drink at Least 2 Fl. Oz.

If you say borei pri ha'gafen and drink at least 2 fl. oz. (59 ml) of wine (or grape juice) within 30 seconds, the borei pri ha'gafen will cover all subsequent beverages you drink at about the same time--even if their fore-blessing should be she'hakol.

NOTE Saying the after-blessing on the wine/grape juice--if drinking at least 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of the wine/grape juice--covers the water or other beverage that you drank.

Borei Pri HaGafen: Before SheHakol: Drink Less than 2 Fl. Oz.

If you say *borei pri ha'gafen* and drink less than 2 fl. oz. (59 ml) of wine (or grape juice) within 30 seconds, you must say *she'hakol* over any subsequent non-grape-based beverages that you drink.

BOREI PRI HAGAFEN: SAYING AGAIN

Saying Borei Pri HaGafen Again

You may say a new blessing on any remaining wine if:

- You said, or heard someone saying, *borei pri ha'gafen*,
- Drank some wine (or grape juice),
- Decided to stop drinking (*hesech da'at*), and
- Returned to drink from the same cup later.

NOTE If you are not sure you had *hesech da'at*, do not say a new blessing.

IV. BOREI PRI HA'EITZ

BOREI PRI HA'EITZ: WHICH FOODS

BOREI PRI HA'EITZ: ALL FRUITS

Borei Pri Ha'Eitz: All Fruits: Perennial Fruits and Nuts

Say *borei pri ha'eitz* on fruits and nuts from perennial trees or bushes.

NOTE A perennial tree or bush is a plant whose trunks or stalks survive from year to year; often with bark on the trunk or stalk.

BOREI PRI HA'EITZ: FIVE SPECIAL FRUITS

Borei Pri Ha'Eitz: Five Special Fruits: General Rule

Say *borei pri ha'eitz* on the *Five Special Fruits* for which the Land of Israel is praised.

Borei Pri Ha'Eitz: Five Special Fruits: Order and Preference

To eat more than one type of the *Five Special Fruits*:

- If you have a particular preference, you may eat the fruits in whichever order you prefer.
- If you have no particular preference, eat them in this order:
 - Olive
 - Date
 - Grape
 - Fig
 - Pomegranate.

NOTE Order of *Five Special Fruits*

The order for eating the *Five Special Fruits* comes from *Deuteronomy/Devarim* 8:8 and follows the fruit's proximity to the two times the word “*eretz*” is used:

“*Eretz chita u's'ora v'gefen u't'eina v'rimon, eretz zayit shemen u'dvash.*”

A land of wheat and barley and grapevine and fig and pomegranate, a land of olive oil and honey.

V. BOREI PRI HAADAMA

BOREI PRI HAADAMA: WHICH FOODS

BOREI PRI HAADAMA: WHICH FOODS: GENERAL RULES

Borei Pri HaAdama: Which Foods: General Rules

Say *borei pri ha'adama* on:

- Common vegetables,
- Fruits and nuts that grow on annual plants (such as pineapple, bananas, strawberries, peanuts), and
- Uncooked or unbaked grains, including those not of the *Five Special Grains*.

NOTE For when to say *she'hakol*, see [Borei Pri HaAdama: Sprouts](#) .

BOREI PRI HAADAMA: WHICH FOODS: SPECIALTY FOODS

Borei Pri HaAdama: Bananas, Hearts of Palm

Say *borei pri ha'adama* if the tree from which the food grew can only be used once, such as banana trees or palm trees that get cut down after giving their produce.

Borei Pri HaAdama: Bread Croutons in Salad

For fore-blessing of bread croutons in salad, see [Borei Pri HaAdama: Salads](#).

Borei Pri HaAdama: Salads

Say *borei pri ha'adama* on vegetable salad.

NOTE The fore-blessing of *borei pri ha'adama* also covers salad toppings and additions that by themselves require a different blessing, such as:

- *Borei pri ha'eitz* for a sprinkling of pine nuts, cashews, apple slices, or raisins, or
- *Borei minei mezonot* or *ha'motzi* for bread croutons.

REASON Since these toppings and additions are subordinate to the main salad, you do not say the individual blessings; you only say *borei pri ha'adama*.

Borei Pri HaAdama: Sprouts

Say the fore-blessing of *she'hakol* if the sprouts were grown only in water.

Say *borei pri ha'adama* if the grains were sprouted in the ground (such as sunflower sprouts or wheat grass).

VI. SHEHAKOL

SHEHAKOL: WHICH FOODS

SheHakol: Which Foods: General Rule

Say *she'hakol*, the most general blessing, over any food or drink that does not fall into a higher category (*HaMotzi*, *Borei Minei Mezonot*, *Borei Pri Ha'Eitz*, *Borei Pri HaGafen*, and *Borei Pri HaAdama*).

NOTE One blessing of *she'hakol* covers both liquids and solids that will be eaten/drunk at the same snack or meal.

SheHakol: Which Foods: Mistaken SheHakol

She'hakol may theoretically apply to many foods, *b'diavad*,--even bread, wine, the Five Special Fruits, and mezonot. However, we have a principle to say the highest-level food blessing possible. If you said *she'hakol*, mistakenly believing it was the correct blessing for a higher-level food, *she'hakol* does cover the food after the fact and, *b'di'avad*, you may eat the bread, wine, or other higher-level food.

SheHakol: Which Foods: Unrecognizable Foods

You must be able to recognize, from at least one piece, that an ingredient is from the ground or from a tree in order to say *borei pri ha'adama* or *borei pri ha'eitz*. If not, say *she'hakol*.

So say *she'hakol* on:

- All foods that did not grow in the ground or on a tree, but also
- Foods that you cannot personally identify as having grown in the ground or on a tree—either because it has been finely ground or processed or because you personally do not know what it is.

EXAMPLE Even if you know that a *kugel* is made with potatoes, unless you can see recognizable pieces of potato, do not say *borei pri ha'adama*, but rather *she'hakol*.

EXAMPLES (Foods that Get *SheHakol*)

- Apple Sauce.
- Beer, Cognac, Grape Brandy, and other alcoholic beverages other than wine and grape juice and their derivatives.
- Cheese and other *Dairy* Products (unless they contain grain).
- Eggs (plain).
- Fish.
- Fruits or vegetables whose identity is not recognizable.
- Honey.
- Ice Cream.
- Juice.
- Meat.
- Mushrooms.
- Poultry.
- Seaweed.
- Soda.
- Soup (clear).
- Sprouts.
- Water.

SHEHAKOL: IF YOU CANNOT EAT THE FOOD

SheHakol: Said But Cannot Eat

SITUATION You said the blessing *she'hakol*, intending to eat some cheese that is in front of you, and then remember that you ate meat shortly before.

WHAT TO DO You should not eat any of the cheese but, instead, say *Baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed*.

SHEHAKOL: HOW OFTEN

SheHakol: Drinking Water Once

Say the *she'hakol* blessing on water once for the entire day if you:

- Are hiking or doing other outdoor activities, and
- Have water with you or know there is water along the way, and
- Expect to be thirsty again later in the day and will want to drink water.

SheHakol: Drinking Water Again

Say a new *she'hakol* blessing if you buy more water along the way while hiking or doing other outdoor activities--even if you said the blessing at the start of your day's activities.

SheHakol: Drinks while in Flight

If you intend to continue drinking during a flight, you may say one blessing on beverages (*she'hakol*) and continue drinking for the entire flight.

SHEHAKOL: WHEN NOT TO SAY

SheHakol: When Not To Say: Non-Nutritive Foods

Do not say a fore-blessing on chewing gum or bubble gum if it contains no nutritional substances.

SHEHAKOL: HUMOROUS REMINDER POEM

SheHakol: Humorous Reminder Poem

If you're in doubt,
And you do not know,
Say *she'hakol*
Nihiyeh bi'dvaro.

FOOD FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): SPECIAL CASES

FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): FOOD MIXTURES

GENERAL RULES OF FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): FOOD MIXTURES

Fore-Blessings (Bracha Rishona): Food Mixtures: Main Ingredient

1. Say the fore-blessing (*bracha rishona*) over the main or most important ingredient in a mixture of foods from various food-blessing categories.
2. The blessing on the main food covers all other ingredients in the mixture.

EXAMPLES Fore-Blessing over Turkey with Cranberry Sauce

To eat turkey with cranberry sauce, saying the fore-blessing *she'hakol* on the more-important food (turkey) covers the less-important food (cranberry sauce). Even if you eat some of the sauce after the turkey is finished, you do not say a new blessing on the sauce.

NOTE If you eat cranberry sauce by itself and not with turkey, say:

- *Borei pri ha'eitz* if it contains identifiable pieces of (or entire) cranberries.
- *She'hakol* if the cranberry sauce has no identifiable pieces.

Fore-Blessing (Bracha Rishona) over Cholent

Cholent blessing (if the cholent is not eaten as part of a meal) follows the most important ingredient and is somewhat subjective to the eater.

- German cholent —A variety of wheat is primary; say *borei minei mezonot*.
- Hungarian cholent —Barley is primary; say *borei minei mezonot*.
- Polish cholent —Beans are primary; say *borei pri ha'adama*.
- Russian cholent —Potatoes are primary; say *borei pri ha'adama*.
- If meat is most important, say *she'hakol*.

NOTE You may need to say more than one blessing (*bracha rishona*) if there is no one preeminently important ingredient in a mixture of food types in one utensil, such as a casserole or cholent, but only if:

- You especially like more than one ingredient, and

- Both (or more than two) of the ingredients can be eaten distinctly.

FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): FOOD MIXTURES: INCLUDING FIVE GRAINS

FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA): MIXTURES WITH FIVE GRAINS: CONTAINING BREAD/MEZONOT

Introduction to Food Fore-Blessings (Bracha Rishona): The Five Grains

Bread or Mezonot: Intended Use

Whether a food made of the *Five Grains* qualifies as bread (ha'motzi) or mezonot (*borei minei mezonot*) depends on whether the food was intended to be eaten as a meal or as a snack, as follows:

- Bread for a meal: Say ha'motzi.
- Mezonot (but you will eat a full meal): Say ha'motzi.
- A snack (including bread as a snack): Say *borei minei mezonot*.

NOTE Some foods may qualify as either ha'motzi or mezonot (such as pizza).

NOTE Whether the bread/mezonot was made with fruit juice instead of water may not affect its blessing, since the blessing is determined by the food's intended use. "Mezonot" rolls on airline flights may still require the blessing of ha'motzi if you eat them as part of a meal.

NOTE Bread that has been cut into small pieces and fried may be reduced in status from bread to mezonot.

Bread/Mezonot: Amount of Five Grains Needed

In a non-bread food containing a mixture of grains, at least 20% of the main ingredients must be from one of the *Five Grains* in order to require the fore-blessing (*bracha rishona*) of *borei minei mezonot* (after-blessing: *al ha'michya*).

If at least 20% of a bread's flour is from one of the *Five Grains*, say a fore-blessing of ha'motzi (and *birkat ha'mazon* afterward if you ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. within four minutes).

NOTE If you do not know the actual percent of each grain, such as in cereal, say *she'hakol* (after-blessing: *borei nefashot*). But you should try to determine the actual amounts of the grains.

Bread/Mezonot: Mixtures with Other Foods

Normally, the fore-blessing for bread (ha'motzi), or for other cooked or baked foods made from flour (*borei minei mezonot*), will override the remaining foods in a food mixture.

NOTE Bread that has been cut into small pieces and fried may be reduced in status from bread to mezonot.

EXAMPLES Saying HaMotzi over Bread Mixture

Wash and say ha'motzi over bread and bread-mixture foods such as French toast, if at least one piece is more than 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) in volume.

If no individual piece is at least 1.3 fl. oz., say *borei minei mezonot*.

REASON Being fried changes the French toast's status, even if the total of all of the pieces is more than 1.3 fl. oz.

Saying Borei Minei Mezonot over Mezonot Mixture

Say *borei minei mezonot* over:

- Cholent whose main ingredient is barley;
- Ice cream cone (ice cream + cone)—see "ice cream cone" for further details;
- Pie; and

- Cheesecake with any kind of crust.

NOTE Cheesecakes are sold in bakeries and not in cheese stores, indicating that the mezonot part is more important than the cheese part as regards fore- and after-blessings.

FORE-BLESSINGS: FRUIT MIXTURES

Fore-Blessings over Fruit Cocktail

For fruit cocktail, say fore-blessings of borei pri ha'eitz (for tree fruits) AND borei pri ha'adama (for pineapple, etc.).

REASON Fruit cocktail does not have a main ingredient.

FORE-BLESSINGS: MIXTURES WITH RICE

Fore-Blessings: Stuffed Grape Leaves

If grape leaves are stuffed with rice, say borei minei mezonot.

Fore-Blessings: Sushi

Say the fore-blessing borei minei mezonot over sushi, since the rice is primary. If you are eating the sushi for the salmon (or other ingredient) in the middle, say she'hakol, too (or whatever blessing is correct for that important ingredient).

NOTE To say fore-blessings over sushi:

- Say borei minei mezonot, then take a bite of rice (which may have nori, etc., on it).
- Say she'hakol, then take a bite of fish (which may have rice, avocado, etc., stuck to it).

FORE-BLESSINGS: UNUSUAL FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Bracha Rishona: Coconut Water

To drink coconut water:

- Say borei pri ha'eitz if you drink coconut water directly from the coconut.
- Say she'hakol if you pour the water out of the nut into a utensil.

Bracha Rishona: Fiddleheads

Say borei pri ha'adama on fiddleheads (unfurled fern tops in early spring).

Bracha Rishona: Hydroponic Vegetables

Say she'hakol on hydroponic vegetables, including bean sprouts.

NOTE If you don't know how the vegetables were grown, you are not required to research the source of the vegetables: you may assume that they are not hydroponic and say the fore-blessing of borei pri ha'adama.

Bracha Rishon: Olives

There is no separate blessing on eating olives with a meal. If you eat olives by themselves (without other food), say borei pri ha'eitz.

Bracha Rishona: Popcorn

Say borei pri ha'adama on popcorn.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA)

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): GENERAL RULES

THE FIVE AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA)

The Five After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona)

There are five Bracha Achrona blessings on food:

- Al HaMichya
- Al HaGefen
- Al Ha'Eitz
- Borei Nefashot
- Birkat HaMazon.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): LEVELS

Levels of After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona)

Like fore-blessings, say the highest level of after-blessing (bracha achrona) that applies.

NOTE Although borei nefashot will cover many foods (at least, after the fact), it does NOT cover bread, wine, or mezannot.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): MINIMUM MEASUREMENTS

Introduction to After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Minimum Measurements

To say any after-blessing/bracha achrona (al ha'michya, al ha'gafen, al ha'eitz, borei nefashot, or birkat ha'mazon), you must:

- Eat at least the minimum volume (1.3 fl. oz.--39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of solid food within four minutes, or
- Drink at least 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of liquid within 30 seconds.

NOTE With hot foods, especially liquids, you are unlikely to be able to swallow a minimum amount in the required time in order to qualify for the after-blessing (bracha achrona).

If Did Not Eat Minimum

Do not say bracha achrona if you did not eat 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml) within four minutes.

If Did Not Drink Minimum

Do not say bracha achrona if you did not drink 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of any potable liquid within 30 seconds.

NOTE You may not combine the volume of solid food to liquid food or liquid food to solid food that you ate and drank in order to make the minimum volume for an after-blessing.

If Did Not Eat or Drink Minimum

Size: How To Calculate

Ounces: Weight or Volume

The minimum quantity for saying after-blessings is based on volume, not weight. If you eat a pack of pretzels whose volume is 1.3 fl. oz., even though the label says it only weighs 0.5 oz., you would say an after-blessing of al ha'michya.

Figuring Volume

Figuring Volume: Non-Mezonot Foods

You may not include the volume of fish or meat or other foods eaten together with bread or matza in order to reach a total volume of 1 fl. oz., which is required for saying the after-blessing of birkat ha'mazon. However, you may combine the volumes in order to say borei nefashot.

Figuring Volume: Unswallowed Pits/Seeds

When eating foods with seeds or pits (olives, pomegranates, etc.), do not include unswallowed seeds or pits to reach the 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) minimum volume needed to say an after-blessing. You may include only what you have swallowed.

D'Oraita Cases

For d'oraita cases (halachot from the Torah), such as eating matza at sefer or drinking wine for kiddush, we use a more stringent minimum measure:

- Eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of solid food within four minutes, or
- Drink at least 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) of liquid within 30 seconds.

Timing

When To Start Counting

You may start counting the period of four minutes (for eating at least 1.3 fl. oz.) or 30 seconds (for drinking at least 3.3 fl. oz.) any time after the fore-blessing as long as it is continuous from when you first swallow until you have swallowed the minimum amount.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): TIME LIMITS

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): TIME LIMITS AND SATIATION STATUS

After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Satiation Status: General Rules

After eating or drinking the required amounts, you may say bracha achrona (including birkat ha'mazon) as long as:

- You are still satiated after having been hungry and eaten, OR
- You were not satiated after eating and it is less than 72 minutes since you finished eating.

REASON We say the effects of food last for at least 72 minutes and that 72-minute period overrides becoming hungry again even after having been satiated.

After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Satiation Status: Hunger Situations

SITUATION You were hungry.
You ate and were satiated.
You are not yet hungry again.

WHAT TO DO You may say bracha achrona without any time limit, until you get hungry again

SITUATION You were hungry.
You ate but were not satiated.
You are still hungry.

WHAT TO DO You may say bracha achrona for up to 72 minutes after having stopped eating.

SITUATION You were not hungry, but you ate.

WHAT TO DO

- If you ate enough that you became satiated and now you are hungry again:
You can say after-blessing for up to 72 minutes after you finished eating.
- If you ate enough to be satiated and are not yet hungry again:
You may say an after-blessing for up to 72 minutes OR until you are hungry again, whichever comes later.
- If you ate but did not become satiated and are still hungry:
You can say after-blessing for 72 minutes after you finished eating.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): TIME LIMITS AND FALLING ASLEEP

After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Falling Asleep for more than 30 Minutes

If you fell asleep for more than 30 minutes in the middle of a meal:

Step 1: Wash your hands the Three-Times Method to remove the tum'a of your sleep.

Step 2a: To Continue Eating

To continue eating in this case, since the previous blessings and food are no longer relevant (due to *hesech da'at*), you may:

- Wash again and say *ha'motzi* again, and then say *birkat ha'mazon*, OR
- Eat other items with a fore-blessing and after-blessing (since your previous eating is finished).

Step 2b: If You Are Finished Eating

- Say *birkat ha'mazon* if you are:
 - Finished eating, and
 - Not hungry again, after having been satiated at the meal.
- Do not say *birkat ha'mazon* if you are
 - Finished eating, and
 - Hungry again (after having been satiated at the meal), as the original snack or meal is irrelevant to any after-blessing now.

After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Falling Asleep for less than 30 Minutes

If you slept less than 30 minutes, you do not need to wash; you may:

- Continue eating your meal, or
- Say *birkat ha'mazon* (as long as you had already eaten at least 1.9 fl. oz., or 56 ml, of bread within 4 minutes).

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): CORRESPONDENCE WITH FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA)

Correspondence between Fore- and After-Blessings

There is no essential connection between fore-blessings and after-blessings.

EXAMPLES Rice

The fore-blessing is *borei minei mezonot*, so you might expect the after-blessing to be *al ha'michya*. But the correct after-blessing is *borei nefashot*.

Apple

The fore-blessing is *borei pri ha'eitz*, so you might expect the after-blessing to be *al ha'eitz*. But the correct after-blessing is *borei nefashot*.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): INCORRECT

Correct After-Blessing after Incorrect After-Blessing

SITUATION You ate or drank *mezonot*, wine, grape juice, or any of the *Five Special Fruits*. You said the incorrect after-blessing.

WHAT TO DO You must still say the correct after-blessing after the incorrect one.

Correct After-Blessing after Incorrect Fore-Blessing

SITUATION You said an incorrect or too-general fore-blessing over food (even *she'hakol*--which does, *b'di'avad*, cover all foods, including bread, wine, the *Five Special Fruits*, and *mezonot*). Or you forgot to say the fore-blessing.

WHAT TO DO You must still say the more-specific, correct after-blessing, including *birkat ha'mazon* when appropriate.

REASON You must still say the correct after-blessing even though you said the incorrect fore-blessing.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): INCOMPLETE

Incomplete After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona)

You must repeat the after-blessing for mezonot, wine/grape juice, or any of the Five Special Fruits if you ate items from more than one of those categories, said the after-blessing for just one of them, and forgot the other.

Example

SITUATION You ate mezonot and some figs, said al ha'michya, and forgot to add the words for al ha'eitz.

WHAT TO DO You must say the after-blessing al ha'eitz.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): SEQUENTIAL

After-Blessings If Snack, then New Meal

If you said a fore-blessing and ate a snack, but then decided to eat bread and a full meal:

- If your meal will not contain any foods that have the same after-blessing as your snack--
 - Say the snack's after-blessing, and then
 - Wash your hands and say ha'motzi.
- If your meal will contain foods with the same fore-blessing as your snack (even the same food as your snack)—
 - Do not say the snack's after-blessing.
 - Wash your hands and say ha'motzi.

NOTE Wash and say ha'motzi if you will be eating any amount of bread—even less than 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) within four minutes and even if it will take you more than four minutes to eat it (in which case, although you say ha'motzi, you do not say any after-blessing, including birkat ha'mazon).

NOTE Say al netilat yadayim only if you intend to eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. (59 ml) within four minutes.

EXCEPTION If you have eaten mezonot (and even if you will not eat any more mezonot with your meal), do not say al ha'michya. Just wash your hands, say ha'motzi, and eat your meal.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): CHANGING LOCATION

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): CHANGING LOCATION: INSIDE TO OUTSIDE, OUTSIDE TO INSIDE

After-Blessings: Start Meal Inside, Intend To End Outside

You may start a meal inside the house and finish outside, or the reverse, if that was your original intention. If that was not your original intention, consult a rabbi.

After-Blessings: Start Snack Inside, Did Not Intend To End Outside

If you were eating a snack inside a building and had not planned to continue eating outside but then decided to eat outside, you must say a new fore-blessing once you are outside.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): CHANGING LOCATION: BREAD OR MEZONOT

After-Blessings: Changing Location: Continuing To Eat Bread or Mezonot

Because bread or mezonot REQUIRES you to say an after-blessing at the place where you ate it, you are considered to NOT have had an interruption of thought (hesech da'at) when you move and eat more bread or mezonot at the new place, and you may say the after-blessing at the new place.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): CHANGING LOCATION: TRAVELING

After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Changing Location: Traveling

When traveling, the proper practice is to:

- Finish eating where you begin eating, or
- Intend, when saying the fore-blessing, to continue eating while traveling.

EXCEPTIONS Even if you did not intend to continue eating along the way, you may say the after-blessing wherever you are if:

- You are already involved in doing a mitzva, or
- If you will incur a large loss of money, or
- By the time you would return to where you ate, it would be past the latest time to say the after-blessing.

After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Changing Location: Food within View

SITUATION You eat one item outdoors, then eat food from another category inside your car, which is *within view* of where you ate the first food.

WHAT TO DO You may say the after-blessings for both foods while in your car (or both outside of your car), even if it is a food that normally would require you to return to the place at which you ate it.

After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Changing Location: Did Not Intend To Continue Eating

SITUATION You did not, at the time you said the fore-blessing, intend to continue eating along the way. You then ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread or mezonot within four minutes.

WHAT TO DO When you say the after-blessing, you should return to where you began eating. However, if you continued eating mezonot or bread while traveling, you may say the after-blessing in either place.

NOTE It is the proper practice to say a new fore-blessing (since you did not intend to continue eating along the way when you began eating) in the vehicle in which you are traveling. But even if you did not say a new fore-blessing, you may still say the after-blessing in the vehicle.

After-Blessings: Changing Location: Inside Vehicle, Outside Vehicle, Return

SITUATION You are traveling (driving, riding in a bus, etc.), and you stop and get out of the vehicle in order to eat part of a meal or snack:

WHAT TO DO

- If, when you said the fore-blessing, you had consciously intended to return to the vehicle and continue eating either along the way or at the next stop, you may say the after-blessing wherever you are when you finish eating.
- If, when you said the fore-blessing, you had not consciously intended to return to the vehicle and continue eating while traveling, it is assumed that you will continue to eat and you do not need to say a new fore-blessing.
- If you intended NOT to continue eating in your car or along the way, you need to say a new fore-blessing in the vehicle.

THE FIVE AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA) GENERAL RULES

I. AL HAMICHYA

AL HAMICHYA: TYPE AND VOLUME OF FOODS

Al HaMichya: Eating Enough

Say al ha'michya after eating at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of non-bread foods baked from the Five Grains (wheat, rye, oats, barley, or spelt) within four minutes.

Al HaMichya: Eating Enough Pie To Say

Say al ha'michya if you ate a total volume of crust + filling of at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) or more within four minutes--even if the total mezonot-based crust you eat is less than 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup).

Al HaMichya: Or Birkat HaMazon

Say birkat ha'mazon instead of al ha'michya if you ate enough bread-like foods (mezonot) or bread-like food combinations (such as crackers with tuna salad) to be the volume of your normal biggest meal of the day.

This is true even if:

- You had not planned to have a meal (for example, you planned to eat only one slice of pizza but then ate two more), and
- Did not wash your hands before the meal.

AL HAMICHYA: DOUBT

Al HaMichya: Doubt If You Said

Don't say al ha'michya after eating mezonot if you are not certain whether you said it or not.

Al HaMichya: Doubt If 72 Minutes Have Passed

SITUATION You ate some mezonot. It might be more than 72 minutes since you finished eating but you are not certain.

WHAT TO DO Doubt about a blessing (safek bracha) does not get a blessing.

NOTE You may not eat one of the Five Special Fruits in order to say the after-blessing of al ha'eitz and include al ha'michya. You could eat fruit and say the al ha'eitz blessing, but you may not include mezonot food in the blessing by adding al ha'michya.

AL HAMICHYA: FORGETTING V'ZACHREINU L'TOVA

Al HaMichya: Forgetting To Add V'Zachreinu L'Tova

Don't repeat al ha'michya on Rosh Chodesh if you forget to add v'zachreinu l'tova....

II. AL HAGAFEN

AL HAGAFEN: TYPE AND VOLUME OF DRINK

Al HaGafen: Drinking Enough Wine/Grape Juice To Say After-Blessing

Say al ha'gafen after drinking at least a revi'it (3.3 fl. oz., or 99 ml) of wine (or grape juice) within 30 seconds.

Al HaGafen: Covering SheHakol Drink

If you drank at least 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of grape juice or wine water within 30 seconds and then drank some water or another beverage, saying the after-blessing of al ha'gafen on the wine/grape juice covers the water or other beverage.

AL HAGAFEN: WHICH BLESSING ENDING

Al HaGafen: Al Pri HaGafen or Al Pri Gafna

After drinking wine made from grapes grown in Eretz Yisrael (regardless of where you are physically located when you drink the wine), end the after-blessing with al ha'aretz ve'al pri gafna instead of al ha'aretz ve'al pri ha'gafen.

III. AL HA'EITZ

INTRODUCTION TO AL HA'EITZ

Al Ha'Eitz: Type and Volumes of Fruits

Say the after-blessing of al ha'eitz after eating at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup), within four minutes, of the Five Special Fruits:

- Olive,
- Date,
- Grape,
- Fig,
- Pomegranate.

NOTE The after-blessing of al ha'eitz also covers any non-special fruits that you ate while eating the Five Special Fruits.

SITUATION You ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) within four minutes of the Five Special Fruits, such as figs, and any amount of non-special fruits, such as walnuts, at about the same time.

WHAT TO DO Say:

- Fore-blessing of borei pri ha'eitz, and
- After-blessing of al ha'eitz.

AL HA'EITZ: FIGURING VOLUME

Al Ha'Eitz: Figuring Volume: Eating Special and Non-Special Fruits Sequentially

You may not eat non-special fruits sequentially with or even interspersed with the Five Special Fruits in order to make the minimum volume for saying the after-blessing of al ha'eitz.

SITUATION You ate a date and then ate the remainder of 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of cherries.

WHAT TO DO Say:

- Fore-blessing of borei pri ha'eitz over the date (and cherries).
- After-blessing of borei nefashot on all the fruits.

Al Ha'Eitz: Figuring Volume: Eating Special and Non-Special Fruits As a Unit

The volume of special and non-special fruits DO combine for the after-blessing if:

- They are considered to be one food, AND
- The main component is the Special Fruit.

SITUATION You eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) within four minutes of dates stuffed with almonds.

WHAT TO DO

Say the after-blessing of al ha'eitz over both types of fruits.

Al Ha'Eitz: Figuring Volume: Eating Special Fruits Mixed with Other Foods

SITUATION You say borei pri ha'eitz and eat a few olives, but less than 1.3 fl. oz. Then, you say borei pri ha'adama and eat lettuce mixed with enough olives to constitute the minimum volume when combined with the first olives. You eat them all within four minutes. It is time to say the after-blessing.

WHAT TO DO You may not combine all the olives in order to say the after-blessing of al ha'eitz unless the olives remain distinct from the lettuce and you continue to eat them separately. Say borei

nefashot after finishing eating as long as the total food eaten was at least 1.3 fl. oz.

AL HA'EITZ: VE'AL HAPEIROT OR VE'AL PEIROTEHA

Al Ha'Eitz Ve'al HaPeirot or Ve'al Peiroteha

SITUATION You ate some of the Five Special Fruits and they were grown in Eretz Yisrael.

WHAT TO DO End the after-blessing al ha'eitz with al ha'aretz ve'al peiroteha instead of ve'al ha'peirot.

IV. BOREI NEFASHOT

BOREI NEFASHOT: TYPE AND VOLUME OF FOODS

Borei Nefashot: Minimum Requirements

Say borei nefashot after:

- Eating at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of non-mezonot food or non-special fruits within four minutes, OR
- Drinking at least 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of non-grape juice drinks or wine within 30 seconds.

Borei Nefashot: Special Cases: Popcorn

To say the after-blessing on popcorn, you only need to eat a few popped kernels as long as in the popped state they fill 1 fl. oz. (30 ml).

V. BIRKAT HAMAZON

BIRKAT HAMAZON: SOURCE

Birkat HaMazon: Torah Source

The source of birkat ha'mazon is Deuteronomy/Devarim 8:10: You will eat and be satiated and bless Hashem, your God, for the good land that He gave you.

Birkat HaMazon D'Rabanan: Rabbinic Source

Although the mitzva d'oraita is to thank God only when you are satiated from the meal, chazal decreed that we say birkat ha'mazon even when eating only the volume of a k'zayit and even if not satiated. So you must still say birkat ha'mazon after eating at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread within four minutes—even if you are not full. This is known as birkat ha'mazon d'rabanan.

BIRKAT HAMAZON: HOW MUCH FOOD

Eating Enough Bread To Say Birkat HaMazon

Say birkat ha'mazon if you ate a “meal” as defined by halacha—that is, if you ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread made of the Five Grains within four minutes.

NOTE If you didn't eat the minimal amounts within four minutes, don't say birkat ha'mazon (even if you washed and said ha'motzi).

Eating Enough Mezonot To Say Birkat HaMazon

Say birkat ha'mazon after eating mezonot if it constituted a meal—that is, if you ate:

- The amount a person would eat for his/her dinner meal, OR
- Mezonot in addition to other foods that are normally eaten with bread in a quantity sufficient to be a normal dinner meal.

NOTE In either case, you must eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of mezonot made of the Five Grains within four minutes.

Birkat HaMazon: If You Planned To Eat Minimum Amount of Bread and Did

Regardless of how much bread you plan to eat, if you eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) within four minutes, say *birkat ha'mazon*.

Birkat HaMazon: If You Planned To Eat Minimum Amount of Bread and Did Not

If you planned to, but did not, eat a full meal:

- Do not say *al ha'michya* if you did not eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of foods baked from the *Five Grains* within four minutes--even if you had washed your hands and said *ha'motzi*.
- Do say the appropriate *bracha achrona* for any other foods of which you ate the minimum (1.3 fl. oz.--39 ml, or 1/6 cup) quantity within four minutes, even though you did not say an individual *bracha rishona* (since you were planning to

BIRKAT HAMAZON: TIME LIMIT

Birkat HaMazon: Time Limit

For time limits on *birkat ha'mazon*, see [After-Blessings \(*Bracha Achrona*\): Time Limits](#).

BIRKAT HAMAZON: LOCATION

Birkat HaMazon: Location: Switching Seats

You should sit down for *birkat ha'mazon*, but you do not need to sit in your original seat. You may sit anywhere in the room in which you ate, even at a different table.

Birkat HaMazon: Location: Eating in Two Places--No Prior Intention

SITUATION

- You said *ha'motzi*.
- Ate bread without planning to continue your meal elsewhere.
- Then changed your mind and wanted to eat at a second place.

WHAT TO DO The ideal practice is to:

- Say *birkat ha'mazon* where you are, and then
- Start a new meal--wash, make *ha'motzi*, and eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup)—of bread in the second place.

B'di'avad, it is OK to say *birkat ha'mazon* at the second place, but only if you also ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread at the second place (no additional washing or *ha'motzi* is needed).

Birkat HaMazon: Location: Eating in Two Places--Prior Intention

Say *birkat ha'mazon* at either place if:

- You eat in one place, intending to continue your meal in another place, AND
- You ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread at either place.

NOTE If you intend to eat only a snack only at the second place, you do not need to say *birkat ha'mazon* before you go there; you only need to say whichever fore-blessings are required for the foods you will eat there. You must return to the first place to say *birkat ha'mazon*.

BIRKAT HAMAZON: MAYIM ACHRONIM

Mayim Achronim a Custom?

Many people have the custom of using *mayim achronim* (water to wash hands after a meal). But according to some opinions, to do so is not required by Jewish law.

NOTE According to most opinions, women do not wash with *mayim achronim*.

BIRKAT HAMAZON: MEZUMAN AND MINYAN

Birkat HaMazon: Reason for Mezuman

Saying *birkat ha'mazon* with a *mezuman* (or a *minyan*) is important since it gives honor to God.

Birkat HaMazon: Seating for Minyan or Mezuman

You may join with other men to make a *minyan* or *mezuman* (a *mezuman* is any group of 3 or more Jewish men 13 years old or older and so a *minyan* is also a kind of *mezuman*) for *birkat ha'mazon* if, while you are eating:

- You can see any other tables at which the other men are eating, or
- You had the same waiter as the other men, even if you could not see the rest of the group (such as in an L-shaped room).

Birkat HaMazon: Eating for Mezuman

Say *birkat ha'mazon* as a *mezuman* if:

- You don't have enough men for a *minyan* (see above), AND
- Two men wash, said *ha'motzi*, and ate bread, AND
- One or more other men ate any food other than water and salt.

NOTE If the three men's eating overlapped in time with each other, they MAY say *birkat ha'mazon* with a *mezuman*.

If the three men began eating at the same time, they MUST say *birkat ha'mazon* with a *mezuman*.

Birkat HaMazon: Eating for Minyan

You may say *birkat ha'mazon* with a *minyan* if:

- At least seven men washed, said *ha'motzi*, and ate bread, with
- Enough other men who ate some food (anything other than water or salt) to total 10 men.

NOTE If the 10 men's eating overlapped in time with each other, they MAY say *birkat ha'mazon* with a *minyan*.

If the 10 men began eating at the same time, they MUST say *birkat ha'mazon* with a *minyan*.

Birkat HaMazon: Women's Mezuman and Minyan

Women (even if 10 or more) do not make a *minyan*, only a *mezuman*. So do not say the *birkat ha'mazon's minyan* introduction but simply say the *mezuman* introduction if:

- 10 or more women ate together, without men present;
- At least two women washed, said *ha'motzi*, and ate bread; AND
- At least one more woman ate some type of food.

NOTE Women are never required to make a *mezuman*. So when three women are eating together and no men are present, they may say *birkat ha'mazon* as a *mezuman* but they are not required to do so.

Birkat HaMazon: Until When To Join Mezuman

You may join a *mezuman* by eating any food (except water and salt) up until the leader says "*rabotai nevareich*."

Birkat HaMazon: How To Join Mezuman and Continue Eating

To join a mezuman and continue eating:

- 1) Reply to “rabotai nevareich,” etc.,
- 2) Say amen after the leader says the first paragraph's final blessing, and then
- 3) Finish eating and say birkat ha'mazon on your own.

Birkat HaMazon: How Many Men Needed for Baruch Hu U'Varuch Shemo

Say baruch hu u'varuch shemo before birkat ha'mazon even if only three men are present; you don't need a minyan.

NOTE Only the leader (mezamein) says this, not the other two men.

Birkat HaMazon: Standing Up to Honor God

Stand up a little to honor God when you say God's name in the introduction (nevareich eloheinu) if you ate with 10 men. This is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

BIRKAT HAMAZON: TABLE

BIRKAT HAMAZON: KNIVES ON TABLE

Birkat HaMazon: Covering Knife on Shabbat

You do not need to cover or remove a knife on the table before saying birkat ha'mazon on Shabbat.

Birkat HaMazon: Covering Knife on Weekdays

Cover or remove a sharp knife from the table on weekdays before saying birkat ha'mazon. This is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

BIRKAT HAMAZON: BREAD ON TABLE

Birkat HaMazon: Replacing Bread

Place the bread back onto the table before saying birkat ha'mazon if the bread had been removed during the meal. This is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

NOTE This is true for any meal, not just for Shabbat.

BIRKAT HAMAZON: WHEN TO REPEAT

Birkat HaMazon: When To Repeat If Forgot Additions

When saying birkat ha'mazon, you must repeat birkat ha'mazon if you forgot:

- Retzei on the first two meals of Shabbat.
- Ya'aleh v'yavo on the first two meals of any Jewish festival day (women only repeat if they forgot it at the Passover seder).

Never repeat birkat ha'mazon if you forgot additions for:

- Rosh Hashana (during the daytime) or
- Rosh Chodesh.

BIRKAT HAMAZON: ALTERNATE WORDINGS

BA'ALAT HABAYIT HAZEH

Ba'alat HaBayit HaZeh: Woman Head of Household

Say ba'alat ha'bayit ha'zeh if the head of the household is a woman.

BRACHA MERUBA BABAYIT HAZEH

Bracha Meruba BaBayit HaZeh: Inside Jewish Home

Say bracha meruba ba'bayit ha'zeh only when eating in a house or apartment that is occupied by a Jewish family or a Jewish owned public building.

Bracha Meruba BaBayit HaZeh: Outside Jewish Home

If eating outside a Jewish home, including when eating outdoors, say (instead of *bracha meruba...*):

Ha'rachaman hu yishlach lanu bracha meruba b'halichateinu uv'yeshivateinu ad olam.

MIGDOL OR MAGDIL

Birkat HaMazon on Musaf Days: Migdol or Magdil

Say *migdol* (*yeshuot*) on days when we say musaf (on other days, say *magdil*).

Birkat HaMazon Once Shabbat Ends: Migdol or Magdil

When saying birkat ha'mazon after Shabbat until *halachic* midnight (chatzot), say *migdol*, not *magdil*.

NOTE This also applies to birkat ha'mazon after Jewish festivals or Rosh Chodesh--all days when we say musaf.

VE'AL SHULCHAN ZEH SHEACHALNU ALAV

Ve'al Shulchan Zeh SheAchalnu Alav When Alone

Say she'achalnu (in the plural) even if you are alone.

Ve'al Shulchan Zeh SheAchalnu Alav If No Table

Skip ve'al shulchan zeh she'achalnu alav if there is no table.

YA'ALEH V'YAVO

If You Forgot Ya'aleh V'Yavo

SITUATION

You forgot to say *ya'aleh v'yavo* in *birkat ha'mazon* for a meal that you were required to eat on a Jewish festival.

WHAT TO DO

If you have already begun the fourth blessing, you must repeat the entire *birkat ha'mazon*. If you have not yet said the fourth blessing, you may say a special addition that appears in many *siddurim*.

SHEHECHEYANU

INTRODUCTION TO SHEHECHEYANU

Introduction to SheHecheyanu: When Obligatory

Say she'hecheyanu for:

- Acquisitions,
- Jewish festivals, and
- New fruits.

NOTE You MUST say she'hecheyanu on Jewish festivals; saying she'hecheyanu on acquisitions is subjective and is only required if you enjoy the possession and it is new (for you) and valuable.

HaTov V'HaMeitiv or SheHecheyanu

Say ha'tov v'ha'meitiv instead of she'hecheyanu when two or more people benefit from or enjoy something.

EXAMPLES

- If your wife or husband will enjoy and use the new item too.
- When wine is already on the table and a second bottle of wine that is as good as, or better than, the first bottle is brought to the table (and more than one person will drink that second bottle of wine).

NOTE

When two or more people are eating a new fruit that is in season, each person says the blessings al pri ha'eitz and then she'hechaynu (and not ha'tov v'hameitiv).

SHEHECHEYANU: ACQUISITIONS

SHEHECHEYANU: ACQUISITIONS: WHICH ITEMS

On What To Say SheHecheyanu

Say she'hecheyanu on any item that you acquire through any of the following means, as long as the item gives you pleasure:

- Gifts.
- Purchases you made.
- Used items that you acquire.

NOTE If the item would be desirable or a luxury to other people, but it is not to you, or if it only has value to you as a useful item, do not say she'hecheyanu.

NOTE From Richard Aiken --I said she'hecheyanu on my scuba diving equipment and on my paragliders, the first time I used them.)

Items on Which Women Say SheHecheyanu

Women say she'hecheyanu on:

- Engagement rings but not on wedding rings.
- Valuable candlesticks.

Items on Which Men Say SheHecheyanu

Men say she'hecheyanu on a new talit. Do not say she'hecheyanu on tefilin.

SheHecheyanu and Attire

The only items of attire that get a she'hecheyanu blessing are those that are worn for enjoyment or importance. These are both subjective: If you don't enjoy new clothes, don't say she'hecheyanu over them.

NOTE She'hecheyanu is not said on shoes.

SheHecheyanu: House or Apartment

Say she'hecheyanu on a house, condominium, apartment, or other accommodation that you buy. Don't say she'hecheyanu on a house or apartment that you are renting.

NOTE If you are married (or living there with any other family members), say ha'tov v'ha'meitiv instead of she'hecheyanu.

SHEHECHEYANU: ACQUISITIONS: WHEN TO BLESS

SheHecheyanu: Acquisitions: When You May Say

You may say she'hecheyanu as long as you still feel the exhilaration of having or using the new item (ideally, say the blessing when you purchase the item or receive it as a gift.).

SheHecheyanu: Acquisitions: When To Bless over New Home

If you buy a house, condominium, apartment, or other accommodation, say she'hecheyanu:

- When you buy it, if it is ready to move in when you buy it (if you will live there by yourself).
- When you move in, if it is not ready to move in when you buy it (if you will live there by yourself).

NOTE If you are married, say ha'tov v'ha'meitiv instead of she'hecheyanu.

SHEHECHEYANU: JEWISH FESTIVALS

SheHecheyanu at Candle-Lighting for Jewish Festivals

Say she'hecheyanu when lighting candles for:

- Both days of Rosh Hashana,
- Yom Kippur,
- First day (if in Eretz Yisrael) or first two days of Sukkot,
- Shmini Atzeret and Simchat Torah,
- First day (if in Eretz Yisrael) or both days of Shavuot, and
- First day (if in Eretz Yisrael) or first two days of Passover.

NOTE She'hecheyanu is not said on the last day (if in Eretz Yisrael) or last two days of Passover.

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS: ORDER OF BLESSINGS

Borei Pri Ha'Eitz or SheHecheyanu First

Steps for saying she'hecheyanu on a new fruit:

- Say borei pri ha'eitz first, then
- Say she'hecheyanu, then
- (Cut and) Eat it.

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS: WHEN TO BLESS

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS: WHEN FIRST IN SEASON

SheHecheyanu: New Fruits: When Is First in Season

Say she'hecheyanu when eating a fresh (not dried or frozen) fruit for the first time it appears in the market that season (this does not follow Rosh Hashana or any of the other Jewish “years”).

NOTE If a fruit is available year round, never say she'hecheyanu over it.

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS: WHEN TRAVELLING

SheHecheyanu: New Fruits: Visiting Place Where Fruit Is Available Year Round

SITUATION

- You live in an area in which a fresh fruit is not available all year.
- You visit a place in which that fruit IS available all year.

WHAT TO DO You do not say she'hecheyanu when eating this fruit the new place.

SheHecheyanu: New Fruits: Visiting Place Where Fruit Is Not Available Year Round

SITUATION

- You visit a country in which a fresh fruit is not available there year round.
- You have not eaten this fruit that year (either since the fruit season began there or within the past 12 months).

WHAT TO DO You may say she'hecheyanu.

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS: IMPORT/EXPORT

SheHecheyanu: New Fruits: Import/Export

SITUATION

A fruit is available year-round in one place.

That fruit is taken to a place where it is not available.

WHAT TO DO

You may say she'hecheyanu on the fruit in that second place.

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS: WHICH TYPES

Varieties of Fruit for SheHecheyanu

If one type of fruit has many varieties--such as navel oranges, Valencia oranges, kumquats, grapefruit, and other citrus fruits-- say she'hecheyanu on each type if the:

- Trees have different leaves, OR
- Taste differs from one another (taste must be noticeable to an average person).

NOTE Since many fruits are often available year round, it may not be possible to ever say she'hecheyanu on those fruits.

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS: ON WHICH FORMS TO BLESS

SheHecheyanu: Cooked Fruit

Say she'hecheyanu on cooked fruit in season if that fruit is not normally available all year. If the fruit is commonly available canned, you may not say she'hecheyanu on it at any time.

SheHecheyanu: Dried Fruit

Do not say she'hecheyanu on dried fruit.

NOTE She'hecheyanu may be said on carob while it is still chewy.

SheHecheyanu: Imported Fruit

Do not say she'hecheyanu again if:

- You already said she'hecheyanu on that type of fruit once during that year,
- The fruit then stops being available, but
- Later in the year it becomes available again as an import from another country.

SheHecheyanu: New Fruit with Juice

SITUATION

- You drink the juice of a fruit that you have not eaten for one year.
- Later, you will eat the actual fruit,

WHAT TO DO Say she'hecheyanu on the fruit (if you would normally be required to do so).

NOTE Having drunk the juice does not affect the status of the fruit's being new and in season.

NOTE You do not ever say she'hecheyanu on fruit juice!

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS: TWO OR MORE

SheHecheyanu for Two or More Fruits

If you eat two new fruits at same sitting, say she'hecheyanu only once.

SHEHECHEYANU: NEW FRUITS: MIGHT NOT LIKE

SheHecheyanu for New Fruit You Might Not Like

SITUATION

You have a fruit on which you would like to say *she'hecheyanu*, but you might not like it.

WHAT TO DO

To avoid saying a pointless blessing (*bracha l'vatala*), you may:

- Say the blessing *borei pri ha'eitz* on a different fruit.
- Eat from the fruit you just blessed over.
- Taste the new fruit. If you like it—and before you have eaten all of the new fruit—
- Swallow the small piece you tasted (if you do not like it, you do not need to swallow it).
- Say *she'hecheyanu*.
- Finish eating the new fruit.

NOTE When saying *she'hecheyanu* on a new fruit, there is no preference for on which fruit to say *borei pri ha'eitz*--you may say it on the new fruit or on any other fruit.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

TEFILAT HADERECH

TEFILAT HADERECH: WHEN TO SAY

Tefilat HaDerech: When To Say: Leaving Your

Say *tefilat ha'derech* when leaving your “place,” which may be a city, town, village, or even your home if you live in an isolated area. You may only say *tefilat ha'derech* if you will go at least 2.8 miles outside the inhabited area.

Tefilat HaDerech: When To Say: Starting Journey

If you will certainly leave the city limits at some point in your journey, you may say *tefilat ha'derech* as soon as you start your journey (when you leave your house or get in your car, etc.).

EXAMPLE You may say *tefilat ha'derech* when leaving your house for a flight, but the optimal time is when the plane begins to taxi.

Tefilat HaDerech: When To Say: City Limits

City limits for *tefilat ha'derech* means the last house before a gap of 2.8 miles, measured horizontally but not vertically.

Tefilat HaDerech: Boat

Say *tefilat ha'derech* in a boat that will be going at least 2.8 miles from shore.

TEFILAT HADERECH: HOW OFTEN

TEFILAT HADERECH: HOW OFTEN: ONCE A DAY/ONCE A TRIP

Tefilat HaDerech: How Often: Once a Day/Once a Trip: Vehicles

When riding in a vehicle on a trip, you should say *tefilat ha'derech* once each day, as long as:

- You have gone--or will go--at least 2.8 miles past any populated area, and
- You will be breaking your trip at night.

NOTE If you will be living in an RV or other vehicle, only say *tefilat ha'derech* once for the entire trip.

Tefilat HaDerech: How Often: Once a Day/Once a Trip: Boats

If you take a multi-day boat trip, such as a cruise, say tefilat ha'derech only once during the journey—not each day.

NOTE Any time you stay overnight (on land) along the journey, say tefilat ha'derech again when you resume your travel.

TEFILAT HADERECH: WHAT TO SAY

Tefilat HaDerech: What To Say: Main Blessing

You do not need to say other blessings before tefilat ha'derech. Since tefilat ha'derech begins without a blessing, some people like to say an unrelated blessing before it, but the custom is not to require saying another blessing first.

Tefilat HaDerech: What To Say: For Others

When saying tefilat ha'derech, even if you say it for other people traveling with you, always say “*titneini*” (in the singular) and not “*titneinu*” (plural).

NOTE This is different from most blessings, which are in the plural even when said by just one person for him/herself.

Tefilat HaDerech: What To Say: Phrases (Psukim)

After saying the main blessing of tefilat ha'derech, some people have the custom to say these phrases (psukim) three times each:

- L'shuatcha kiviti...
- V'ya'akov halach l'darko...
- Yivarechecha...
- Hinei anochi sholei'ach lifanecha...

AL NETILAT YADAYIM OR AL TEVILAT YADAYIM

Al Netilat Yadayim or Al Tevilat Yadayim: Water Fit or Not Fit

Say al netilat yadayim even if you wash your hands by immersing them in a river, ocean, or other natural body of water.

NOTE Say al tevilat yadayim if the water is not fit for netilat yadayim (if it smells bad, is salty, a dog would not drink it, etc.). This applies to washing before bread, after sleeping, etc.

BLESSINGS: SCENTS

Blessings: Scents: When To Say

Say the blessing if you intend to smell something fragrant; you may, but do not need to, say a blessing if you smell a scent in passing. If you are outdoors and a pleasant scent of flowers comes to you, even if you did not intend to smell the flowers, as long as you enjoy the scent, you may still say the appropriate blessing.

Blessings: Scents: The Four Blessings

Choose the correct smell blessing (Note that these blessings are not said on synthetic scents!):

- Borei minei vesamim Generic; this is the default blessing if you are not certain which category applies; also say this when smelling a mixture of scents;
- Borei isvei vesamim Plants which do not have stiff stems;
- Borei atzei vesamim Trees and stiff-stemmed plants (such as roses); and
- Ha'notein rei'ach tov ba'peirot Fragrant fruits, such as lemons and some *etrogs*.

Blessings: Scents: Minimum Scent

The minimum intensity of scent required to be permitted to say a scent blessing is anything you can smell and that you find pleasant.

Blessings: Scents: Sniffing First

SITUATION You see a flower but do not know whether it has a scent.

WHAT TO DO You may sniff the flower and, if it does have a nice scent, you may then say borei minei (or atzei or isvei as appropriate) vesamim and then take a big whiff.

Blessings: Scents: All Scents in that Category

SITUATION You are visiting a botanical garden or an outdoor area at which you will see many flowers and blossoms.

WHAT TO DO You may say the appropriate blessings on pleasant smells once for each category and intend for the blessing to apply to all flowers and blossoms you will smell during that day.

Blessings: Scents: Hesech Da'at

If you say borei isvei vesamim or borei atzei vesamim, you should say the blessing again once you have had a lapse of thought (hesech da'at); that is, once you have stopped thinking about smelling fragrances at that time.

HAGOMEL

HAGOMEL: FOR WHICH EVENTS

After What To Say HaGomel

Say ha'gomel after:

- Crossing the ocean (far enough away that you cannot see the shore);
- Crossing a desert by any means except flying;
- Getting out of jail; or
- Recovering from a serious illness.

In addition, say ha'gomel anytime a catastrophe has been avoided, such as a vehicle crash. Consult a competent *halachic* authority in these cases.

HAGOMEL: WHEN TO SAY

Saying HaGomel within 30 Days

Say ha'gomel within three days of the event; b'di'avad, it is OK to say it within 30 days.

Say HaGomel When You Can Walk Normally

You may say ha'gomel after recovering from a serious illness once you are able to walk around normally.

HAGOMEL: FOR WHOM TO SAY

For Whom To Say HaGomel

Don't say ha'gomel for anyone other than yourself (not even for your spouse or children). Likewise, one person may not exempt the entire congregation for ha'gomel except b'di'avad. But when an entire congregation says ha'gomel, use “*gemalanu*.”

HAGOMEL: WOMEN

Women and HaGomel

Women customarily do not say ha'gomel. A woman does not say ha'gomel after childbirth.

BLESSINGS: NATURAL PHENOMENA

BLESSINGS: COMETS

Blessings: Comets: How Often

Say *oseh ma'aseh v'reishit* only once per comet.

BLESSINGS: EARTHQUAKES

Blessings: Earthquakes: Cycle of Earthquakes

Say *she'kocho u'gvurato malei olam* or *oseh ma'aseh v'reishit* (either is correct) once per earthquake. Don't say the blessing on aftershocks.

NOTE One cycle of quakes and aftershocks is still considered just one earthquake, even if it lasts more than one day.

BLESSING: ECLIPSES

Blessings: Eclipses: Solar and Lunar Eclipses

There is no blessing for eclipses.

BLESSINGS: METEORS

Blessings: Meteors: How Often

Say *oseh ma'aseh v'reishit* once per night.

BLESSINGS: MOUNTAINS

Blessings: Mountains Renown for Their Height

Say *oseh ma'aseh v'reishit* once per month on mountains, but only on very large mountains that are famous for their height and that you have not seen within 30 days.

BLESSINGS: OCEANS

Blessings:

Say *she'asa et ha'yam ha'gadol* when you can see an ocean or the Mediterranean sea, but only:

- While you are present, and
- After not having seen it for at least 30 days.

NOTE If you forgot to say it and returned the next day, you may not say the blessing.

BLESSINGS: RAINBOWS

Blessings: Rainbows: Looking and Blessing

The blessing over rainbows is *zocheir ha'brit v'ne'eman bi'vruto, v'kayam b'ma'amaro*.

NOTE You may not gaze at a rainbow, but you may look at it for up to 2.5 seconds, then look away, and then look back repeatedly an unlimited number of times.

NOTE Don't tell other people that a rainbow is visible. But if they see you looking or hear you saying the blessing, you may tell them that there is a rainbow and you may tell them the correct blessing to say.

BLESSINGS: STORMS

Blessings: Thunder

Say the blessing she'kocho u'gvurato malei olam if you hear thunder. (See [Blessings: Thunder/Lightning: Which First](#))

Blessings: Lightning

Start saying the blessing oseh ma'aseh v'reishit within 2 ½ seconds of seeing a lightning flash; otherwise, do not say the blessing at all.

NOTE You do not need to see the actual lightning bolt--you must just see the light from lightning, even if reflected from something.

NOTE The lightning must be from a rainstorm, but you may say the blessing on lightning even if it is not raining where you are, as long as you can hear thunder first. (See [Blessings: Thunder/Lightning: Which First](#) and [Blessings: Thunder/Lightning: How Often](#))

Blessings: Thunder/Lightning: Which First

Always say she'kocho u'gvurato malei olam (on thunder) before oseh ma'aseh v'reishit (on lightning.)

If you see lightning but don't hear thunder, do not say oseh ma'aseh v'reishit at all.

Blessings: Thunder/Lightning: How Often

Say she'kocho u'gvurato malei olam (on thunder) and oseh ma'aseh v'reishit (on lightning) only once per storm. If you hear thunder over telephone or microphone, you may not say kocho u'gvurato.

NOTE If the storm clouds clear and another storm comes along, you may say blessings again, even on the same day.

KIDDUSH LEVANA

INTRODUCTION TO KIDDUSH LEVANA

Introduction to Kiddush Levana: Thanksgiving

Kiddush levana expresses our thanks to God for having made the moon, which affects our lives (tides, weather, crops, biological clocks) and provides us benefits in many ways (light at night, basis for determining our calendar and our holidays).

KIDDUSH LEVANA: WHAT TO SEE

Kiddush Levana: What To See: How Clear the Moon

You do not need to see the moon completely clearly in order to say kiddush levana, but you must be able to see the outline of the moon.

KIDDUSH LEVANA: WHEN TO SAY

Kiddush Levana: When To Say: Molad

Although the traditional time to say kiddush levana is after Shabbat, you may say kiddush levana from the third day (three periods of 24 hours) after the molad until 14 days and 18 hours after the molad. Ideal is after seven 24-hour periods.

Kiddush Levana: When To Say: Custom not To Say

It is customary not to say kiddush levana:

- During the Nine Days before and including Tish'a b'Av;
- On Friday night, and
- On the evening of a Jewish festival.

Many people also have the custom not to say kiddush levana during the first 10 days of Tishrei.

However, you should do so if you do not expect to see the moon on any other night (due to weather or other factors), rather than miss the chance to say it that month. If you do say kiddush levana on Friday night or the after nightfall of a Jewish festival, say only the blessing, not the Psalms and other phrases that are normally

said.

Kiddush Levana: When To Say: Night

You may say *kiddush levana* (blessing on the new moon) only at night, after dark/tzeit ha'kochavim.

Kiddush Levana: When To Say: When No Dark

At the high latitudes, you may say *kiddush levana* during any season when the sky gets dark but not during seasons when the sky does not get dark.

Kiddush Levana: When To Say: Shabbat

You may say *kiddush levana* on Shabbat, if needed.

EXAMPLES

- Shabbat is the last possible night that month to say *kiddush levana*.
- The forecast is for clouds for the other nights until it will be too late that month to say *kiddush levana*.

NOTE On Shabbat, say only the blessing of *kiddush levana*, not the *psalms* or other phrases (*psukim*).

KIDDUSH LEVANA: WHO SAYS

Kiddush Levana: Minyan

You do not need a minyan to say *kiddush levana*.

Kiddush Levana: Women

Women do not say *kiddush levana*.

KIDDUSH LEVANA: WHAT TO SAY

Kiddush Levana: Minimum Blessing

The minimum you may say of *kiddush levana* and fulfill the mitzva is the blessing. The *psalms* and other *psukim* are customary but are not required.

ASHER YATZAR

Asher Yatzar: Minimum

The minimum amount to urinate or defecate and be able to say *asher yatzar* is any quantity (kolshehu).

Asher Yatzar: Timing

If you did not say *asher yatzar* immediately after finishing, you may still say the blessing until the next time you feel the need to urinate or defecate.

Asher Yatzar with No Water

Say *asher yatzar*, even when you cannot wash your hands, such as when you do not have any water with you.

NOTE In any case, your hands must be clean; if they are not, you must wipe them off on something before saying the blessing.

Asher Yatzar: Saying for Someone Else

You may say *asher yatzar* for someone else if you need to say it also.

Asher Yatzar or After-Blessing

If you are eating and stopped to use the toilet, you may say either *asher yatzar* or the after-blessing on the food first.

Asher Yatzar Underwater

After urinating while scuba diving, say *asher yatzar*. The water is sufficient as a head covering or, better, you may cover your head with your wetsuit sleeve.

BLESSING THE CHILDREN/BIRKAT HABANIM

Introduction to Blessing the Children/Birkat HaBanim

The Blessing for the Children has two parts:

1. Introduction

For Boys: “*Yesimcha Eloh^{im} k'Efraim v'chi'Menashe*”

(May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe)

For Girls: “*Yesimeich Eloh^{im} k'Sara, Rivka, Rachel, v'Leah*”

(May God make you like Sara, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah)

NOTE The formula asks God to make the boys like Ephraim and Menashe but to make the girls like Sarah, Rivka/Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. We might think that Sara, Rivka/Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah should be paired with their husbands, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob instead of with their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Yet, while Isaac and Jacob had the advantage of growing up in religious homes and in Eretz Yisrael, all of the fore-mothers as well as Ephraim and Menashe lived righteous lives even though all grew up in bad environments outside of Eretz Yisrael.

2. Priestly Blessing/Birkat Cohanim (Numbers/Bamidbar 6:24-26)

This is the blessing that the priests (cohanim) use when blessing the Jewish people. For words to the blessing, please click here and scroll down to "Birkat Cohanim": <http://practicalhalacha.com/blessings#B>

Blessing the Children: When To Bless

Bless children on:

- Friday night,
- Saturday night (this is so we start the new week with a blessing), and
- Jewish festival nights.

NOTE This is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

Blessing the Children: Who Should Bless

Who should bless the children:

- Anyone may bless children, but it is best for both parents to do so.
- Parents may ask any other adult to be their emissary to bless their children.

Blessing the Children: How To Bless: How To Place Hands

You may use one or two hands when giving a blessing, such as when blessing children on Shabbat or Jewish festivals. You may hold your hands over the person's head or actually put your hands on their head--either is OK.

Blessing the Children: How To Bless: From Afar

Parents may bless their children by telephone if not nearby. This is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

BRIT MILA

INTRODUCTION TO BRIT MILA

Introduction to Brit Mila

Avraham was commanded to circumcise himself and all males in his household. From then on, all healthy Jewish males were to be circumcised when they reached 8 days old.

If there is any question about the baby's health, the circumcision is delayed or, in rare cases, not done at all. The primary obligation to do the circumcision is on the boy's father. Since most people are not skilled surgeons, the actual cutting is usually done by a highly trained expert, called a mohel, who is appointed by the father. A festive meal is eaten after the circumcision. A minyan is preferred, but not required, for a brit mila.

BRIT MILA SCHEDULING

BRIT MILA: WHICH DAY

BRIT MILA: EIGHTH DAY

Brit Mila: When Is Eighth Day

As long as the boy was born before sunset (even one minute before), this time period counts as the first day. Normally, the brit mila will be performed on the following week on that same day of the week (the baby's eighth day). If the baby was born between sunset and dark, consult a rabbi or mohel.

BRIT MILA: DELAYS

BRIT MILA: DELAYS: HEALTH

Brit Mila: Delays: Health: Doctor and Mohel

The brit mila may be done only if the baby is healthy by the opinions of both a doctor and a mohel. If either says not to do the brit mila, don't.

NOTE Even if the doctor says the baby is healthy, ask the mohel for his opinion since the mohel can still veto.

BRIT MILA: DELAYS: SHABBAT/JEWISH FESTIVALS

Brit Mila: Delays: Shabbat/Jewish Festivals: Special Births

SITUATION A baby boy is born by caesarean section. The eighth day after the birth is Shabbat or a Jewish festival.

WHAT TO DO The brīṭ mīlā must be delayed to at least the next day following that Shabbat or Jewish festival. (If the mohel or doctor says the baby is not healthy enough for a brit, the brit must be delayed even more.)

BRIT MILA: DELAYS: CAESAREAN BIRTH

Brit Mila: Delays: Caesarean Birth

Do not delay a Shabbat brit mila until Sunday in order to prevent Jews who do not keep Shabbat from driving or otherwise desecrating Shabbat to attend the brit.

BRIT MILA: WHAT TIME

Brit Mila: Time of Day

The brit mila may be done anytime from sunrise to sunset, but the preferred time is in the morning.

NOTE Brit mila may only be done during the daytime.

BRIT MILA: HATAFAT DAM

Brit Mila: Hatafat Dam

For a boy who requires an operation six months later (or more) to repair an anomalous condition such as hypospadias or webbing--if the hospital will allow a moהל "hands-on" participation, then the brit mila is done at the time of the operation.

If not, after the child heals, a hatafat dam brit mila should be performed.

BRIT MILA: WHO SHOULD PERFORM

Brit Mila: Who Should Perform: Preference

A father should circumcise his male children (if he knows how to do the circumcision!) or appoint someone to do so. Order of preference for who should do the circumcision, if competent:

- Father
- Other shomer-Shabbat male
- Shomer-Shabbat woman (if no male is available).

NOTE A father (or anyone else) may not perform the brit mila--even just the incision--on Shabbat if it is his first time.

NOTE A non-Jew may not perform a brit mila.

NOTE If a child was circumcised in the hospital or by anyone who is not shomer Shabbat, consult a rabbi.

BRIT MILA: SANDAK

Brit Mila: Choice of Sandak

Choose the greatest Jewish scholar (talmid chacham) in your town or city as sandak (person who holds the baby for the brit mila), since kabbala says it is a good omen for the boy's soul. A woman may be a sandeket but only if no suitable man is available. If no Jewish man or woman is available, a non-Jewish person may serve as a sandak or sandeket.

BRIT MILA: HOW TO DO

Brit Mila: How To Do: Metzitza

When doing a circumcision, metzitza (sucking out some blood) is required. Metzitza may be done using a pipette or other tube, but the traditional way is by mouth.

NOTE Using a gauze pad for metzitza is not traditionally done.

Brit Mila: Amount of Metzitza Blood

There is no minimum amount of blood to draw out for metzitza: any quantity suffices.

BRIT MILA: INVITATION

Brit Mila: Announcement or Invitation

Don't formally invite people to a brit mila meal, just announce it.

REASON If you invite people and they don't come, they are disrespecting the chance to participate in a mitzva.

BRIT MILA: NAMING THE BABY

Brit Mila: Naming a Baby after Someone

You are not *halachically* required to name the baby after a particular person. The custom is that a baby is not named after its living parent.

BRIT MILA: FESTIVE MEAL

Brit Mila Meal: Minimum Requirement

A se'udat mitzva is required for a brit mila, but the brit mila is still valid even if no meal is held. The minimum requirement for the meal is to eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread within four minutes.

Brit Mila: Fast Day

If a brit mila is performed on Tish'a b'Av or other fast days, the meal (se'udat mitzva) is held after the fast ends. On a delayed fast day, the sandak, mohel, and father of the boy who is having the brit may eat after mincha.

CHARITY/TZEDAKA

INTRODUCTION TO CHARITY/TZEDAKA

Introduction to Charity/Tzedaka

The Torah requires everyone to give charity (tzedaka), and even people who are so poor that they receive charity must also give something to charity. The giving of charity engenders consideration for people who have less than we do.

GENERAL CHARITY/TZEDAKA

CHARITY/TZEDAKA: HOW MUCH TO GIVE

CHARITY/TZEDAKA: NORMAL DONATION

Charity at 10% After Taxes

You must give 10% of your net, after-tax income or received gifts of money to charity (ma'aser kesafim), by rabbinic enactment. For what is considered income, see Charity/Tzedaka: On What To Give.

CHARITY/TZEDAKA: MAXIMUM DONATION

Charity at 20% After Taxes

You should not give more than 20% of after-tax income to charity for poor people.

NOTE This rule is intended only for average people. If you have more money than you need, you may give away more than 20%.

No Charity Limit for Jewish Education

There is no limit to how much “charity” you may give to Torah institutions.

NOTE You may give more than 20% after taxes for Jewish education because it is considered an investment that benefits the donor--the donor shares in the reward that the student gets for studying Torah--rather than charity.

CHARITY/TZEDAKA: DONATION IF POOR

Charity When Not Required

Even if you do not have enough income to be required to give to charity, you MAY give small amounts of money anyway. RMH suggests not giving more than 0.5% of your liquid assets.

CHARITY/TZEDAKA: ON WHAT TO GIVE

Introduction To Charity/Tzedaka: On What to Give

Introduction To CHARITY/TZEDAKA: ON WHAT TO GIVE

Give charity on 10% of your net, after-tax income or received gifts of money (cash, checks, or equivalent).

Items or Material Gifts

If you receive or inherit items or material gifts that you use, you do not need to give charity from their value. If the items or material gifts were intended for sale and you sold them, give to charity 10% of the money you receive.

Trusts, Funds, and Securities

A trust or other inherited or gifted fund does not pay charity on money it receives or earns. Only the recipients give charity, when get they get any money.

If the trusts or funds are intended for sale and you sold them, pay 10% on the value you received to charity.

You do pay 10% on inherited or gifted securities once you have inherited them, even if you do not intend to sell them. If you do not have enough cash to give 10% of the securities' value, you should sell 10% and give that money to charity. The remaining securities do not incur a requirement of owing charity, whether they increase or decrease in value in the future.

Heir: Charity on Money or Property for Sale

You must give to charity 10% of the value of an inheritance or gift of:

- Money, and
- Property, including a building or house, that you to sell (but not if you will keep or use it for yourself, such as to live in). If you do not have enough cash to pay 10% of the building's value, you may pay it off over time.

NOTE If you inherit (or will inherit) from a person who died, you are required to pay for (or help pay for) the dead person's burial. You may not deduct this money for burial or funeral expenses from your *ma'aser* charity.

CHARITY/TZEDAKA: WHAT TO GIVE

Buying Seforim To Pay Charity/Tzedaka

You may use tzedaka (*ma'aser*) money to buy *seforim*. Because the books then become public property, you must write in the books that they are *ma'aser* and anyone may use them. You may only do this if other people who are not in your family will also use them.

NOTE You may only use tzedaka (*ma'aser*) money to buy *seforim* that are not commonly found in Jewish homes; you may not use this money to buy a siddur, chumash, or Talmud.

Jewish Education Tuition as Charity

Parents may consider as charity any money they spend on the Jewish education of children age 16 and up. If a child goes to a college and takes secular and Jewish classes, the parent may count any tuition for the Jewish classes as charity.

CHARITY/TZEDAKA: HOW TO DIVIDE

How To Divide Charity Donation

A good split of the total amount to give to charity is:

- 1/3 for Jewish education,
- 1/3 for poor people, and
- 1/3 for humanitarian purposes such as a hospital, mikva, synagogue, or Jewish outreach/kiruv.

Charity to Local Jewish Causes

When giving charity, you should give at least 51% of your donations to local Jewish charities, if there are any that need support. After that, donations to Israel have priority over donations to other locations.

SITUATION You have residences in more than one place (for example, you were assigned to work in a new place for a few years) and you need to know which location is to be considered your home for giving charity locally:

1. If you kept your first residence and intend to return to it, even after a few years, that remains your halachic home for this purpose (even if you rent out that house to someone else).
2. If you do not intend to return to your first residence and you moved to a second city where you earn money, give money to charities in that second city.
3. If you made an investment while in that second city and received profits from it while living in a third city, donate to charities in that third city.
4. If you donated to a foundation while in the second city but the funds were not distributed until you were in the third city, donate to charities in the third city.

EXCEPTION If you purchased an investment with money that you were supposed to give to charity, your donation should go to where you were when you earned the money from which you owed the charity.

CHARITY/TZEDAKA: WHO SHOULD GIVE

One Who Receives Charity, Gives Charity

A person who receives charity should still give a minimal amount to charity. Doing so gives him or her the benefit of the *mitzva* of giving charity and serves as an example to his or her children (who should be made aware that the parents are giving money to charity).

CHARITY/TZEDAKA: TO WHOM

Charity/Tzedaka: To Whom

Charity/Tzedaka: To Whom: General Rules

Charity: Family First

Give charity first to family; then to your local or nearby community. Only then may you give to remote communities, especially if the remote communities are in Eretz Yisrael.

Who Qualifies To Receive Charity

A person may receive charity if he or she has so little money that he or she must worry about having sufficient funds to buy a non-luxury item.

An institution is needy if it does not have enough money for basic needs (repairing buildings, maintenance, utilities...).

There is no need to donate to people or institutions if their basic needs are covered.

Charity/Tzedaka: To Whom: Beggars

Charity to a Jewish Beggar for Himself

If a Jewish beggar asks for money for him/herself, and you know him/her to be needy, you should at least give something, but it does not need to be much.

Charity to a Beggar for Jewish Institution

If a beggar asks for money for a Jewish institution, you do not need to give.

Charity/Tzedaka: Assumed Beggar at Door

If someone knocks on your door and you assume that he or she is a beggar, you do not need to answer the door.

Charity/Tzedaka: To Whom: Purim

Charity on Purim

On Purim, give money to anyone who asks.

NOTE If for an institution, you are not required to give.

Charity/Tzedaka: To Whom: Poor Brides/Hachnasat Kalla

Charity/Tzedaka: Poor Brides (Hachnasat Kalla): How Much

Hachnasat kalla means helping a poor woman pay the expenses to hold a wedding and set up a household for married life. The minimum required is enough so that she is not embarrassed. **It does not include paying for an opulent wedding.** There is not any absolute amount of money that you should give per guest and even the quality of the food, decorations, and any entertainment are dependent on the individual.

Hachnasat Kalla for Women and Men

Hachnasat kalla also applies to a poor man who needs money to pay the expenses to get married.

Charity/Tzedaka: To Whom: Non-Sectarian Causes

Non-Sectarian Causes and Ma'aser

You may give small amounts of money or goods to a non-sectarian charity (hospital, school, etc., that is not affiliated with any religion other than Judaism) and it will count as part of your charity (ma'aser). You may give large amounts of money to non-sectarian charities, but you should not count it as part of your ma'aser.

NOTE A small amount of money is whatever is common in your area as a minimal amount to give to a person or charity.

CHARITY/TZEDAKA: FROM WHOM TO TAKE

Charity from a Woman

A person may receive charity from a woman:

- From a single woman: any amount.
- From a married woman: a small amount; a large amount only if her husband agrees.

CHARITY/TZEDAKA: WHEN TO GIVE

CHARITY/TZEDAKA: BY WHEN TO GIVE

Charity/Tzedaka Should Be Paid by Third Jewish Festival

Charity/tzedaka should be paid by the third Jewish festival (Passover, Shavuot, Sukkot) after the money is received.

CHARITY/TZEDAKA: HOW OFTEN TO GIVE

Charity Daily on Weekdays

You should give charity daily (except Shabbat and Jewish festivals) at the time of prayer.

Giving Charity Less, More Frequently

You should give charity frequently, even if that means giving smaller amounts at each giving.

DEATH AND MOURNING

INTRODUCTION TO DEATH AND MOURNING

Introduction to Death and Mourning

When we hear of a death, we say Baruch Dayan Ha'Emet to acknowledge that even though we are unhappy about a person's dying, we recognize that it is part of God's operation of the world.

CLOSE TO DEATH

CHANGING SICK PERSON'S NAME

Changing Sick Person's Hebrew Name

When a person is very ill and is younger than expected to have a deadly illness, the person may change his or her Hebrew name.

- If he or she lives (in health, such as able to walk around outside) for at least 30 days after changing his or her name, the person should keep that name (and if the person dies, that changed name should go on the tombstone).
- If the person dies in less than 30 days, the person's original name reverts to being the valid name.

CONFESSION/VIDUI

Vidui

A very sick person who might die soon should say a special confession (vidui). It is not a problem to say it multiple times during one's life.

NOTE If the person cannot say vidui, someone else says it for the person.

PREPARATION OF BODY

CHEVRA KADISHA

Chevra Kadisha for Males and Females

There is a “holy society” (chevra kadisha) for males and a separate one for females.

CLEANING BEFORE TAHARA

Blood

Any blood should be wiped up and the cloth should be buried with the body.

Wet Cloth and Soap

The body is cleaned with a wet cloth and soap (if necessary).

TAHARA

No Tahara

A dead body that bleeds a lot, such as after being shot or in a car crash, does not get purification (tahara) by water.

Three Buckets of Water

A ritual purification is performed (“tahara”) by pouring three buckets of water over the body:

The body is stood up and water is poured from the head over the body. The subsequent buckets are poured before the previous ones are empty, so that the water from the subsequent bucket overlaps the water from the previous one.

Psukim

Certain lines from the Torah (psukim) are said during the purification.

DRESSING

Shrouds, Hat, Robe

The body—whether male or female—is wrapped in shrouds: shirt, pants, socks (or long pants with the feet sewn up), hat (women who covered their hair while alive get two hats), and robe (kittel) on top of all. The hat covers the face.

Talit

An adult male is wrapped in a talit but one of the tzitziyot is made invalid/pasul.

Child's Dressing

A child under bar mitzva or bat mitzva age also gets dressed the same way as an adult, except if less than 7 years old (consult a rabbi in that case).

Egg and Wine for Face of Dead Person

Some people have the custom of putting egg and wine on the face of a dead person, but this is not halacha.

POSITIONING

Arms on Sides, Hands Open

The body is placed lying on its back, with arms on the sides and hands open.

Note on Christian Hospitals

In many Christian hospitals, as soon as a person dies, the arms are put in the shape of a cross. After *rigor mortis*, it is very difficult to move the arms, so if the arms were crossed, they should be uncrossed as soon as possible.

Feet First

The body is removed from the building feet first. (This is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.)

IN THE PRESENCE OF THE BODY

Lighted Candle Near Head of Dead Person

It is customary to place a lighted candle near the head of a dead person.

Put Dead Body on Floor

It is customary to put a dead body on the floor, if possible.

Shomer To Honor Dead Person

A “watcher” (*shomer*) should stay with a dead body at all times until the burial, if possible, to honor the dead person. The watcher should be close enough to be able to see the body. A non-Jew may be a watcher, but only b'di'avad.

NOTE If the body is being shipped somewhere, it is preferable that a *shomer* stay with the body, but it is not required.

Shomer for Several Days

When a person dies on Shabbat or a Jewish festival, a watcher (*shomer*) should still be present until burial, even if there will be a delay of several days.

Woman Shomeret

A woman may be a watcher (*shomeret*) for a dead person.

NOTE Either gender may watch the other, but the custom is to have the same gender where possible.

Eating in Room with Body

Don't eat in a room in which there is a dead body.

FROM FUNERAL HOME TO CEMETERY

Offspring at Funeral

Attending a funeral is a mitzva--that of honoring the dead person--but in attending a parent's funeral, there is the added mitzva of honoring a parent.

Adult (at least bar mitzva or bat mitzva) offspring should attend their parent's funeral, unless there is a financial, health, or other significant reason not to attend. There is no requirement for minor offspring to attend a funeral for a parent. RMH recommends consulting a rabbi before having a minor go to any funeral, including for the child's parent.

NOTE If both parents are still alive, it is not customary to go to the cemetery for any funeral except for a close relative, but it is a mitzva to attend the eulogies and ceremony beforehand.

Accompanying the Body: Jerusalem

In Jerusalem, *charedim* do not allow sons of a dead father to attend their father's funeral (from the funeral home to the cemetery).

BURIAL

BURIAL: WHERE

BURIAL: JEWISH CEMETERY

Jews Buried with Jews

Jews should be buried with Jews. It is permitted to disinter a body from a non-Jewish cemetery for reburial into a Jewish cemetery.

Non-Jew Not Buried in Jewish Cemetery

A non-Jew (including a non-Jewish spouse of a Jew) may not be buried in a Jewish cemetery.

Suicide

Someone who commits suicide may not be buried within 8 amot of other Jews in a Jewish cemetery. If the person had emotional problems, consult a rabbi.

BURIAL: ERETZ YISRAEL

Burial: Eretz Yisrael If Did Not Live There

You should not be buried in Eretz Yisrael if you could have lived in Eretz Yisrael but chose not to. If you could not live there or if you had a heter to not live there, it is OK to be buried there.

NOTE The reason to be buried in Eretz Yisrael is for Resurrection of the Dead (techiyat ha'meitim), which will only happen in Eretz Yisrael. But the entire world will eventually become Eretz Yisrael, so it is only an issue of time.

BURIAL: NEAR OFFSPRING

Children Visiting Cemetery

It is considered comforting to the parent's soul for children to visit the cemetery. So proximity to children may be a factor in choosing where to be buried (but who knows where offspring will end up living?).

BURIAL: WHEN

Same-Day or Delayed Burial

A body should be buried the same day as death occurs or as soon as possible afterward, but the burial may be delayed to allow relatives to arrive or for a body to be taken to Eretz Yisrael for burial.

BURIAL: COFFIN

Coffin Material

The coffin should be plain wood (usually pine) without any adornments or fancy features. It has holes in it.

BURIAL: SPECIFICS

Pall-Bearers

The pall-bearers usually pause seven times on their walk to the grave. On days when no tachanun is said, they walk directly to the grave without pausing.

Who Shovels

It is a mitzva but not a requirement for attendees to shovel some earth into the grave. Women should only do this if no men are present.

How To Shovel

Do not hand the shovel from person to person. Rather, stick the shovel in the ground. The next person takes it out, shovels some dirt, and sticks it back in the ground.

Depth of Coffin

The coffin should be buried with at least 12 inches of dirt above it.

BURIAL: KADDISH

Burial: Kaddish: Version of Kaddish

Kaddish is recited near the grave but at least 4 amot (7 feet) away from the nearest grave:

- If the son of the dead person is present and the burial occurred on a day when tachanun is normally said, the version of kaddish recited is the same as for a siyum (celebration of completing studying part of mishnayot or other holy books).
- If there is no son of the dead person present or if it is not a day when tachanun is said, then the version of kaddish recited is the normal mourner's kaddish.

Burial: Kaddish: Having Minyan

It is important, but not critical, to have a minyan at the gravesite so the mourner will be able to say kaddish.

Burial: Kaddish: Attending Minyan

It is a mitzva to attend the minyan at a burial, but no one needs to interrupt his day in order to do so.

BURIAL: LEAVING

Walking between Rows

All non-mourners stand in two rows on the way back from the grave. The mourners walk between the rows and are greeted with this phrase:

Ha'makom yinachem etchem b'toch she'ar aveilei tzion v'yerushalayim.

Then, the mourners remove any shoes which contain leather from their feet before walking between the rows of people. (Take other non-leather shoes to the cemetery so they can switch into them after the burial).

Stepping on Graves

For rules on how to treat graves, see [Graves: Stepping on](#).

"Three-Times" Hand Washing

After leaving the cemetery, wash hands using the Three-Times Method without a blessing; see [How To Wash Hands Using the Three-Times Method](#). You can take a container of water with you in your car.

MOURNING

INTRODUCTION TO MOURNING

Introduction to Mourning

Who Is a Mourner

A mourner is defined in halacha as someone mourning during the 12-month mourning period for parents or the 30-day mourning period for the other five relatives (spouse, brother, sister, son, daughter). After 30 days, one is no longer a mourner for anyone but one's parents.

Mourners' Restrictions

If the mourner goes about business as usual, it may show he or she doesn't care about the close relative who died. The mourner should ideally not want to do these things. The mourner honors the dead person by refraining from pampering him/herself and refraining from going about his or her life as usual.

Public Meals

A mourner may not attend a public meal for any purpose. For example, if the mourner attends a lecture or Torah class at which food is being served, he or she may not eat the food. This only applies to sit-down meals; snacking is permitted.

Siyum/Brit/Bar Mitzva

After 30 days after a parent's burial, a mourner may:

- Attend a siyum or bar mitzva and eat there.
- Attend a brit but not eat there.

NOTE If there is music (live or recorded), the mourner must leave.

Weddings

A mourner may not eat at a wedding and may not even be in the wedding hall after the ceremony took. The mourner may also not hear the music at a wedding.

EXCEPTIONS

- If the mourner is the parent of someone getting married, the mourner can fully participate in the wedding.
- If the mourner is the bride or groom, he or she must normally wait to get married until after shloshim /30 days.

NOTE If it is after shiva, but still during shloshim, consult a rabbi.

Kiddush and Shabbat or Festival Meals

A mourner may not publicly (noticeably) mourn on Shabbat or festivals so he or she may attend Shabbat or festival meals and kiddushes if he or she would be expected to attend. If the mourner always or routinely invites some person or a lot of different people on Shabbat or festivals, it is still permitted. If the mourner does not routinely invite some person or a lot of different people to a Shabbat or festival meal, then he or she may not, for his or her own enjoyment, invite guests for meals. However, the mourner is permitted to do so for other purposes (for the benefit of the invited person or people), such as kiruv or hachnasat orchim. There is no limit to how many guests the mourner may host.

The mourner may attend or host a sheva brachot in his/her home.

A mourner should not be invited to meals, even for Shabbat or festivals; but if he/she was invited, he/she may go.

Holidays

A mourner does eat at a Purim or Jewish festival seuda, since there is no mourning on Purim nor on any festival (except Chanuka).

MOURNING: WHO MUST MOURN

Mourning: Who Must Mourn: Seven Categories

There are seven categories of relatives for whom mourning is required: father; mother; spouse; son; daughter; brother; sister.

Mourning: Who Must Mourn: Before Burial/Onen

From the time of death until burial, the seven relatives are called onen (onenim). One is only an onen if he or she will participate in the funeral or make decisions related to the funeral. This could be even if you will be involved only in deciding who will speak at the hesped. If someone is completely uninvolved in the funeral arrangements, one is an aveil.

Mourning: Who Must Mourn: No Onenut on Shabbat and Jewish Festivals

One is not an onen whenever a body may not be buried, such as on Shabbat and Jewish festivals, and so there is no onenut on Shabbat or Jewish festivals. An onen says blessings and does mitzvot on those days.

Mourning: Who Must Mourn: After Burial/Avel

After burial, any of the seven close relatives are called avel (aveilim).

MOURNING: HOW LONG TO MOURN

Mourning: How Long To Mourn: Parents or Others

Mourning for parents lasts one year. Mourning for others lasts only 30 days.

MOURNING: HOW TO MOURN

BEING AN ONEN

Onen Restrictions

An onen is prohibited from doing positive mitzvot so as not to be distracted from taking care of the dead body.

An onen may not:

- Do any positive commandment (no blessings, prayers, shema...).
- Eat meat or drink wine (until after the burial).
- Work or operate a business.

NOTE Before the relative dies, if possible, the onen should sell his business for whatever days he or she will be an onen and in shiv'a. Otherwise, the owner may have to close the business until shiv'a is over.

NOTE If there will be a large financial loss, consult a rabbi. A large loss is subjective to the individual's actual wealth and also to that person's perception of what is a large loss. Consult a rabbi for how much constitutes a large loss.

Onen Traveling with Body

An onen who accompanies a body to a foreign country for burial may have two extra days (or more) of onenut. If the onen then returns home and joins other mourners in the shiv'a house, the onen may end shiv'a with the other family members. (For more details, see [When Shiv'a \(and Shloshim\) Starts: Normal Days](#).)

Being an Onen: Saying Kaddish

Some communities have the custom of an onen's saying kaddish.

NOTE When a person's parent dies on or just before (erev) Shabbat or a Jewish festival, a daughter of any age should not be told until after Shabbat or the festival is over. A son should only be told if he is 6 years old and above and the custom in that community is to say kaddish as an onen.

KRI'A: TEARING THE CLOTHES

KRI'A: WHO TEARS

Children and Kri'a

When a parent has died, the children must tear "kr'ia," that is, tearing any garments that they wear during shiv'a.

Women and Kri'a

Women do kri'a. To avoid exposing her body when tearing, a woman may wait until she is in a private place. After tearing, she might need to pin the torn area closed for tzni'ut (modest attire).

KRI'A: ON WHAT TO TEAR

What To Tear for Kri'a

When tearing kri'a, do not tear underwear, a coat or sweater worn for warmth, or talit katan. To avoid ruining good or expensive clothing, you may change to other clothes before doing kri'a.

You may tear the same garment more than once if you need to do kriya for more than one dead person or for seeing the Temple mount more than once (in more than 30 days).

KRI'A: WHEN TO TEAR

Tear at News or Funeral Home

Do the tearing/kri'a when you hear the news of a death. If not, tear at the funeral home before the funeral.

KRI'A: HOW TO TEAR

How To Tear Kri'a

If you are in mourning for a parent, whether you are a man or woman, tear a vertical tear 4 inches (10.2 cm) long on your outermost garments (shirt and jacket, if you wear one) at the neck on the left side. The bulk of the tear must be made by hand, not with scissors or a knife, although you may start the tear with a sharp implement.

KRI'A: HOW OFTEN TO TEAR

Kri'a: How Often for a Parent

When mourning for a parent, you must tear kri'a throughout the shiv'a week whenever you change shirts, so it is best to change garments as little as possible! You must wear the torn garment during the entire week of shiv'a. Coats do not require kri'a.

NOTE Wearing a torn black ribbon pinned to a garment does not fulfill the requirement of kri'a.

Kri'a: How Often for Non-Parents

When mourning for any of the five categories of people other than parents (spouse; son; daughter; brother; sister), tear only one time and only the outermost garment (but not coats) and tear on the right side.

SHIV'A

SHIV'A: PURPOSE

Shiv'a: Purpose

The purpose of shiv'a is to honor the dead person and the mourners.

SHIV'A (AND SHLOSHIM): TIMING

WHEN SHIV'A (AND SHLOSHIM) STARTS

When Shiv'a (and Shloshim) Starts: Normal Days

Shiv'a (and shloshim) starts for a mourner who:

- Attends funeral: After the burial.
- Will not attend funeral and is a(n):
 - Non-Onen: Immediately upon hearing news of the death.
 - Onen: As soon as the onen has nothing (more) to do with the funeral.

NOTE Family members may observe shiv'a at different starting and ending times.

When Shiv'a (and Shloshim) Starts: Jewish Festivals

For someone who dies during Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, or any of the three Jewish festivals, the mourning period does not start until after the holiday has ended.

HOW LONG SHIV'A (AND SHLOSHIM) LASTS

Duration of Shiv'a (and Shloshim)

Shiv'a lasts seven days. Shloshim lasts 30 days, beginning with Day 1 of shiv'a. There may be some exceptions if shiv'a occurs before or during festivals.

NOTE Any part of the first day is considered to be one full day. On the final day after shacharit, the mourners finish shiv'a, so shiv'a can actually last as little as 5 ½ calendar days.

WHEN SHIV'A RESUMES

When Shiv'a Resumes: Shabbat

Shiv'a that is interrupted by Shabbat resumes Sunday morning.

When Shiv'a Resumes: Jewish Festival

Shiv'a that is interrupted by a Jewish festival does not resume after being interrupted.

When Shiv'a Resumes: Purim

Shiva is interrupted for Purim and resumes (except on shiv'a's 7th day) after Purim (or, in Jerusalem, after Shushan Purim).

When Shiv'a Resumes: Chanuka

Shiva is not interrupted for Chanuka.

When Shiv'a Resumes: Rosh Chodesh

Shiva is not interrupted for Rosh Chodesh.

WHEN SHIV'A ENDS

When Shiv'a Ends: Onen

An onen ends shiv'a (and shloshim) with the household head ("gadol ha'bayit"--whoever controls the money in that household)—even if the household head begins shiv'a before burial and the onen joins the shiv'a house after burial.

When Shiv'a Ends: Non-Onen Who Finds Out Later

If you do not hear about someone's death for 30 days after the person died, observe just one day of shiv'a. If you hear in less than 30 days, observe the regular seven-day shiv'a.

SHIV'A: LOCATION

Ideal Location of Shiv'a

The ideal place to sit shiv'a is the home of the dead person, but any practical location is permitted.

Shiv'a in Several Locations

There may be more than one shiv'a house for one dead person. There is no requirement for people to all join for one shiv'a house, especially if the mourners live in different cities.

SHIV'A: LEAVING THE HOUSE

Mourners' Leaving the Shiv'a House

Mourners should not leave the shiv'a house even if they do not have a minyan there.

NOTE There are some exceptions for extreme conditions, including medical reasons. A rabbi should be consulted.

Shiv'a and Going Elsewhere To Sleep

If there is not enough space for all of the mourners to sleep in the shiv'a house, they may go elsewhere to sleep at night.

SHIV'A: MINYAN

Reason for Shiv'a House Minyan

The main reason for a shiv'a house minyan is to allow the male mourners to pray with a minyan and say kaddish, since they may not leave the house.

SHIV'A: FURNISHINGS

Shiv'a: Furnishings: Seat Height

Mourners during shiv'a do not sit on normal chairs. Any seat should be less than 12 inches high.

Shiv'a: Furnishings: Mirrors

Cover all mirrors after the funeral in the house of mourning (shiv'a house). This is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

Shiv'a: Furnishing: Candle

Have a candle burn for seven days in the shiv'a house.

SHIV'A: MEALS

FIRST SHIV'A MEAL

First Shiv'a Meal: Bread and Egg

The first meal should be bread and a hard-boiled egg. After that meal, any foods may be eaten, including meat and wine.

First Shiv'a Meal: Prepared by Others

The mourners do not eat their own food for the first meal after the burial, so other people bring prepared food to the shiv'a house.

BRINGING FOOD TO SHIV'A HOUSE

Bringing Food to Shiv'a House

Bringing food to a shiv'a house is a non-binding custom, not a halacha. Some people have the custom for all seven days.

SHIV'A: DAILY LIFE

SHIV'A: BATHING

Bathing during Shiv'a

An *avel* should not bathe for pleasure and should only wash hands (to elbows), face (to collarbone), and feet (to the knees). If the *avel* is sweaty, smelly, or dirty, he or she may wash other body parts as needed.

SHIV'A: BUSINESS

Business during Shiv'a

An *avel* may not work and may not own an operating business during shiv'a. If a death is imminent, consult a rabbi immediately to arrange a sale of the business.

SHIV'A: CLOTHING

Clothing during Shiv'a

Mourners may not wear leather shoes for the seven days of shiv'a.

SHIV'A: DRIVING

Driving during Shiv'a

A mourner who absolutely must go somewhere may drive himself or herself (or be driven by someone else), but the proper observance of shiv'a is to stay home for the week.

SHIV'A: GIFTS

Gifts during Shiv'a

A mourner may not give gifts for seven days.

It is not appropriate to give gifts to a mourner for one year if the mourner is mourning for a parent.

SHIV'A: GREETING

Greeting during Shiv'a

A mourner may not greet someone in return but may acknowledge a greeting to him/her and may say “thank you” back. (This restriction ceases if a Jewish festival occurs during shiv'a.)

SHIV'A: LAUNDRY

Laundry during Shiv'a

A mourner may not do laundry nor wear clean clothes for comfort during shiv'a, but if all of the clothes are dirty, they may be washed. If so,

- Someone else should briefly wear such clothes before the mourner wears them, or
- The clothes may be thrown on the floor so that they will be considered dirty.

SHIV'A: MAKE UP

No Make Up for Mourner

A mourner should refrain from wearing make up during shiv'a.

SHIV'A: MARITAL RELATIONS

Marital Relations during Shiv'a

A mourner may not have marital relations and may not touch his or her spouse affectionately during shiv'a.

SHIV'A: SHABBAT AND PUBLIC MOURNING

Shiv'a: Mourning on Shabbat

A mourner does not mourn publicly on Shabbat.

Shiv'a: Entering Synagogue Friday Night

A mourner enters the synagogue on Friday evening before Mizmor shir l'yom haShabbat (after the main part of Kabbalat Shabbat has finished).

REASON Mizmor shir is the actual starting point of Shabbat.

The congregation stands and, as the mourners walk in, greets the mourners with “HaMakom yenacheim etchem b'toch she'ar aveilei tzion v'yrushalayim.”

Women and Public Consolation after Kabbalat Shabbat

It is not the custom for women to get public consolation (nichum aveilim) on Friday night at synagogue.

SHIV'A: TEFILIN ON FIRST DAY

Tefilin: First Day of Shiv'a

Mourners do not wear tefilin on the first day (the day of burial), but do wear them after the first day.

SHIV'A: TORAH STUDY

Torah Study during Shiv'a

A mourner during shiv'a may not study Torah, other than:

- Laws of mourning (aveilut), and
- Whatever is permitted to study on Tish'a b'Av.

NOTE This restriction ceases if a Jewish festival occurs during shiv'a.

SHIV'A: WASHING, HAIRCUTS, SHAVING

Washing, Haircuts, Shaving during Shiv'a

An avel may not wash, shave, or get a haircut during shiv'a (for more details on haircuts, see Haircuts during Shloshim).

MOURNER'S KADDISH

KADDISH: FOR WHOM TO SAY

Kaddish for Parents/Exceptions

Mourner's kaddish is only supposed to be said for parents, unless no one else is saying kaddish for the dead person. If both your parents are still alive, you may not say mourner's kaddish for someone else unless you get your parents' permission.

Kaddish for Relatives Other than Parents

If you wish, you may say mourner's kaddish for family members other than parents, especially during shloshim (the first 30 days after burial), since the first 30 days after death are the most difficult for the dead person's soul.

However, you may say kaddish for anyone even after shloshim ends, if you wish, until the end of 11 months (for a shomer-mitzvot person) or 12 months (for a non-shomer mitzvot person). But in a place where only one person says kaddish, you may not supplant another person who is halachically required to say kaddish.

KADDISH: HOW LONG TO SAY

Kaddish: How Long To Say: Shomer Shabbat or Not

Kaddish is only said for 11 months for a shomer Shabbat Jew and 12 months for a non-shomer-Shabbat Jew.

Kaddish Timing: Last Day of Kaddish

The last day of kaddish is based on the day he or she was buried.

The final kaddish for a mourner, at the end of 11/12 months, will always be at mincha, regardless of when the dead person died or was buried.

KADDISH: WHO SHOULD SAY

Kaddish: Who Should Say: Sons Six and Above

All sons age 6 and above are required to say kaddish for a dead parent. For frequency, see Kaddish Frequency: Requirements of Sons.

NOTE Women are not required to say kaddish.

Kaddish: Who Should Say: Women

Women are not required to say kaddish, and it is not customary for them to do so. But if they want to, it is best if at least one man says kaddish with the woman.

KADDISH: HOW OFTEN TO SAY

Kaddish Frequency: Needs of Dead Person

Each dead person needs kaddish to be said for him or her:

- By at least one person.

NOTE If more than one person who was close to the dead person (such as a relative) says kaddish, it is a merit for the soul of the dead person.

- At least once a day.

NOTE More frequently is commendable, since kaddish relieves a dead person's soul from *gehenna*.

Kaddish Frequency: Requirements of Sons

Each son age 6 and above is required to say kaddish for his dead parent at least once a day.

NOTE “Day” here means from dark until the following sunset. If you say kaddish at mincha and the following ma'ariv, you have covered two days.

Saying Kaddish Multiple Times

Even though saying kaddish many times benefits the dead person's soul, there is no need--nor is it the custom--to attend multiple minyans each day in order to say kaddish for a dead person many times.

KADDISH: WITH WHOM TO SAY

Saying Kaddish in Unison

Ideally, only one mourner should say kaddish, whether mourner's kaddish, rabbis' kaddish, etc. Any kaddish said by more than one mourner should be said in unison.

THIRTY DAYS OF MOURNING (SHLOSHIM)

WHEN SHIV'A (AND SHLOSHIM) ENDS

Shiv'a and Shloshim: Ended by Jewish Festivals

Shiv'a ends if a Jewish festival, Rosh Hashana, or Yom Kippur intervenes.

Shloshim ends if a Jewish festival, Rosh Hashana, or Yom Kippur intervenes.

If two of those holidays occur within the first seven days after burial, the first one will break shiv'a and the second one will break shloshim.

Shimini Atseret does not constitute a second day for breaking shiv'a or shloshim (it is considered to be part of Sukkot for this purpose).

SHLOSHIM: DAILY LIFE

SHLOSHIM: BATHING

Bathing during Shloshim

For the first 30 days, a mourner should not bathe for pleasure in hot water and should only wash hands (to elbows), face (to collarbone), and feet (to the knees). If sweaty, smelly, or dirty, he or she may wash other body parts even during shiv'a. Lukewarm water may be used after shiv'a ends.

SHLOSHIM: CLOTHING

Clothing during Shloshim

Do not wear newly purchased clothing during the first 30 days of mourning (shloshim). You may wear new clothing from the end of shiv'a if someone else wears them somewhat before you do.

NOTE Restrictions on newly purchased clothing end after:

- the year of mourning for those mourning for parents, and
- 30 days for those mourning for other relatives.

SHLOSHIM: HAIRCUTS

Haircuts during Shloshim

Do not get a haircut for the first 30 days of mourning. When mourning for parents, a mourner's hair should grow for three months from the last haircut but not for less than 30 days from the time shiv'a began. This applies to men and women, except if the woman needs to cut her hair for immersing in the mikva.

SHLOSHIM: KIDDUSH

Kiddush Club during Shloshim

A mourner during shloshim (or the rest of the mourner's year) may eat at a kiddush on Shabbat after shacharit if he is expected to be there (for example, if he is a regular member of a "Kiddush Club") because you may not display mourning in public on Shabbat.

SHLOSHIM: NAIL CUTTING

Nail Cutting during Shloshim

Do not cut your nails for the first 30 days of mourning.

EXCEPTION Women mourners may cut their nails before going to the mikva.

SHLOSHIM: SHAVING

Shaving during Shloshim

If you shave regularly (can be every day or a few times each week), you may shave after 30 days but not within 30 even if for non-parent and certainly not for a parent. If you normally grow a beard, you may not shave until 3 months have passed since the last time you trimmed your beard (and as long as it is more than 30 days from the day shiva began for the parent).

In case of a large financial loss, consult a rabbi.

NOTE A large loss is subjective to the individual's actual wealth and also to that person's perception of what is a large loss

SHLOSHIM: GETTING MARRIED

Wedding during Shloshim

Do not get married during the first 30 days of mourning, but you may get engaged.

YEAR OF MOURNING

YEAR-OF-MOURNING: TIME PERIOD

Mourner Period When Shiv'a or Shloshim Are Shortened

Someone who is mourning for parents is still a mourner for the entire year even if shiv'a and shloshim are truncated.

YEAR-OF-MOURNING: PRACTICES

YEAR OF MOURNING: MARRYING

Remarrying after a Wife Dies

If a wife dies, the husband must wait for three Jewish festival holidays to pass before remarrying (Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur do not count for this purpose).

Remarrying after a Husband Dies

If a husband dies, the wife may remarry after 92 days have passed.

YEAR OF MOURNING: NEW CLOTHING

New Clothing during Year of Mourning for Parent

For wearing new clothes during the year of mourning for a parent, see Clothing during Shloshim .

YEAR OF MOURNING: MOURNERS LEADING A MINYAN

Mourners Leading a Minyan

The dead person benefits if his/her son or sons lead public prayer services, whether during shloshim or the entire year (11 or 12 months). However, if the mourner is uncomfortable leading the minyan or is not a good reader or will be embarrassed, he should not feel obligated to do so.

A mourner does not lead a minyan on:

- Shabbat;
- Jewish Festivals (including chol ha'moed);
- Purim;
- Rosh Chodesh.

Opinions differ concerning Chanuka, so follow your local custom.

YEAR OF MOURNING: PUBLIC FESTIVITIES

Public Festivities for Mourner for Parent

A mourner may not generally enter a hall of joyous celebration and may not eat at any public meal. During the year of mourning for parents, you may not join any public festivities (even if it is not a simcha) that have a meal, including any meals celebrating a mitzva (se'udat mitzva) such as for a brit mila, wedding, or redemption of a son (pidyon ha'ben). After 30 days, you may attend a bar mitzva or a siyum meal, since a bar mitzva is similar to a siyum since the child's parent's commandment to educate his/her child in Jewish education has been completed.

EXCEPTION A mourner whose child is getting married, does attend the wedding and does eat at the meal with everyone else, even if mourning for a parent. He or she does not need to leave the room when music is being played. To attend the wedding of anyone other than one's child, regardless of who died, a mourner must eat alone and outside the main dining area.

NOTE An intervening Jewish festival partially truncates the 30 days of mourning and so you may attend a bar mitzva or siyum even before the end of 30 days.

NOTE If you work at weddings (caterer, musician, etc.), you may attend weddings even before 30 days are up, but you may not join the meal.

Public Festivities for Mourner for Non-Parent

A mourner for the five categories of people other than parents (spouse; son; daughter; brother; sister) may join any celebrations, including the meals, after 30 days (and if any Jewish festivals intervene, that 30-day period is truncated).

YEAR OF MOURNING: SHEHECHEYANU

SheHecheyanu

A mourner (*avel*) is permitted to say she'hecheyanu for himself but should not say she'hecheyanu if required for the congregation. An *avel* should say she'hecheyanu on:

- Eating a “new” fruit.
- Wearing a new garment.
- Lighting Chanuka candles at home for the first time that year.

An *avel* should not do the following, since he should not say she'hecheyanu unless it is necessary:

- Light Chanuka candles in synagogue.
- Read the megila.
- Blow shofar on Rosh Hashana.

YEAR OF MOURNING: SYNAGOGUE SEAT

Synagogue Seat When Mourning for Parent

Change your normal seat in synagogue during the year of mourning for a parent. (The rabbi is not required to change seats). You should move to a seat further away from the aron hakodesh than your previous seat (since seats further from the aron are considered to be less prestigious than those close to the aron).

REASON This is to show humility and that we feel subdued due to the death.

TOMBSTONES AND GRAVES

TOMBSTONES

When To Set Up Tombstone

Set up a tombstone on the grave any time after the burial but within 12 Jewish months of burial.

What To Have Engraved on Tombstone

Put the dead person's name on the tombstone. Anything aside from the name is optional.

Tombstone if Hebrew Name Unknown

Use the person's secular name in any language if the Hebrew name is unknown.

GRAVES

HOW TO TREAT GRAVES

Graves: Photographs

Taking photos of graves is OK. (This is common at the Jewish cemetery in Prague.)

Graves: Visiting

There is not any mitzva or halacha to visit graves of any person, not even *tzadikim* and not even parents.

Graves: Stepping on

Do not step on graves.

Graves: Leaving Stone

When you visit a grave, it is customary to leave a small stone on the tombstone.

Yahrzeit

Yahrzeit: Date

Yahrzeit: Timing

If the person was buried before the passage of two sunsets after death:

- Yahrzeit day is the anniversary date of the day he or she died.

If the person was NOT buried before the passage of two sunsets after death:

- First yahrzeit is one year after the day he/she was buried.
- Subsequent yahrzeits will be on the day he/she died.

Yahrzeit: Candle

Yahrzeit: Candle: Day of Yahrzeit

Yahrzeit: Candle: Day of Yahrzeit

Lighting a yahrzeit candle on the yahrzeit of a parent is a universal custom but not a halacha.

Yahrzeit: Candle: How Many Candles

Yahrzeit: Candle: How Many Candles: Yahrzeit and Yizkor

One candle is lit on the yahrzeit/anniversary of the date a parent died.

NOTE If both parents died on the same day, light two candles on the yahrzeit day (but only one on yizkor day).

Yahrzeit: Candle: How Many Candles: One per Household

For a deceased parent on a yahrzeit or yizkor day, only one candle needs to be lit in each home where any of a parent's children are at sunset of that evening.

EXAMPLES

- If two siblings (or more) are in the same residence on the night of the yahrzeit, just light one yahrzeit candle.
- If all siblings are in different homes, each sibling lights one yahrzeit candle.

Yahrzeit: Fasting

Fasting on Yahrzeit of Parents

It is a good custom (but not halacha) to fast on the yahrzeit of one's parents, since it is a kind of repentance (teshuya).

HOLIDAYS

Jewish Festivals (Chagim, Yom Tov)

Introduction to Holidays/Jewish Festivals

Introduction to Holidays/Jewish Festivals/Chagim/Yom Tov

Jewish Festivals are listed in the Torah and are of two types:

1. Three pilgrimage festivals (shalosh regalim):

- Passover,
- Shavuot, and
- Sukkot (including Shimini Atzeret).

These festivals were celebrated in ancient times by "appearing before God"--by bringing offerings to the Tabernacle or Temple.

2. High Holidays:

- The Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashana—"Yom Teru'a" in the Torah), and the
- Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur).

Duration

Jewish holidays that were originally one day are now observed as follows:

- Rosh Hashana--2 days.
- Yom Kippur--1 day.
- Shavuot--1 day in Eretz Yisrael or 2 days elsewhere.
- Passover has festival days at the beginning and end of the holiday and intermediary days of lesser holiness, which are called chol ha'moed. In Eretz Yisrael, Passover lasts for 7 days in total and the first and last days are festival days. Outside of Eretz Yisrael, Passover lasts 8 days and has two festival days at the beginning and two at the end.
- Sukkot has festival days at the beginning and at the end and intermediary days of lesser holiness, which are called chol ha'moed. In Eretz Yisrael, Sukkot lasts for 8 days and the first and last days are festival days (the last day is Shimini Atzeret). Outside of Eretz Yisrael, Sukkot lasts for 9 days and the first two days and last days are festival days (the 8th day is Shimini Atzeret and the 9th day is Simchat Torah).

Character

Each holiday contributes its own character to Jewish life (Passover--the theme of freedom; Yom Kippur brings atonement, etc.).

Celebrating

How to celebrate these holidays is detailed in our Oral Law and halacha books. Jewish festivals as practiced today are similar in holiness to Shabbat. As with Shabbat, the Jewish festival has candle lighting, kiddush at two meals, and havdala. We eat our best food and wear our best clothing on Jewish festivals (we eat our next-best food and wear our next-best clothing on Shabbat!).

The main idea behind eating meals on Jewish festivals is joy (simcha), so you should drink wine and eat meat (only if you enjoy wine and meat). There is no third meal on Jewish festivals since people used to eat two meals each day (adding a third meal on Shabbat was for enjoyment/oneg).

Melachot

Any activities or actions permitted on Shabbat are also permitted on the Jewish festivals. Actions that are forbidden on Shabbat are generally also forbidden on Jewish festivals, but there are some leniencies (only if the actions are needed for that festival day).

EXAMPLES

- Lighting from an existing flame,

- Cooking and baking for the Jewish festival day, and
- Carrying outside the eruv (hotza'a--transferring objects between domains).

Grama

Grama (indirectly causing an action) is permitted on Jewish festivals (but not on Shabbat). For example, you may advance or delay a timer that will make a light go on or off in the future (the timer must already be plugged in and operating from before sunset of the festival day).

NOTE For an action to be considered indirect based on time, there must be at least 2.5 seconds after the first action is done before the resulting action begins to happen.

Psik Reisha Dla Neicha Lei

Psik reisha dla neicha lei is forbidden on Jewish festivals, just as it is on Shabbat.

D'oraita Restrictions

D'oraita restrictions apply world-wide to:

- First and seventh days of Passover,
- First and eighth days of Sukkot,
- First day of Shavuot,
- Yom Kippur,
- First day of Rosh Hashana.

NOTE The same restrictions apply to all other Jewish festival days but are *rabbinical*.

Women

In general, women are not required to perform the positive, time-dependent commandments. Women and girls are not required to eat any Jewish festival meals except the Passover seder meal (but they are not allowed to fast on those days).

PRE-JEWISH FESTIVAL ISSUES

JEWISH FESTIVAL: WHICH DAY

JEWISH FESTIVAL: INTERNATIONAL DATELINE

Jewish Festival: Dateline Considerations

If unsure which day to start the Jewish festival because you are near the International Dateline, follow guidelines for Shabbat; see [Introduction to Shabbat](#), [IDL](#), and [Region of Safek/Doubt](#).

JEWISH FESTIVAL: ONE DAY OR TWO

Jewish Festival: One Day or Two

Outside of Eretz Yisrael, Jewish festivals are observed for two days instead of one.

REASON In ancient Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin declared the new month based on testimony of at least two witnesses. Since Jews who lived far from Jerusalem did not find out when the Jewish festivals began until as much as two weeks after the fact, a two-day festival was declared and we continue to observe that two-day holiday outside of Eretz Yisrael.

SITUATION You are in Eretz Yisrael for any of the Jewish festivals. You want melacha done for you on the second day of the festival.

WHAT TO DO You may ask a resident of Eretz Yisrael to do melacha for you. (You may not ask a non-Jew to do melacha for you!)

REASON It is no longer a Jewish festival for him/her.

NOTE

If you are outside of Eretz Yisrael, you may not ask a resident of Eretz Yisrael (who is visting you) to do melacha for you on the second day of the Jewish festival, even though he/she is no longer observing the festival.

REASON He/she may not do any melacha d'oraita even in private and not even for him/herself.

Jewish Festival: One Day in Eretz Yisrael

To keep one day only of a Jewish festival in Eretz Yisrael, you must live most of year in Eretz Yisrael and fulfill certain other requirements. Consult a rabbi for details.

Jewish Festival: One Day for a Year Plus in Eretz Yisrael

If you are living in Eretz Yisrael for one year and might stay longer, ask a rabbi if you must keep one or two days of the Jewish festival.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: TRANSPORTATION

Non-Jew Driven Vehicle before Dark Starting Jewish Festival

You may continue riding in a car or taxi driven by a non-Jew between sunset and dark (tzeit ha'kochavim) beginning a Jewish festival, even if the vehicle is driven just for you. You:

- May not do this on Shabbat.
- Must have already paid before sunset.
- May not open a door that will cause a light to turn on or do any other melachot.
- If you have already traveled outside techum, you may move only 4 amot (85" or 116 cm) away from the vehicle, unless the driver leaves you off in an enclosed domain (any area surrounded by walls or an eruv), in which case you may go anywhere in that domain.
- If you had not gone outside of techum, you may go anywhere in the domain and you may also go up to 2000 amot (3,542 ft. or 1,080 m) outside of the domain.

NOTE Since this is a d'oraita case, we use a smaller measurement for ama--21 ¼" (54 cm).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: LEAVING THE WORLD OF WORK

Sole or Majority Business Ownership on Jewish Festivals

For sole or majority ownership of a business on Jewish festivals, see Jewish Festivals: Business Ownership.

Refraining from Distracting Work

You may not do any work or get involved in any project that might distract you from preparing for a Jewish festival, beginning from twice the duration of plag ha'mincha. So allow 2 1/2 halachic hours (sha'ot zmaniyot) before sunset to prepare for the Jewish festival.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: EATING BEFORE

Appetite for Jewish Festival Dinner

Do not eat a full meal (meaning, do not eat bread or a lot of mezonot) after halachic midday on the afternoon before a Jewish festival.

REASON To have an appetite for Jewish festival dinner.

NOTE You may eat other food after halachic midday the afternoon of (before) the Jewish festival but you should not eat foods which are filling.

Eating before Hearing Jewish Festival Evening Kiddush

See Eating from Start of Jewish Festival until Kiddush.

JEWISH FESTIVAL: SETTING THE TABLE

Jewish Festivals: Tablecloth

A tablecloth should cover the table during *Jewish festival* meals, but you may remove and switch tablecloths. Even if you have a beautiful and valuable table, you should still cover it for *Jewish festival* (and *Shabbat*) meals.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: WHEN MEN START

Jewish Festivals: When Men Start: Sunset or Bar'chu

Jewish festivals begin for men at sunset or when they say “*bar'chu*” in *ma'ariv*, whichever comes first.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: WHEN WOMEN START

Jewish Festivals: When Women Start: Candle-Lighting or Sunset

As for *Shabbat*, *Jewish festivals* start for women when they light candles or at sunset, whichever is earlier. For more details, see *Jewish Festivals: Candles: Lighting with Delay until Sunset*.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: CANDLES

JEWISH FESTIVALS: CANDLES: WHO LIGHTS

Jewish Festivals: Candles: One Person per Home

Like *Shabbat* candles, *Jewish festival* candles should be lit only by one person per home. Priority order: wife; then husband; then children.

It is customary for each married woman to light candles on each festival even though she is not eating in her own home and even though her hostess is already lighting candles. She may light her candles at her hostess's house or at her own home (but if at her own home, she must see the candles are burning after dark if she lights there).

Girls should not be encouraged to light *Jewish festival* candles except when no parent can.

Single people should light *Jewish festival* candles in their homes if they will eat there.

Jewish Festivals: Candles: Have Others in Mind

Whoever is lighting the *Jewish festival* candles should have in mind all other people who will be eating dinner in that home.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: CANDLES: WHEN TO LIGHT

Jewish Festivals: Candles: Earliest Time To Light

You may not light *Jewish festival* (or *Shabbat*) candles before *plag ha'mincha*. The candles must burn until at least dark (*tzeit ha'kochavim*) and someone must be there to see the light from the candles after dark.

SITUATION *Mincha minyan* begins at *plag ha'mincha*. You cannot light candles at home and still get to *mincha minyan* on time.

WHAT TO DO You may light a candle without a blessing, just so you can have a flame for after the festival has begun. You go to *synagogue* and after *ma'ariv* you return home and light the candles from the flame which was burning from before sunset. If you will not have a flame burning from before sunset, you must say *mincha* on your own (anytime from half an hour after mid-day until sunset). You will light candles after *plag ha'mincha* but before sunset and not join the *mincha minyan*. Women should skip *mincha* and light candles either 18 minutes before sunset or have a flame burning from before sunset and light candles from that flame once the festival has begun (but she may not light from a new flame or a match).

Jewish Festivals: Candle-Lighting Times

In most countries, candle lighting time is 18 minutes before sunset. In Jerusalem, many people have the custom of lighting candles 40 minutes before sunset.

Jewish Festivals: Candles: Lighting Two Days

The custom is to light candles:

- Before sunset on the first day of a Jewish festival, and
- After dark on the Jewish festival's second day (except when the second day coincides with Shabbat!).

Jewish Festivals: Candles: Lighting after Sunset

Men and women may light candles after sunset on Jewish festivals, with these conditions:

- You may light only from an already-burning flame.
- You may not light Jewish festival candles after sunset on Friday nor on the evening before Yom Kippur begins.

Jewish Festivals: Candles: Lighting with Delay until Sunset

As on Shabbat, you may say “I am lighting Jewish festival candles but not starting the Jewish festival until sunset” to delay observing the Jewish festival until sunset, but this in only *b'diavad*.

NOTE As for Shabbat, women should not routinely start Jewish festivals at sunset since the proper time for women to begin Jewish festivals is at candle lighting (typically 18 minutes before sunset).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: CANDLES: WHERE TO LIGHT

Jewish Festivals: Candles: Dinner Location

As on Shabbat, light Jewish festival candles wherever you will eat dinner that night.

NOTE If you will be eating away from home, do not light the candles at home unless you will be home for some period of time after dark (in which case you must see the candles burning for at least one minute after dark/zeit ha'kochavim; otherwise you will have made a bracha l'vatala). This is not the ideal situation, as the ideal is to light where you will eat.

NOTE You do not need to light candles at all if you are not eating at your own home on the Jewish festival (this applies to men and women, even wives and mothers who normally light at their own home) as long as someone else is lighting candles where you will eat. While the basic halacha is that the hostess lights for everyone, it is a widespread custom for any woman who is--or was--married to light at the hostess's home.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: CANDLES: HOW MANY TO LIGHT

Jewish Festivals: Candles: How Many Required To Light

As on Shabbat, wives should light two candles for Jewish festivals, even though we say the blessing over “ner” (“candle” in the singular). Lighting any more than two candles is a universal custom.

Jewish Festivals: Candles: How Many To Light when Eating Elsewhere

A wife lighting Jewish festival candles in a place other than her own home lights only two candles, even if she normally lights more than two candles in her own home. This is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

Jewish Festivals: Candles: Adding a Candle

Unlike on Shabbat, on Jewish festivals you do not add an extra candle to the number you normally light for the rest of your life if you miss lighting Jewish festival candles.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: CANDLES: HOW LONG TO BURN

Jewish Festivals: Candles: How Long Candles Must Burn

As on Shabbat, Jewish festivals candles must burn at least until you have eaten the bread of ha'motzi.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: CANDLES: HOW TO LIGHT

Jewish Festivals: Candles: Lighting before Blessing

On the first day of Jewish festivals, both women and men may say the blessing before lighting the candles, but it is customary for women to light before they say the blessing, as they do on Shabbat.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: YAHRZEIT CANDLE

Jewish Festivals: Yahrzeit Candle

Some people have the custom of lighting a yahrzeit candle for a deceased parent on days when yizkor is said: Yom Kippur, last day of Passover; second day of Shavuot; and on Shmini Atzeret.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: MINCHA BEFORE

JEWISH FESTIVALS: WHAT TIME IS MINCHA

Jewish Festivals: Earliest Mincha

The earliest permissible time to say mincha before a Jewish festival is one-half hour after halachic midday, as with all mincha prayers including before Shabbat.

NOTE You may begin the second day of any Jewish festival as early as plag ha'mincha. You should ideally say mincha before plag and then say ma'ariv after plag; but if you are praying with a minyan, you may say mincha anytime after plag and then say ma'ariv immediately afterward, just as on Shabbat.

NOTE However, there is nothing gained by saying mincha early before a Jewish festival:

- We don't want to start Rosh Hashana (Yom HaDin) early and no one wants to start Yom Kippur early.
- You may not start either seder until after dark on Passover.
- You could eat in a sukka before dark on either of the first two days of Sukkot, but you would not fulfill the requirement of eating in a sukka since it was not dark.
- Likewise, the first day of Shavuot does not begin until after dark.
- Since you may not say the blessing on eating in a sukka on Shmini Atzeret (which you would have to do if you eat before dark), there is nothing gained by saying mincha and ma'ariv early on that day, either.

So, as a practical matter, the only days on which saying mincha and ma'ariv early would allow beginning the holiday early are the second day of Shavuot, the second day of Rosh Hashana, and the last days of Passover.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: MINCHA AND CANDLE LIGHTING

Saying Mincha after Lighting Jewish Festival Candles

A woman who has already lit Jewish festival candles may not say mincha for the afternoon before a Jewish festival, even if she lit (after plag ha'mincha) long before sunset time, unless she intended not to begin the Jewish festival when she was lighting the candles (and intending to begin later should only be done in urgent situations, not routinely.)

JEWISH FESTIVALS: MA'ARIV

Saying Ma'ariv at Plag HaMincha

You may say ma'ariv before the start of a Jewish festival as early as plag ha'mincha (1 1/4 halachic hours before sunset), even if you did not say mincha before plag (unlike on weekdays when you must say mincha before plag in order to say ma'ariv before sunset).

Answering Kedusha If You Began the Jewish Festival Early

If you began the Jewish festival early and you are at a minyan where they are saying kedusha for mincha before the Jewish festival, you should reply to kedusha.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: MEALS

INTRODUCTION TO JEWISH FESTIVALS: MEALS

Introduction to Jewish Festival "Eating a Meal" Requirements

We are required to eat two meals on Jewish festivals, each preceded by kiddush, one in the evening and one in the morning. For both meals for each Jewish festival day (and all three meals on Shabbat), say ha'motzi over two complete loaves of bread, each of which is at least 1.3 fl. oz. in volume.

NOTE Girls and women are not required to eat any meals (that is, including bread or matza) on Jewish festivals except the Passover seder. However, if a woman, or girl at least bat mitzva age, wants to eat bread, she should use two loaves, just as men do. This is halacha, not a custom. Also, girls and women may not fast on any festival day so even if they do not eat bread or matza, they must eat some food.

Source of Saying Jewish Festival Kiddush

Some kiddushes are commanded by the Torah (d'oraita); the others are from Chazal (d'rabanan), as follows:
Kiddush d'Oraita

- First night of Jewish festivals
- Night of seventh day of Passover
- Night of Shmini Atzeret.

Kiddush d'Rabanan

- First day of Jewish festival
- Second night of Jewish festival
- Second day of Jewish festival
- Seventh day of Passover
- Eighth night of Passover
- Eighth day of Passover
- Shmini Atzeret day
- Night and day of Simchat Torah.

Source of Jewish Festival Kiddush Location

Saying Jewish festival kiddush at the place where you will eat your meal is a rabbinical (d'rabanan) enactment.

Jewish Festival Kiddush-Meal Quantities: Evening

- For evening kiddush for a first-night (d'oraita) Jewish festival, a minimum of 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) of wine must be blessed on and at least half must be drunk.
- For evening kiddush for a second-night (d'rabanan) Jewish festival, a minimum of 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of wine must be blessed on and at least 2.0 fl. oz. must be drunk.
- For the evening meal, as on the first two Shabbat meals and for all required Jewish festival meals, a minimum of 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of bread must be eaten within four minutes.

Eating Requirements for Jewish Festival Morning Kiddush

There are two separate eating requirements during the daytime. They may be combined (say/hear kiddush and start the main meal right away) but are often done separately (say/hear kiddush and then eat some light foods and beverages; the main meal is eaten later in the day).

NOTE Since eating and drinking requirements on all morning kiddushes (both Shabbat and Jewish festivals) are d'rabanan, the required beverage amount for morning kiddush is only 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) instead of the d'oraita 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) (which is required for kiddushes for Shabbat evening and all first-night Jewish

festivals).

- Morning kiddush requires a *halachically* legal “meal” with these elements:
 - Blessing on a minimum of 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of wine (or other beverage),
 - Someone's drinking at least half the beverage, followed by
 - Eating at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of some type of mezonot within four minutes.
- NOTE** If you drink at least 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of wine within 30 seconds, you do not need to eat mezonot.
- NOTE** You do not need to drink the wine or other kiddush beverage to fulfill “establishing a meal.” You may hear kiddush and then simply eat the required amount of bread or mezonot. This applies to Shabbat or Jewish festivals, evening or morning.

The kiddush “meal” does not have to satiate.

- The real meal (kovei'a se'uda) requires eating at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of bread (or matza during Passover!) within four minutes. It must include enough food to satiate.
- NOTE** You can simultaneously fulfill the requirement to “establish a meal” and to “eat a meal” by eating one (the same) piece of bread.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: KIDDUSH

JEWISH FESTIVALS: KIDDUSH: WHO MAY MAKE

Jewish Man or Woman Making Kiddush

Any adult Jew, male or female, may say kiddush for him/herself and, as long as he/she still needs to say kiddush for him/herself, may include any other Jews of any age or gender.

Any Jewish male, 13 years old or older, may say kiddush for anyone else, either gender and any age, even if he has already fulfilled his personal requirement of saying kiddush.

Any Jewish female, 12 years old or older, may say kiddush for any other females but not for men, except that on the 2 Passover seder nights, a Jewish female who is at least 12 years old may even say kiddush for men, if the men are not able to say it for themselves. (Women may also say kiddush for men on Shabbat evening).

REASON Any person who is obligated to fulfill the mitzva of kiddush may say it for another person. It is questionable whether women are obligated to say (or have said for them) Jewish festival morning kiddush.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: KIDDUSH: WHAT TO DRINK

Ideal Kiddush Beverage: Wine/Grape Juice

Wine (or grape juice) is the ideal and proper beverage for kiddush (and havdala).

REASON It is considered to be a prestigious beverage.

Jewish Festival Night Kiddush Beverage

Wine (or grape juice) is the only drink permissible for Jewish festival (or Friday) evening kiddush. See Challot for Kiddush, below, if you do not have wine or grape juice with which to make Jewish festival (or Shabbat) evening kiddush.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: KIDDUSH: HOW MUCH TO POUR

Jewish Festivals: Kiddush: Pour Revi'it

As on Shabbat, the minimum volume of kiddush beverage on which you may say Jewish festival kiddush (or havdala) is a revi'it:

- 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) for d'oraita cases such as the first night of Jewish festivals (or Shabbat evening) kiddush, and
- 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) for d'rabanan cases such Jewish festival lunch and evening/daytime meals on the second Jewish festival day (as well as kiddush for Shabbat lunch).

Jewish Festivals: Kiddush: How High To Fill the Cup

Ideally, fill your kiddush cup to just above the rim, even if the cup is larger than 4 fl. oz. (119 ml). Don't make the cup overflow.

NOTE If you did not fill the kiddush cup to the rim, it is still OK.

Jewish Festivals: Kiddush: Diluting Wine

There is no need to dilute wine before drinking it.

Jewish Festivals: Kiddush: If Not Enough Wine

If there is not enough wine (or grape juice) for Jewish festival (or Shabbat) kiddush and havdala:

- Set aside the first cup for havdala. Then, if there is one more cup,
- Use it for the morning kiddush.

Jewish Festivals: Kiddush: Challot for Kiddush

To use two challot for kiddush instead of wine:

- Wash hands and say *al netilat yadayim*,
- Say kiddush but substitute ha'motzi for borei pri ha'gafen; and, as soon as you finish saying kiddush,
- Eat the bread as normal.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: KIDDUSH: CUP & WINE BOTTLES

Your Own Kiddush Cup

If you want to drink kiddush wine, you may either hold your own cup of wine (or grape juice) during kiddush or receive wine or grape juice from the kiddush leader's cup.

Kos Pagum

Kos pagum means either:

1. "Physically damaged or broken drinking utensil": You may not use such a cup for kiddush l'chatchila.
OR
2. Cup of wine, grape juice, or any beverage that has been drunk from. This beverage may not be used for a kos shel bracha until at least a small amount more of some beverage has been added.

Uncovered Wine Bottles/Cups

You do not need to close the wine bottle or cover the other wine cups while the first of several people says kiddush, whether on Shabbat or Jewish festivals.

Washing Wine Glass

There is no need to wash a clean wine glass before using it for kiddush.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: KIDDUSH: HOW MUCH TO DRINK

Jewish Festivals: Kiddush: Drinking Cheekful

As on Shabbat, the minimum total volume of Jewish festival kiddush beverage that must be drunk--usually by the kiddush-maker (mevareich) but it may even be several people combined--is a cheekful (m'lo lugmov)—considered to be 2 fl. oz. (59 ml) within 30 seconds.

NOTE If no one drinks the kiddush beverage, the commandment to say or hear kiddush has not been fulfilled.

NOTE Although you must drink at least a cheekful to fulfill kiddush, you must drink at least 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) within 30 seconds in order to say the after-blessing.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: KIDDUSH: WHEN TO SPEAK OR DRINK

When You May Speak after Kiddush

You may speak, even without having drunk anything yourself, once:

- The leader (mevareich) has said Jewish festival (or Shabbat) kiddush for other people, and
- At least 2 fl. oz. (59 ml) of the wine (or other appropriate beverage) over which kiddush was made has been drunk.

When You May Drink after Kiddush

You may drink your own beverage as long as:

- The leader (mevareich) has said Jewish festival (or Shabbat) kiddush for other people, and
- At least 2 fl. oz. (59 ml) of the wine (or other appropriate beverage) over which kiddush was made has been drunk.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: KIDDUSH: WHEN TO SAY BLESSING AGAIN

JEWISH FESTIVALS: KIDDUSH: BOREI PRI HAGAFEN AFTER DRINKING KIDDUSH WINE

Jewish Festivals: Kiddush: Drinking Kiddush Wine and then Drinking Later in Meal

If you drank any amount of kiddush wine (or grape juice), you do not say borei pri ha'gafen over wine or grape juice later in the meal (but you may have to say ha'tov v'ha'meitiv if the wine is better than the kiddush wine).

Jewish Festivals: Kiddush: Borei Pri HaGafen after Drinking Kiddush Wine and Hesech Da'at

If you said or heard the blessing borei pri ha'gafen, finished drinking had hesech da'at, and then want to make a new blessing over the remaining wine in the cup, see [Borei Pri HaGafen: Saying Again](#).

NOTE Although you may say a new borei pri ha'gafen on wine (or grape juice) that you left off drinking and returned to finish after hesech da'at, you may do so only as a simple blessing, not as kiddush (for how to make kiddush on same wine, see next [halacha](#)).

Jewish Festivals: Kiddush: Making New Kiddush after Drinking Kiddush Wine

To say borei pri ha'gafen as a new kiddush on the same wine, you must add at least one drop of new wine to the cup, if you have drunk any of the wine directly from that cup.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: KIDDUSH: BOREI PRI HAGAFEN AFTER NOT DRINKING KIDDUSH WINE

Jewish Festivals: Borei Pri HaGafen after Not Drinking Kiddush Wine

You must say borei pri ha'gafen if you want to drink wine (or grape juice) after you heard kiddush and then:

- Spoke without drinking any amount of kiddush beverage, and/or
- Spoke before the kiddush leader drank at least 2 fl. oz. (59 ml) of wine (or grape juice) from his cup, and/or

- Heard someone make kiddush over a she'hakol, even if you drank from that cup.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: KIDDUSH: STANDING OR SITTING

Kiddush Standing or Sitting

Standing or sitting while drinking wine or other beverage for kiddush (or havdala) is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: TWO LOAVES (LECHEM MISHNEH)

JEWISH FESTIVALS: TWO LOAVES (LECHEM MISHNEH): WHAT TO USE

Bagels for HaMotzi

You may use two bagels for the two loaves (lechem mishneh), even though they are already sliced most of the way through, if you can pick up each bagel by its slightly smaller half and the larger half does not fall off.

Crackers for HaMotzi

The minimum volume of a cracker or crispbread (such as Ryvita or Wasa) that may be used for lechem mishneh is 1 oz. (30 ml).

Other Foods for HaMotzi

You may not substitute other foods for the two loaves (lechem mishneh). You may not, for example, use two apples or two cans of fish.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: TWO LOAVES (LECHEM MISHNEH): HOW MUCH MAY BE MISSING

How Much Challa May Be Missing

Less than 1/48th missing is still considered a whole loaf. So if you only have two challot (or other loaves of bread) for a Jewish festival, you might be able to use one loaf twice:

- Wash your hands,
- Say ha'motzi,
- Cut off a piece that is less than 1/48th of the loaf, and
- Eat it.

REASON You may consider the remainder of that loaf as still being a full loaf and you may re-use it for your Jewish festival morning meal.

NOTE If you have pieces of bread or other mezonot, you may:

- Cut off less than 1/48th of the loaf,
- Eat the additional pieces of bread to make a total of at least 1.9 fl. oz., and then
- Re-use the same loaf for Jewish festival morning.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: TWO LOAVES (LECHEM MISHNEH): HOW TO COVER

White Challa Cover Above and Below

As on Shabbat, on Jewish festivals you should place a white cover above and another below the challot to remind us of the layers of dew and "mun" in the desert that the Israelites ate for 40 years.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: TWO LOAVES (LECHEM MISHNEH): HOW TO WASH AND BLESS

How To Wash for HaMotzi

To view all *halachot* related to washing for *ha'motzi*, see [HaMotzi: Washing Hands](#).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: TWO LOAVES: (LECHEM MISHNEH): WHAT HAMOTZI COVERS

What HaMotzi Covers

See [Which Foods HaMotzi Covers](#).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: TWO LOAVES (LECHEM MISHNEH): HOW TO CUT

Mark the Challa

Mark in the bread with a knife where you will cut before *ha'motzi*.

NOTE It is customary to just make a mark on the *challa*. You may cut almost all of the way through, but you must be able to pick up the bread by the small end and have it hold the big end up.

Cut Upper Loaf for Jewish Festivals

For *Jewish festivals*, cut the upper loaf at night and day.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: TWO LOAVES (LECHEM MISHNEH): SALT

Why Dip Challa in Salt

Before eating bread (at any time, not just on *Shabbat* or *Jewish festivals*), the bread should be dipped in some salt. This makes it taste better and makes it like a sacrifice (which had salt added to it).

NOTE You may sprinkle salt on the bread instead, but *kabbala* recommends dipping.

EATING BEFORE KIDDUSH

Eating a Full Meal before Jewish Festival

See [Appetite for Jewish Festival Dinner](#).

Eating from Start of Jewish Festival until Kiddush

Once the *Jewish festival* begins for you—either at sunset or before (such as if you lit *Jewish festival* candles)—you may not eat or drink before hearing *kiddush*. Women and girls may make *kiddush* soon after lighting candles.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: DINNER

JEWISH FESTIVALS: BLESSING THE CHILDREN

Jewish Festivals: Blessing the Children

See [Blessing the Children/Birkat HaBanim](#).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: EVENING KIDDUSH

Jewish Festivals: Evening Kiddush

To fulfill the two requirements for *Jewish festival* evening *kiddush*:

1. Make *Kiddush*

Say, or hear, the three *Jewish festival* evening *kiddush* blessings/segments:

1. *Borei pri ha'gafen* (if on wine or grape juice—preferred option), OR *Ha'motzi* (on two *challot* if you have no wine or grape juice, since no *chamar medina* is allowed for *Jewish festival* evening *kiddush*; see [Jewish Festivals: Kiddush: Challot for Kiddush](#)) AND
2. *Asher bachar banu mi kol am.... mekadeish Yisrael v'hazmanim*, AND

3. She'hecheyanu on all Jewish festival nights, except the last two nights of Passover. So say she'hecheyanu on:

- Both nights of Rosh Hashana (in or outside of Eretz Yisrael),
- First two nights of Passover (1 night in Eretz Yisrael),
- Both nights of Shavuot (1 night in Eretz Yisrael),
- First two nights of Sukkot (1 night in Eretz Yisrael), and
- Nights of Shmini Atzeret and Simchat Torah (same day in Eretz Yisrael).

NOTE There is never any requirement on an individual to drink kiddush wine (except at the Passover seder), but the kiddush wine must be drunk by one or more persons.

NOTE A woman who had said she'hecheyanu when she lit the Jewish festival candles does NOT say she'hecheyanu again if she makes kiddush for herself, even when making kiddush at the Passover seder.

NOTE There is no need to eat a new fruit after saying she'hecheyanu on the second night of Shavuot, Passover, or Sukkot. This is not comparable to Rosh Hashana, since the second festival night was instituted due to uncertainty of the actual date of the holiday, while Rosh Hashana is considered to be one single, long day.

2. Establish a *halachic* “meal” (kovei'a se'uda).

For how to establish a *halachic* meal, see [Introduction to Jewish Festival “Eating a Meal” Requirements](#).

NOTE For evening kiddush, the custom is to go straight to the meal without delay (with no mezonot or snacking first). B'di'avad if you snacked, it is still OK.

NOTE At night on Jewish festivals (or Shabbat), you may not say kiddush at a place where you will not eat your evening meal (even if you will hear or say kiddush again at the place where you will eat the meal).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: DAY

JEWISH FESTIVALS: DAY: PRAYERS

JEWISH FESTIVALS: SHACHARIT: EATING

JEWISH FESTIVALS: SHACHARIT: EATING BEFORE

Eating before Making Jewish Festival Kiddush

As on Shabbat, you may eat non-mezonot and non-bread food before praying Jewish festival shacharit and without making kiddush, in order to avoid hunger or hypoglycemia (low blood sugar).

Women and Minimum Prayer before Jewish Festival Kiddush

The minimum prayer that a woman should say on Jewish festival (or Shabbat) morning before saying kiddush and eating some food is birchot ha'shachar.

Eating before Jewish Festival Midday

As on Shabbat, don't fast on Jewish festivals (except Yom Kippur!) past halachic midday.

- If you will not finish shacharit before halachic midday, you should eat or drink earlier in the day, even before you begin shacharit—water can be sufficient for this purpose.
- If you will finish shacharit, but not musaf, by halachic midday:
 - Finish shacharit,

- Make kiddush,
- Eat some mezonot, and then
- Return to say musaf.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: SHACHARIT: EATING AFTER

Eating Only after Jewish Festival Kiddush

As on Shabbat, once you have said the anida of Jewish festival shacharit, you may not eat any food until you have said (or heard) kiddush and finished kiddush requirements by either drinking 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) of wine/grape juice or eating at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of mezonot or bread.

JEWISH FESTIVAL DAY: YIZKOR

Jewish Festival Day: Reason for Yizkor

Yizkor on Yom Kippur serves as a type of elevation for the souls of dead people.

Jewish Festival Day: When To Say Yizkor

Yizkor is not required to be said at all, but it is the custom in most places. Yizkor is normally said on Yom Kippur (and the final day of Passover, the second day of Shavuot and on Shmini Atzeret), when many people attend the synagogue prayer services.

Yizkor may be said anytime you wish—even when it is not a Jewish festival--and does not require a minyan.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: MUSAF

JEWISH FESTIVALS: MUSAF: ADDITIONS FOR SACRIFICES

Jewish Festivals: Musaf: Additions for Sacrifices: Sukkot

In the anida of musaf for Sukkot, there is a different line added about the sacrifices for each day.

Jewish Festivals: Musaf: Additions for Sacrifices: Sukkot: Outside Eretz Yisrael

Since two days of Jewish festival are observed outside of Eretz Yisrael, read the lines for the sacrifice for both days that might have been the correct day.

EXCEPTION On second day of Sukkot, repeat the same lines said on the first day.

EXAMPLE On the 4th day of Sukkot (the 2nd day of chol ha'moed), say the lines for the 3rd day and 4th day. On Shmini Atzeret, say only the lines for Shmini Atzeret.

Jewish Festivals: Musaf: Additions for Sacrifices: Sukkot: In Eretz Yisrael

In Eretz Yisrael, read only the line for the actual (correct) day.

NOTE After the lines about the sacrifices, say u'minchatam v'niskeichem. If you are outside of Eretz Yisrael, you will need to say u'minchatam v'niskeichem twice:

EXAMPLE

- Say the line for the prior day's sacrifices and then say u'minchatam v'niskeichem.
- Then say the line for the sacrifices for the day you are at and, again, say u'minchatam v'niskeichem.

JEWISH FESTIVAL LUNCH

JEWISH FESTIVALS: DAYTIME KIDDUSH

Jewish Festivals: Daytime Kiddush

To fulfill the two requirements for Jewish festival daytime kiddush:

1. Say, or hear, at least #b and #c of these Jewish festival daytime kiddush blessings/segments:

a) Eileh mo'adei Adonai mikra'ei kodesh asher tikri'u otam b'mo'adam.

NOTE It is not a universal custom to say the above sentence.

b) Va'yidaber Moshe eht mo'adei Adonai el bnei yisrael.

NOTE It IS a universal custom to say the above sentence. AND

c) Borei pri ha'gafen (if on wine or grape juice), OR
She'hakol nihiyeh bi'dvaro (if on other beverage/chamar medina).

NOTE For Jewish festival (or Saturday) lunch and havdala, you may use any beverage (chamar medina) commonly drunk for social purposes (not just for thirst) in the country in which you are saying kiddush (say the blessing she'hakol instead of borei pri ha'gafen where appropriate).

NOTE There is never any requirement on an individual to drink kiddush wine (except at the Passover seder), but the kiddush wine must be drunk by one or more persons.

2. Establish a *halachic* “meal” (kovei'a se'uda).

You must establish the *halachic* meal required for kiddush shortly after hearing Jewish festival morning kiddush. See [How To Fulfill Eating Jewish Festival Second Meal](#).

NOTE If you make Jewish festival morning kiddush on any beverage except wine or grape juice, you must also eat mezonot or bread to establish the kiddush meal. If you do not want to eat bread or mezonot, only drinking 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of wine or grape juice within 30 seconds will fulfill all of the requirements for kiddush. If you have not fulfilled the requirements for kiddush, you may not eat other foods, such as fruit or fish at a kiddush.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: SECOND MEAL

How To Fulfill Eating Jewish Festival Second Meal

You must eat a second meal on Jewish festival (or Shabbat) day with 1.9 fl. oz., or 56 ml, of bread--even if you already said ha'motzi and ate bread at kiddush.

NOTE There is no essential time limit for eating the second meal, but it must be before you get distracted (hesech da'at). Otherwise, you must hear kiddush again and drink wine (or grape juice) or eat bread/mezonot before eating anything.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: ENDING

JEWISH FESTIVALS: ENDING: WHEN THEY END

Jewish Festivals: When Is

Jewish festivals (and Shabbat) end at “dark”: when three medium-sized stars are visible overhead.

NOTE When stars appear in the west (these are “large stars”), medium-sized stars should be visible overhead and the Jewish festival (or Shabbat) will be over.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: ENDING: BEFORE HAVDALA

Jewish Festivals: Ending: Before Havdala: Baruch HaMavdil

Say baruch ha'mavdil bein kodesh l'chol (without saying God's name!) if:

- It is already “dark” (you can see three medium-size stars--tzeit ha'kochavim), and
- You want to end the Jewish festival (and Shabbat) before saying ma'ariv's amida or havdala.

NOTE Saying this formula allows you to do melacha, but you may not eat or drink until you have said or heard havdala.

NOTE Men must still say the amida and men and women must say or hear havdala later even if they said

baruch ha'mavdil bein kodesh l'chol. For how late you may say havdala after a Jewish festival, see Jewish Festival Havdala at Night or Next Day.

Jewish Festivals: Ending: Before Havdala: Baruch HaMavdil and Birkat HaMazon

Saying Baruch ha'mavdil bein kodesh l'chol after dark at the end of a Jewish festival or of Rosh Hashana does not affect the additions you will then say in birkat ha'mazon.

SITUATION On a Jewish festival afternoon, you washed your hands, said ha'motzi, and started eating. It is now dark and the end of the Jewish festival.

WHAT TO DO You may say Baruch ha'mavdil bein kodesh l'chol and do melacha, and then

- Continue to eat your meal, or
- Say birkat ha'mazon INCLUDING ya'aleh v'yavo and ha'rachaman hu yanchileinu yom she'kulo tov.

Jewish Festivals: Ending: Before Havdala: Ata Chonantanu

As on Shabbat, if you forgot to say ata chonantanu after Jewish festivals, you do not need to repeat the amida. But, if you then ate food before saying havdala, you must repeat the amida including ata chonantanu.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: ENDING: HAVDALA

JEWISH FESTIVALS: ENDING: HAVDALA: WHEN TO SAY

Jewish Festival Havdala at Night or Next Day

Say Jewish festival havdala at night. If this is impossible, say it the next day but only until sunset on the day after the Jewish festival.

NOTE This is different from havdala after Shabbat!

JEWISH FESTIVALS: ENDING: HAVDALA: WHO MUST SAY/HEAR

Men and Women Must Say/Hear Havdala

The following must each hear or say havdala for themselves:

- Men and boys 13 years old and up, and
- Women and girls 12 years old and up.

NOTE As on Shabbat, any male Jew above 13 years old and any female Jew above 12 years old may say Jewish festival havdala for himself/herself and for anyone else.

NOTE A husband's or father's hearing havdala at synagogue does not cover his family's obligation to hear havdala. He may say havdala for his wife and children even if he fulfilled his personal havdala requirement at the synagogue. (Men who say havdala for their families normally intend not to be covered by the synagogue's havdala).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: ENDING: HAVDALA: WHAT TO USE

Jewish Festivals: Ending: Havdala: No Candle or Spices

For Jewish festival havdala, use only wine (or a substitute, chamar medina, beverage); NO candle or spices (unless the Jewish festival also coincided with Shabbat).

Jewish Festivals: Ending: Havdala: Beverage

Wine or grape juice is the preferred beverage for havdala, but you may use any common beverage (chamar medina) that is drunk for social reasons.

Jewish Festivals: Ending: Havdala: Filling the Cup

You must pour at least 4 fl. oz. (119 ml--a [revi'it](#)) of wine or other beverage into the [havdala](#) cup--this is [halacha](#). However, to symbolize that we are blessed ([siman bracha](#)) with wealth, overflow the cup (non-binding custom).

NOTE Do not drink the overflow, to show that we are so rich that we do not need the spilled beverage.

NOTE Do not overflow a cup containing [shmita](#) wine!

Jewish Festivals: Ending: Havdala: How Much To Drink

To fulfill the commandment of [havdala](#) (or [kiddush](#)), the person making [kiddush](#) must drink at least 2 fl. oz. (59 ml) within 30 seconds from the [kiddush](#) cup. However, drinking at least 4 fl. oz. (119 ml--a [revi'it](#)) from the [havdala](#) cup within 30 seconds allows you to say [bracha achrona](#).

Jewish Festivals: Ending: Havdala: Who Drinks the Beverage

For men: No one should drink the [havdala](#) beverage except the person saying [havdala](#). This is a non-binding custom, not a [halacha](#).

For women: This custom does NOT apply to women. Women who say [havdala](#) for themselves may give their [havdala](#) beverage to someone else to drink.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: ENDING: HAVDALA: STANDING OR SITTING

Havdala Standing or Sitting

Sitting or standing while drinking [havdala](#) (or [kiddush](#)) beverage is a non-binding custom, not a [halacha](#).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: PERMITTED/FORBIDDEN ACTIONS

JEWISH FESTIVALS: ACQUISITIONS

Jewish Festivals: Acquisitions

You may not acquire items ([kinyan](#)) on [Jewish festivals](#) unless they are needed for that [Jewish festival](#) or for a [mitzva](#). The classic example is bringing food or wine to a house for [Jewish festival](#) lunch, which the house owner acquires on the [Jewish festival](#) for the [Jewish festival](#). Other permissible [kinyan](#) on [Jewish festivals](#) is giving:

- [Siddur](#), [machzor](#), or [chumash](#) to use on that day.
- Permissible medicine for use on that day.

On bringing mail or a newspaper into your house on [Jewish festivals](#), see [Jewish Festivals: Bringing Mail inside House](#) and [Jewish Festivals: Bringing Newspaper inside House](#).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: ANIMALS

Jewish Festivals: Trapping Animals

You may not trap animals on [Jewish festivals](#).

Jewish Festivals: Releasing Trapped Wild Animal

As on [Shabbat](#), on [Jewish festivals](#) you may release a wild animal that is trapped in a trap or cage by opening the door or gate, but you may not move or lift the cage.

Jewish Festivals: Feeding Trapped Wild Animal

You may not feed wild animals on [Jewish festivals](#). But if you intend to keep the animal, you MUST feed it.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: AIR CONDITIONERS

Jewish Festivals: Adjusting Air Conditioner Louvers

As on [Shabbat](#), you may adjust air conditioner louvers on [Jewish festivals](#).

Jewish Festivals: Adjusting Air Conditioner Temperatures

On Jewish festivals, you may:

- Lower the temperature when an air conditioner compressor is running, and
- Raise the temperature when the compressor is off.

NOTE You may do so ONLY with an analog control; not with a digital control.

REASON Grama is permissible on Jewish festivals (but not on Shabbat).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: BATHING

Jewish Festivals: Showering

It is forbidden to shower on Jewish festivals.

Jewish Festivals: Blotting Hair

You may blot your hair with a towel on Jewish festivals as long as you don't squeeze or wring out your hair.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: BIOLUMINESCENCE

Jewish Festivals: Creating Bioluminescent Light

You may not create bioluminescent light, as with glowsticks, on Jewish festivals.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: BOOKS

Jewish Festivals: Marking Pages in Books

You may mark pages in a book, whether secular or holy, on Jewish festivals by:

- Putting slips of paper in the book (but only if the slips were torn before the Jewish festival began), or
- Bending the corners.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: BRAIDING HAIR

Jewish Festivals: Braiding Hair

As on Shabbat, you may not braid (or unbraid) hair on Jewish festivals.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: BRUSHING TEETH

Jewish Festivals: Water, Tooth Powder, Toothwashing Liquid

You may use water, tooth powder, and toothwashing liquid on Jewish festivals. But, to avoid squeezing the toothbrush bristles, you must put the water or toothwashing liquid into your mouth and not on the brush.

Jewish Festivals: Flossing Teeth

You may floss your teeth on Jewish festivals as long as your gums do not bleed.

Jewish Festivals: Cutting Floss

You may not cut floss on Jewish festivals, so it is best to cut the floss before the festival starts.

NOTE Even if you did not cut the floss ahead of time, you may still pull out a length of floss and clean your teeth (but be careful not to cut off the floss when you are finished.)

JEWISH FESTIVALS: BUSINESSES

JEWISH FESTIVALS: BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

Jewish Festivals: Business Ownership

A business whose sole or major owner is Jewish may not be operated on Jewish festivals (and Shabbat), even by non-Jewish employees. There may be possibilities to allow operation by relinquishing majority control, but the issues are complex and rabbinic guidance is essential.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: INTERNET BUSINESS

Jewish Festivals: Internet Business

Running a business that accepts orders and payments over the internet during Jewish festivals (and Shabbat) is complicated. The main issue is collecting payments. A rabbi should be consulted for specific cases.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: SELLING TICKETS FOR FLIGHTS

Jewish Festivals: Selling Tickets for Flights

If you are a travel agent, you may sell airline tickets during a weekday to a Jew who will fly on a Jewish festival (even though Jews are not allowed to fly--except in some emergencies).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: CHILDREN

JEWISH FESTIVALS: CHILDREN AND MELACHA

Jewish Festivals: Children and Melacha

As on Shabbat, you may not have a child, even younger than gil chinuch, do melacha for you on a Jewish festival.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: CHILDREN'S GAMES

JEWISH FESTIVALS: BALL PLAYING

Jewish Festivals and Ball Playing in Yard or Eruv

Playing ball is not forbidden on Jewish festivals, as long as the Jewish festival does not coincide with Shabbat (in which case, it is not forbidden to play ball in an enclosed private yard, but it is not in the spirit of Jewish festivals or Shabbat).

Jewish Festivals and Retrieving Ball

You may retrieve a ball or other item that has fallen into a bush on a Jewish festival, but only if you can get it without moving the bush.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: CARD PLAYING

Jewish Festivals: Cards If No Gambling or Melacha

Playing cards is not forbidden on Jewish festivals as long as you do not gamble or do melacha. As on Shabbat, you may sort a deck of cards into suits.

NOTE However, playing cards is not in the spirit of Jewish festivals (or Shabbat).

Jewish Festivals: Removing Unwanted Cards

Unlike on Shabbat, on a Jewish festival you may select (boreir) and remove unwanted cards (such as Jokers).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: STICKERS

Jewish Festivals: Stickers

Children may apply or remove stickers for decoration or "jewelry" if the stickers and earrings are likely to come off in less than 24 hours.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: CLOTHING

JEWISH FESTIVALS: REMOVING DIRT FROM CLOTHING

Jewish Festivals: Non-Embedded Dirt

You may remove non-embedded dirt or hair from the surface of clothing on Jewish festivals. You may not remove dust or burrs and anything that penetrates the surface of the garment.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: FOLDING CLOTHES

Jewish Festivals: Folding Clothes on Existing Crease

Don't fold clothes (including a *talit*) on an existing crease on *Jewish festivals*.

Jewish Festivals: Folding Clothes on New Crease

You may fold clothes on *Jewish festivals* by making a new crease, but only if there is already an existing one on the garment. If there is not a crease from before you used the garment, you may not make one.

REASON This avoids smoothing out clothing (a forbidden action on *Jewish festivals* and *Shabbat*).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: REMOVING TAGS FROM CLOTHING

Jewish Festivals: Removing Tags from Clothing

You may not cut a tag off clothes on *Jewish festivals*.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: COLORING (TZOVEI'A)

Introduction to Jewish Festivals: Coloring (Tzovei'a)

Since wool and/or leather was dyed for the *Tabernacle* in the desert, similar actions are forbidden today on *Jewish festivals* (and *Shabbat*). Any action that causes one item or substance to change its color may be forbidden, even if it is not related to dyeing wool or leather.

Jewish Festivals: Coloring (Tzovei'a): Food

You may not add a substance, whether food or other, in order to color food on *Jewish festivals* (and *Shabbat*). You may add food to other food even if it will cause the other food to become colored as long as that is not your intention.

Jewish Festivals: Coloring (Tzovei'a): Cloth

You may wipe a stain off of your face or hands onto a cloth or piece of paper if you do it to clean your face or hands on *Jewish festivals* (and *Shabbat*), but not if you want to color the cloth or paper.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: COURIERS AND PACKAGES

Jewish Festivals: Shipment that Arrives on Festival

You may not send a shipment--such as Fedex or another express delivery service--to arrive on *Jewish festivals*. However, you may tell the shipper that it is OK with you if it is delivered at night after the festival.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: CUT FLOWERS

Jewish Festivals: Putting Cut Flowers in Water

You may not put cut flowers in a vase or other utensil (with water in it) on *Jewish festivals*.

Jewish Festivals: Adding Water to Cut Flowers

You may add water to cut flowers in a utensil on *Jewish festivals* as long as there are no unopened buds that will open on the *Jewish festival*.

Jewish Festivals: Moving Cut Flowers

You may move cut flowers in a vase or other utensil on *Jewish festivals* if they were in the vase or utensil since before the *Jewish festival* started.

NOTE If there are still some unopened buds on the stems, you may not put the cut flowers into direct sunlight.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: DOORS

Jewish Festivals: Replacing Doors

You may not replace a door on its hinges and you may not replace a sliding door onto its track on Jewish festivals.

REASON This is due to the melācha of boneh (building).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: ELECTRICITY

Jewish Festivals: Turning Off Electrical Devices

You may not turn off or disconnect an operating electrical device (such as an alarm, appliance, light, oven, or any machinery) on Jewish festivals, even using a shinui and even if the noise will prevent you from sleeping. You may ask a non-Jew to turn it off, but you may not ask a Jew, not even a child below bar/bat mitzva age.

NOTE If the device catches on fire, you may call the fire department or unplug it. However, there must be an actual danger or actual fire in order for you to disconnect it yourself. You may not disconnect the device if there is only a chance that it will catch fire, unless an indirect means (grama) is possible (in which case, it would be permissible; consult a rabbi).

Jewish Festivals: Electric Eyes

On Jewish festivals, when walking into the path of an electric eye:

- You may walk into one that prevents a door from closing.
- You may not walk into one that causes the door to open.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: ELEVATORS/ESCALATORS

Jewish Festivals: Riding Elevators

You may ride an elevator on Jewish festivals if:

- The elevator stops at all floors, or
- A non-Jew pushes the button in order to ride the elevator himself. But:
 - You may only get off on the floor he or she has stopped at (he or she may not push a button for a different floor for you).
 - You must enter the elevator while the door is already opened but has not yet begun to close (since your presence keeps the door open but does not *cause* it to open).

NOTE You may not ride an elevator at all if a Jew pushes the button to any floor.

Jewish Festival: Riding Escalators

You may ride escalators on Jewish festivals if they run constantly and are not controlled by a foot treadle or an electric eye.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: EXERCISE

Jewish Festivals: Strengthening

You may not exercise on Jewish festivals to strengthen your body. You may exercise on Jewish festivals for enjoyment, for socializing, or other fun purposes if:

- No melacha is involved, and
- It does not appear to be for healing (refu'a) or health purposes.

EXAMPLE

You may run on Jewish festivals if you like to run. You may not run on Jewish festivals if you don't like running but would do it to lose weight or to get in shape.

Jewish Festivals: Trapeze

You may swing and fly on a trapeze on Jewish festivals.

Jewish Festivals: Roller Blading

You may roller blade on Jewish festivals.

Jewish Festival: Swimming

You may not swim on Jewish festivals.

Jewish Festival: Weight-Lifting

You may change weights on barbells or on a completely mechanical (no electrical parts; no timers or indicators) weight machine on Jewish festivals but only for enjoyment, not for exercise.

Jewish Festivals: Stretching

You may stretch on Jewish festivals (and Shabbat) to make yourself more comfortable but not if it appears that you are doing it as exercise for health.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: FLASHLIGHTS

Jewish Festivals: Turning On Flashlight

You may not turn a flashlight on or off after sunset at the beginning a Jewish festival (until the holiday is over).

Jewish Festivals: Flashlight On before Festival

If you turn on a flashlight before a Jewish festival starts, you may carry the flashlight with you if you need the light.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: FOOD PREPARATION

INTRODUCTION TO JEWISH FESTIVALS: FOOD PREPARATION

Introduction to Jewish Festivals and Food Preparation

Food preparation forbidden on Jewish festivals includes these forbidden melachot:

- Preparing soil for planting (choreish)
- Causing plants to grow (zorei'a)
- Harvesting (kotzeir)
- Gathering (mi'ameir)
- Threshing (dash; such as milking a cow into clean container or squeezing juice for drinking)
- Winnowing (zoreh)
- Selecting (boreir) (for exceptions, see [Introduction to Jewish Festivals: Selecting/Boreir](#))
- Grinding (tochein) (Grinding may be OK with a shinu'i; ask a rabbi for specific cases)
- Sifting (merakeid).

However, you may do all food preparation necessary for baking or cooking food for that day--from kneading dough (kneading, or lash) to cooking and baking (ofeh) from an existing flame.

NOTE You may not use electric appliances to knead dough and you may not turn on an electric oven.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: CHECKING FOR BUGS

Checking Product for Bugs on Jewish Festivals

You may check produce for bugs on Jewish festivals. You may remove the bug but not by hand.

EXAMPLE You may rinse a bug off produce.

NOTE You may not kill bugs on Jewish festivals (or Shabbat). To do something that is certain to kill the bug is forbidden; if might not kill the bug, it is OK.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: COOKING

JEWISH FESTIVALS: EXISTING FLAME

Jewish Festivals: Cooking from an Existing Flame

You may cook food on all Jewish festivals (except Yom Kippur or when they coincide with Shabbat) as long as the fire, oven, or other cooking appliance:

- Has been on since before the Jewish festival began, OR
- Is lit during the Jewish festival from an existing flame, such as from a pilot light or yahrzeit candle lit before the Jewish festival began.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: ASKING NON-JEW TO TURN ON A STOVE OR OVEN

Jewish Festivals: Asking Non-Jew To Turn on a Stove or Oven

You may directly ask a non-Jew to turn on a stove or oven for you.

NOTE Be careful about bishul akum problems if a non-Jew will then be cooking food for Jews on that stove or oven.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: ADJUSTING STOVE/OVEN TEMPERATURE CONTROLS

JEWISH FESTIVALS: DIGITAL-DISPLAY DEVICES

Digital-Display Ovens and Stoves on Jewish Festivals

You may not adjust digital-display ovens and stoves (and also refrigerators or other electronic devices) on Jewish festivals unless they were designed for Jewish festival use.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: RAISING/LOWERING FLAMES/HEAT

Jewish Festivals: Raising Flames/Heat

On Jewish festivals, you may adjust (analog-only) temperature controls of gas and electric stoves and ovens UP when the heating element is ON, as verified by an indicator light or some other means.

Jewish Festivals: Lowering Flames/Heat

On Jewish festivals, you may adjust (analog-only) temperature controls of gas and electric stoves and ovens DOWN but ONLY to prevent the food's getting overcooked or burnt (not for convenience or to save money). One permitted way to lower a burner temperature is to put a pot of water on the burner and lower the flame so the water does not boil away (but you must use some of the heated water during the holiday!).

NOTE For an electric stove or oven, you may only adjust the temperature DOWN when the heating element is OFF, as shown by an indicator light.

NOTE An analog control used on Jewish festivals must allow continuous changes to the temperature: if an analog control has discreet settings, it may not be used on Jewish festivals!

JEWISH FESTIVALS: COOKING ON FIRST DAY FOR SECOND DAY

Jewish Festivals: Cooking on First Day for Second Day

You may not cook on the first day of a Jewish festival for the second day. But you may cook enough food for both days in the same pot, even l'chatchila (but not bein ha'shmashot). You must eat at least a normal-sized portion before sunset on the first Jewish festival day.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: ERUV TAVSHILIN

Jewish Festivals: Personal Eruv Tavshilin

One person per household should make an eruv tavshilin in order to allow cooking on a Jewish festival for the next day, if the next day is Shabbat. The person sets aside something cooked and something baked and says a formula (which can be found in most siddurs).

NOTE An eruv tavshilin made by one person covers everyone in that household, including guests staying over for that Jewish festival--even if he or she did not intend it to cover anyone else.

Jewish Festivals: Eating Eruv Tavshilin Food

You are not required to eat food set aside for an eruv tavshilin, but the custom is to eat it for se'uda shlishit.

Jewish Festivals: Rabbi's Eruv Tavshilin

If you forgot to make an eruv tavshilin, you may rely on the eruv tavshilin said by the local rabbi only once in your lifetime.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: FREEZING

Jewish Festivals: Making Ice Cubes

You may fill an ice cube tray on Jewish festivals if you intend to use the ice cubes on the same day.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: GRINDING

Grinding on Jewish Festivals: How Finely You May Grind

You may not grind, grate, or even finely chop or dice food on Jewish festivals. You may not use a garlic press on Jewish festivals.

The minimum size before violating the melacha of tochein varies by the type of food. The resulting pieces must be somewhat larger than the size you would normally use.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: SALTING

Jewish Festivals: Salting Food

You may not salt certain foods, whether cooked or raw, on Jewish festivals if the:

- Foods have a shell, such as corn kernels (on or off of the cob), beans, peas;
- Salt has not been heated previously (such as during salt processing) and the food you are salting is hot (over 120° F, or 49° C); or
- Salt will materially change the flavor of the food, especially if it causes a chemical change, as when salting cut or chopped onions or salting tomatoes.

NOTE You may dip the tomato or other food into salt using your hand as long as you eat the food immediately afterwards.

NOTE If the food has oil in it, you may add salt even if the food contains onions or has a shell.

NOTE Even a thin layer of oil will exempt the salt.

NOTE You may pour salt into a liquid or a liquid onto salt, but you may not make a saturated salt solution on Jewish festivals.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: SELECTING/BOREIR

Introduction to Jewish Festivals: Selecting/Boreir

Issues of boreir are almost always d'oraita, not d'rabanan, and therefore we are stringent in applying restrictions concerning boreir.

Unlike on Shabbat (when you must remove some good along with the bad so as not to violate the melacha of boreir), on Jewish festivals you may remove the bad from the good if it is easier to take the undesired food from the desired food.

Desired from Undesired

You may select desired food from undesired (or inedible) substances if you follow these two rules:

1. Cannot Use Specialized Separating Utensil

Don't use a utensil--such as a slotted spoon, peeler, or sieve--that is specialized for separating:

- Food from other food, or
- Food from other substances.

NOTE You may remove dirt from a carrot's surface by scraping the peel with a knife (a tool not specialized for separating food), but not by using a peeler.

EXCEPTION As on Shabbat, an action necessary to eat a food normally (derech achila) does not violate the prohibition of boreir. So you may peel a food that is normally separated from its peel or shell in order to be eaten, as long as you do not use a specialized instrument to do so.

EXAMPLES

- You may peel an orange by hand, with or without a knife.
- You may remove the shells from peanuts by hand.
- You may remove the shell from a hard-boiled egg by hand.

2. Do This Shortly before You Eat the Food

Prepare the food soon before it will be eaten.

NOTE You may prepare the food as much in advance as you would normally prepare a meal which you will eat--even as much as several hours.

EXAMPLES

On Jewish festivals, you may:

- Remove fish bones from fish while you are eating the fish or just before eating it.
- Cut open a melon such as a cantaloupe and remove any seeds normally.

Jewish Festivals: Separating Good Food from Bad in Your Mouth

You may separate food inside your mouth while eating, even if you remove the bad from the good, on Jewish festivals (it is not boreir.)

Jewish Festivals: Salt Shaker with Rice

You may not, due to boreir, use a salt shaker into which rice has been added (in order to keep the salt dry).

Jewish Festivals: Lemon Seeds

You may remove lemon seeds (pits) from food, such as after you have squeezed out some lemon juice, but not with a specialized utensil such as a sieve or slotted spoon.

Jewish Festivals: Washing-Draining Food

You may wash and drain olives and other canned fruits and vegetables on Jewish festivals (it is not boreir unless the food in the can is dirty).

Jewish Festivals: Dropping Unwanted Food

When you have food mixed with non-desired substances, you may remove the non-desired ones by picking up the entire mixture and letting the non-desired elements fall away.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: SEPARATING CHALLA

Jewish Festivals: Challa Not Separated before Festival

On Jewish festivals, you may not separate challa from loaves baked before the festival, as follows:

- In Eretz Yisrael, you may not eat bread from which challa was not separated if required (for more details, see [Separating the Challa Portion](#) and [Challa Separation](#)) until after the Jewish festival ends and you have separated the challa.
- Outside Eretz Yisrael, you may:
 - Leave one loaf until after the Jewish festival,
 - Eat as much as you want of the remaining loaves, and then
 - Separate the challa from the loaf after haydala.

NOTE If the bread was baked on a Jewish festival, you may separate challa on the Jewish festival.

NOTE This is true even for loaves that came from dough of more than 2.5 lbs of flour.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: SQUEEZING JUICE

Jewish Festivals: Squeezing a Lemon

As on Shabbat, on Jewish festivals you may squeeze a lemon (or other fruit) onto solid food—or mostly solid, even wet, food—that you will eat right away, but not into a container or into a liquid.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: FANS

Jewish Festivals: Moving a Fan

You may pick up and move a fan on Jewish festivals if you need it elsewhere.

NOTE You may not plug in the fan or unplug it on Jewish festivals.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: FLUIDS ON SKIN

Jewish Festivals: Fluids on Skin

For using fluids on skin during Jewish festivals, see [Jewish Festivals: Sunscreen](#).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: GLASSES

Jewish Festivals: Eye Glasses

You may wash reading glasses or sunglasses using liquid soap on Jewish festivals.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: GRAMA

Jewish Festivals: Temperature Controls and Grama

On Jewish festivals, “grama” (indirect action) is permissible. For adjusting temperature controls on Jewish festivals, see [Jewish Festivals: Adjusting Air Conditioner Temperatures](#) and [Jewish Festivals: Adjusting Heater](#).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: HAIR/BEARDS

Jewish Festivals: Hair Brushing

You may brush your hair on a Jewish festival, but only if the brush bristles bend easily. You may not use stiff bristles or combs since they might pull out some hair.

NOTE Using a special brush for Jewish festivals (and Shabbat) is recommended but not required.

Jewish Festival: Hair Cuts/Shaving

You may not have your hair cut and you may not shave on Jewish festivals (and Shabbat).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: HEATERS

Jewish Festivals: Adjusting Heater

On Jewish festivals, you may adjust a heater with an analog thermostat:

- UP when running, and
- DOWN or OFF when not running.

REASON This is due to grama, which is permissible on Jewish festivals (but not on Shabbat).

NOTE You may not adjust a digital thermostat.

Jewish Festivals: Moving Electric Heater

You may pick up and move an electric heater that is ON on Jewish festivals (and Shabbat) only if:

- You need the heat elsewhere, or
- You need to use the space where the heater is standing.

NOTE You may not unplug it.

Jewish Festivals: Moving Flame Heater

Unlike on Shabbat, you may move a kerosene or other heater that has a flame burning on Jewish festivals.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: INSECTS

Jewish Festivals: Insects that May Carry Diseases

You may kill mosquitoes and other insects on Jewish festivals if they carry deadly diseases, which makes the insects a danger (sakana). You may kill insects that might carry diseases even if you do not know for certain.

Jewish Festivals: Biting or Stinging Insects

If insects such as bees or non-diseased mosquitoes don't carry diseases but they bite or sting you, you may kill them on Jewish festivals, as well as trapping them or chasing them away with bug spray. Unlike on Shabbat, on a Jewish festival you may kill insects that are a nuisance, such as gnats or flies. These halachalot apply to all Jewish festivals unless they fall on Shabbat (or are Yom Kippur).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: KNOTS

Jewish Festivals: Permanent Knots

You may not tie permanent knots on Jewish festivals (and Shabbat).

NOTE A permanent knot is a knot intended to remain tied for at least 24 hours. Any strings you connect on Jewish festivals must be able to easily come undone, such as a bow.

NOTE Since opinions differ on what constitutes a permanent knot, we do not even tie knots that are intended to be untied, such as a double figure-eight knot.

Jewish Festivals: Double Bows

You may not tie a double bow on Jewish festivals.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: LCDS/LEDS

Jewish Festivals: Changing LCD/LED

As on Shabbat, you may not use any item on a Jewish festival that will cause an LCD or LED to form letters or change an LCD display.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: LAUNDRY

Introduction to Jewish Festivals: Laundry

You may not wash or hang up wet laundry on Jewish festivals (or Shabbat). The halachot for drying laundry depend on whether you use a clothesline or a dryer:

Jewish Festivals: Laundry: Clothesline

You may only take down laundry on Jewish festivals if it was dry before sunset at the start of the festival, and only if you don't:

- Transfer the laundry from one *halachic* domain to another (*hotza'a*), or
- Give the impression that the laundry had been washed on the Jewish festival (mar'it ayin).

If laundry on a clothesline is still wet at sunset before the festival, the laundry is muktza and you may not take it down or use it during the *festival*. This is different from the case of a dryer.

REASON On the clothes line, there is no certainty that the laundry will dry during the festival (it might rain, it might be cold or cloudy...), so the person may not have in mind that it will dry during the festival.

Jewish Festivals: Laundry: Dryer

Laundry in a dryer (even if it was wet at sunset) that was turned on before sunset beginning the Jewish festival (or Shabbat) is not muktza, even if you do not intend to wear it. You may remove the dry laundry from the dryer on the Jewish festival as long as no light goes on.

JEWISH FESTIVAL: LIGHTS

Jewish Festivals: Redirecting Lighting Fixture

You may redirect a light fixture on Jewish festivals, but only by moving it with a stick or other object, not directly with your hand.

NOTE During Jewish festivals, you may not:

- Turn this light on or off, or
- Disconnect its plug or light bulb.

Jewish Festivals: Moving Lighting Fixture

You may directly move a lamp or other light fixture to where you need the light but you may not:

- Plug or unplug the plug from the wall.
- Turn the light on or off.

Jewish Festivals: Unplugging Turned-Off Light

You may unplug a turned-off light on Jewish festivals if:

- You need the space where the lamp is situated, or
- The cord is in the way and you want to remove it so someone doesn't trip.

NOTE You may not turn off the light on Jewish festivals.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: MAIL AND PERIODICALS

Jewish Festivals: Bringing Mail inside House

Do not bring mail inside the house on Jewish festivals, unless it was delivered:

- Open

REASON Most mail is muktza on Jewish festivals since it cannot be opened or used without doing melacha, AND

- From within techum Shabbat, AND
- By a non-Jew.

Jewish Festivals: Bringing Newspaper inside House

You may bring a newspaper, magazine, or other reading material inside the house on Jewish festivals and read it, UNLESS it was:

- Printed on Shabbat or a Jewish festival, OR
- Brought from outside the techum Shabbat, OR
- Delivered by a Jew.

If any of these conditions apply, you may not move it or use it in any way during the Jewish festival, even if all of the other conditions permit its use. You may use it once the Jewish festival is over.

NOTE As a policy, you may want to tell delivery services (newspapers, post office, etc.) that you do not need to have the item delivered until after dark.

REASON If delivered on the Jewish festival day, it will not be done at your request and, if it is reading material, you may read the material as long as the other conditions permit it--see above.

NOTE If you do not know where the reading material came from, you may not use it on the Jewish festival.

NOTE Although taking possession of the newspaper, magazine, or other reading material is “acquisition” (kinyan), you may do so since you will use it on the Jewish festival.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: MAKEUP

Jewish Festivals: Applying Makeup

Girls and women may not put on any nail polish or makeup on Jewish festivals (and Shabbat), including mascara and lipstick.

NOTE Regarding makeup that consists only of powder (no oil or liquid ingredients) and that comes off easily, ask your rabbi. Beware of “Shabbat makeup” that stays on longer than normal makeup but is forbidden to be applied on Shabbat or Jewish festivals.

Jewish Festivals: Removing Makeup

Girls and women may remove makeup or nail polish on Jewish festivals (or Shabbat).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: MEDICINES

INTRODUCTION TO JEWISH FESTIVALS: MEDICINES

Introduction to Jewish Festivals: Medicines

Jewish Festivals: Medicines: When To Take

Medicine generally may not be used on the d'oraita Jewish festival days.

Jewish Festivals: Medicine for Chronic Diseases

You may take medicine on Jewish festivals (whether d'oraita or d'rabanana) for:

- Chronic diseases, such as Parkinson's disease, or

- Any disease that affects your entire body.

Jewish Festivals: Medicine for Non-Chronic Diseases

You may take medicine on Jewish festivals for non-chronic illnesses, if skipping one day will prevent cure.

You may not take medicine for non-chronic illnesses if skipping a day will just delay your being cured (unless the disease affects your entire body--in which case, you may take the medicine).

Jewish Festivals: Medicines: When To Take: D'Oraita Festival Days

Here are the d'oraita Jewish festivals:

- First day of Sukkot, Passover, and Shavuot
- Seventh day of Passover
- Shmini Atzeret (8th day of Sukkot)
- Yom Kippur
- Both days of Rosh Hashana (even though the second day is *d'rabanan*).

On these days, as well as on *d'rabanan Jewish festivals*, you:

- MUST take medicine whenever there is any question of a life-threatening disease or condition.
- MAY take medicine for a condition that affects the entire body (illness, weakness, etc.). Consult a rabbi if possible.

EXCEPTION You may not smear substances on skin UNLESS the illness is life-threatening, in which case even smearing is permitted.

- MAY use some medicines if only part of your body is affected by a non-life-threatening disease--consult a rabbi.

Jewish Festivals: Medicines: When To Take: D' Rabanan Festival Days

You may take medicines for any reason on d'rabanan Jewish festivals--even medicines not allowed on the first day of Jewish festivals--except:

- Medicines that you smear on skin.
- If the Jewish festival falls on Shabbat (which can only be second day of Shavuot).

NOTE The d'rabanan Jewish festivals are the second day of Jewish festivals except Rosh Hashana (actually, the second day of Rosh Hashana IS *d'rabanan* but has the status of d'oraita), plus the last day of Passover and Simchat Torah outside of Eretz Yisrael.

Jewish Festivals: Squeezing, Dabbing, Smearing

As on Shabbat, you may squeeze a tube of cream on Jewish festivals, but you might not be able to use the cream on the Jewish festival for other reasons—consult a rabbi.

NOTE Smearing creams or ointments is permitted only in life-threatening situations. Otherwise, you may not smear cream on skin on a Jewish festival (or Shabbat) even using a shinu'i such as using the back of your hand or a toe.

Dabbing is permitted, but only when you are permitted to use medicine.

EXAMPLE

You may use cream on a Jewish festival (and Shabbat) by dabbing (you may ONLY dab--you may not SMEAR cream) for a bee sting if it will affect the entire body. You may not use cream for a mosquito bite, since it is only a local irritation.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: PAINKILLERS

Jewish Festivals: When You May Take a Painkiller

You may take a painkiller on the first day of Jewish festivals if the pain:

- Affects your entire body, or
- Keeps you awake.

NOTE This also becomes the criterion for whether to take the pain killer during the daytime: if the pain you feel during the day would keep you awake if you were trying to sleep.

NOTE You may take painkillers without any restrictions on the second Jewish festival day (except Rosh Hashana).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: MOPPING

Jewish Festivals: Mopping

You may squeegee a floor--as is commonly done in Israel--on Jewish festivals (or Shabbat), but you may not push the water onto earth or plants.

You may mop up a local spill, but only without squeezing out the rag or mop.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: MUSIC

Jewish Festivals: Kazoos/Whistles

You may not use a kazoo or a whistle on Jewish festivals, but you may whistle with your mouth.

Jewish Festivals: Listening to Non-Jewish Musicians

You may listen to non-Jewish musicians performing on Jewish festivals if:

- You do not need a ticket, and
- They are not playing particularly for Jews.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: NAIL CUTTING

Jewish Festivals: Having Nails Cut

You may not cut your nails or have your nails cut on Jewish festivals (and Shabbat).

JEWISH FESTIVALS: NON-JEWS (SHABBAT GOY)

Jewish Festivals: Asking a Non-Jew To Do Melacha D'Oraita

Although you may not normally tell a non-Jew to do melacha d'oraita on a Jewish festival, even for the purpose of doing a mitzva, the non-Jew is not forbidden from doing melacha if he/she wants to do so.

NOTE To save a life, even a Jew may do melacha d'oraita.

Jewish Festival: Inviting Non-Jews to Meal

You may not cook food specifically for a non-Jew on a Jewish festival. You may only invite a non-Jew for a meal on a Jewish festival if you inform him or her ahead of time that you will not cook something special for him or her.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: OPENING/SEALING/TEARING

JEWISH FESTIVALS: BOTTLES

Jewish Festivals: Opening Plastic Bottles

You may completely open plastic bottle caps on plastic bottles on Jewish festivals (even if doing so will leave a plastic ring on the bottle), as long as it is theoretically possible to dispense the liquid without completely separating the cap from its seal.

REASON Since liquid can be poured with the cap still attached, we have not violated the Jewish festival by making a sealed bottle into a “new utensil.”

NOTE If you will destroy letters that are printed on the cap, you may not open the bottle.

Jewish Festivals: Opening Metal Bottle Caps

You may not open metal bottle caps on Jewish festivals if a metal ring will be left after doing so. You may break that ring or simply open the bottle before the Jewish festival (or simply open the bottle and reclose it such that when you open in again, no metal will be broken).

NOTE If you need the contents for a Jewish festival (such as if it is a bottle of wine), you may ask a non-Jew to open the bottle for you. But if it is wine that is not cooked/mevushal, the wine will become non-kosher once opened and handled by the non-Jew.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: TWIST-TIES

Jewish Festivals: Non-Permanent Twist-Ties

You may twist or untwist twist ties on Jewish festivals (and Shabbat), but only if you intend them to be a non-permanent seal.

NOTE If you will (at any time in the future—even long after the Jewish festival is over) remove the twist-tie, it is considered non-permanent.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: PUMPS

Jewish Festivals: Well Water

You may use water from a well on Jewish festivals (as on Shabbat) via an automatic pump that fills a reservoir once the water level drops. But you may not operate the pump directly and you may not turn the pump on or off.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: REFRIGERATORS

Jewish Festivals: Opening Refrigerator Door with LEDs

As on Shabbat, do not open a refrigerator door that has LEDs that illuminate when the door is opened on Jewish festivals.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: ROOM SENSORS

Jewish Festivals: Covering Motion Detectors

SITUATION A motion detector will light up when you move.

WHAT TO DO You must cover the detector or turn off the device before the Jewish festival begins.

Jewish Festivals: Walking Past Motion Detectors/Microwave Sensors Situation

SITUATION You enter a room on a Jewish festival and then find that there is a motion detector that will turn on a light or an LED.

WHAT TO DO You should not move until someone else has entered the room and the light has turned on. You may then leave while the light is still on.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: SECULAR STUDIES

Jewish Festivals: Secular Studies

Studying secular subjects on Jewish festivals is not in the spirit of the Jewish festival, but you may do so.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: SOAP

Jewish Festivals: Hard Soap

You may not use hard soap on Jewish festivals.

Jewish Festivals: Soap Bubbles

Causing soap bubbles from lather is not a problem on Jewish festivals.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: SPONGING

Jewish Festivals: Sponging

You may not wash dishes on Jewish festivals with a

- Sponge (even if it is on a handle),
- Dish rag, or
- Scrubbing pad (pad that holds water and, when used, the water gets squeezed out).

You may use wide mesh or other items that do not normally hold water.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: SUNSCREEN

Jewish Festivals: Sunscreens

To use a fluid on skin on Jewish festivals, even sunscreen that may be needed to protect damaged skin, the fluid must flow without lumps and not be more viscous than honey at room temperature. Therefore, apply sunscreen only if fluid (but not a cream or thick liquid).

Jewish Festivals: Diluting Sunscreens before Festival

You may dilute sunscreen before Jewish festivals with water or alcohol, but some sunscreens may not become more fluid even with added water or alcohol.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: TALKING

Jewish Festivals: Talking about Weekday Subjects

You may talk about weekday subjects on Jewish festivals if what you are discussing already happened, but you may not discuss plans to do activities that involve any type of melacha, even d'rabanan.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: TAPING

Jewish Festivals: Taping Items Together

You may not tape items together, on Jewish festivals, if you intend for them to stay attached for more than 24 hours.

Jewish Festivals: Taping Card to Hotel Door

You may tape a card to a hotel room door on Jewish festivals in order to prevent it from locking you out.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: TEARING

Jewish Festivals: Tearing Paper and Plastic Wrap

You may tear paper, plastic, foil, or other wrappers around food in order to eat that food on a Jewish festival.

You may tear plastic and foil (but not paper) around napkins, plasticware, etc., that you need on Jewish festival.

But you may not:

- Do so if you will inevitably tear through any words or pictures on the package.

- Use scissors.

Except for wrappers for food or eating utensils, do not tear paper, foil, toilet paper, parchment paper, plastic wrap, paper towels, etc., on a Jewish festival.

NOTE If there is a perforation, that makes the tearing worse.

NOTE If you do not have any torn toilet paper, tear it in an unusual way:

EXAMPLES

- Tear using the back of your hand.
- Spread the toilet paper across your knees and then spread your knees apart.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: TECHUM SHABBAT

Jewish Festival: Item from outside Techum Shabbat

You may not use, on a Jewish festival, any item that was outside the techum Shabbat when the Jewish festival began--even if a non-Jew brought it to you.

SITUATION You arrive on a flight but your luggage is delayed and delivered on Shabbat or a Jewish festival. Or, a package is delivered to you then.

WHAT TO DO If the airport or delivery warehouse is within techum Shabbat, you may use whatever is brought to you. If the airport or warehouse is outside techum Shabbat, you may not use the items until enough time has passed after Shabbat (or the Jewish festival) for them to have been delivered from the airport or warehouse.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: TELEPHONES

Jewish Festivals: Telephones and Time Zones

If a Jewish festival is over where you are, you may speak by phone to non-Jews in a place that is still observing the Jewish festival.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: TOILET

Jewish Festivals: Toilet

Flushing a toilet on a Jewish festival is not a violation of transferring from domains.

REASON The pipe is considered too small a space to be a domain.

NOTE If the water comes from a pump-operated well, such as in rural or remote areas, consult a rabbi.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: TREES

Jewish Festivals: Walking between Trees/Bushes

You may walk between bushes or trees on Jewish festivals, even if they are close to each other, and you may use your body to make space for yourself to walk. But you may not push the trunks or branches away using your hand.

REASON The trees are muktza.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: WATER (POOL)

Jewish Festivals: Dangling Legs

On Jewish festivals (and Shabbat), you may dangle your feet or legs into a pool (or other body) of water up to whatever garment you are wearing. However, you may not let the garment get wet.

JEWISH FESTIVALS: WATER FILTERS

Jewish Festivals: Filtering Potable Water

You may filter plain water using a non-electrical water filter on Jewish Festivals.

NOTE The water must be potable before filtering.

CHOL HAMOED

INTRODUCTION TO CHOL HAMOED

Introduction to Chol HaMoed

The intermediate days of Passover and Sukkot (between the first and last days, which are festival days) are called “chol ha'moed.” Passover has four chol ha'moed days outside of Eretz Yisrael and five days in Eretz Yisrael. Sukkot has five chol ha'moed days outside of Israel and six inside Eretz Yisrael.

The restrictions that apply to the Jewish festival days generally do not apply to the chol ha'moed days (see below for exceptions).

CHOL HAMOED: EXPERT WORK

Chol HaMoed: No Expert Work

You may not do “expert” or “professional” work of certain types on chol ha'moed, and some types of expert craftsmen/women may not do their trades on chol ha'moed.

EXAMPLES

- You may sew or lay bricks or other such labors, but not if you are an expert or professional in those fields and you are doing expert work.
- Skilled writers and artists may not do their professional writing, calligraphy, or drawing (even for free!) on chol ha'moed. They may not do calligraphy or sofer work (Torah, tefilin, mezuzah), but they may write normally.
- If you are not a professional writer or expert craftsman/artist, you may write on chol ha'moed but the preferred practice is to use a shinu'i --an altered method of writing, such as:
 - Using your other hand,
 - Holding the pen/pencil differently from normal, or
 - Writing diagonally across the paper.

CHOL HAMOED: SHAVING AND HAIR CUTS

Shaving/Hair Cuts and Jewish Festivals

You should not shave or cut your hair on chol ha'moed.

REASON Chazal made a takana so people would do those types of grooming before each holiday and not wait until chol ha'moed.

Chol HaMoed: Exceptions for Shaving

It is best not to shave during chol ha'moed. You MAY shave if:

- You normally shave every day, and
- You shaved before the Jewish festival began.

NOTE Even if you only shave 2 or 3 times per week instead of every day, it is still considered as if you shave regularly.

NOTE You may shave during omer if not shaving might cause you to lose your job or otherwise incur financial loss. A large financial loss is subjective to the individual's actual wealth and also to that person's perception of what is a large loss.

CHOL HAMOED: CUTTING NAILS

Chol HaMoed: Cutting Nails

You may not cut your nails (fingernails or toenails) during chol ha'moed.

EXCEPTION Women before going to mikva may cut their nails on chol ha'moed.

CHOL HAMOED: LAUNDRY

Laundry before Jewish Festivals

You should not do laundry on chol ha'moed.

REASON Due to a takana so people would do their laundry before each holiday and not wait until chol ha'moed.

NOTE If you had already done the laundry before the Jewish festival began and now no clean clothes remain:

- You may do laundry for babies and small children (3 years old or less) on chol ha'moed.
- You may not do laundry for adults.

ROSH CHODESH

INTRODUCTION TO ROSH CHODESH

Introduction to Rosh Chodesh

Rosh Chodesh, the beginning of the Jewish (lunar) month, is a minor holiday of one or two days, depending on whether the previous month was 29 or 30 days. When the preceding month is 30 days long, the 30th day becomes the first day of Rosh Chodesh and the second day of Rosh Chodesh is the first day of the succeeding month.

Rosh Chodesh used to be officially declared in Jerusalem each month by the Sanhedrin, based on evidence from at least two witnesses who had seen the new moon in the western sky. For the past 1700 years or so, the new moon (and the dates for the entire Jewish calendar) have been determined by a formula prescribed by Hillel HaNasi (then head of the Jewish community in Eretz Yisrael).

ROSH CHODESH: MOLAD

Molad

The molad (first appearance of the new crescent moon somewhere in the world but using Jerusalem time) is an average molad and may be more than 12 hours off the actual time of the moon's first appearance. It varies somewhat from month to month.

ROSH CHODESH: YA'ALEH V'YAVO

Ya'aleh V'Yavo on Rosh Chodesh

If you forgot (or are not sure if you said) ya'aleh v'yavo of:

Rosh Chodesh Ma'ariv

Don't repeat the amida. This applies to both ma'arivs on a two-day Rosh Chodesh.

Rosh Chodesh Shacharit or Mincha

- If you forgot: Repeat the amida of Rosh Chodesh shacharit or mincha.
- If you are not sure: Repeat the amida with the condition that if you had said ya'aleh v'yavo the first time, the second time is a voluntary prayer (tefilat nedava).

NOTE If Rosh Chodesh falls on Shabbat and you are not certain whether you said ya'aleh v'yavo at shacharit or mincha, you must repeat the amida without a condition.

ROSH CHODESH: UL'CHAPARAT PASHA

Shabbat-Rosh Chodesh: Adding Ul'Chaparot Pasha

SITUATION It is Rosh Chodesh in a Jewish leap year.

WHAT TO DO

Add “ul'chaparot pasha” to musaf—from Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan through and including the second month of Adar.

REASON This blessing usually contains 12 requests--corresponding to the 12 months--and so in a leap year, we add ul'chaparot pasha for the 13th month.

NOTE Don't say ul'chaparot pasha on Rosh Chodesh Nisan or after that until the next Jewish leap year.

ROSH HASHANA

INTRODUCTION TO ROSH HASHANA

Introduction to Rosh Hashana

Rosh Hashana is the beginning of the Jewish calendar year (there are three other dates that begin other aspects of the Jewish year).

Rosh Hashana is observed for two days, which are considered to be one continuous day. In Temple times, a cohen would offer a sacrifice but might not know until the following evening, after the new moon had been seen (or not), whether he had offered the Rosh Hashana offering.

Rosh Hashana focuses on the idea of God as King and of our relationship as Jews to that King.

ROSH HASHANA: GREETINGS

Greetings for the New Year

For greetings for the New Year, say:

- “Ketiva V'Chatima Tova”

From: Rosh Chodesh Elul

Until: Eve of (erev) Rosh Hashana (when the holiday begins).

- “L'Shana Tova Tikateiv V'Tichateim”

From: First night of Rosh Hashana (when the holiday begins)

Until: Musaf of the first day of Rosh Hashana.

- “Gmar Chatima Tova”

From: Musaf Rosh Hashana

Until: End of Yom Kippur.

- “Gmar Tov”

From: Yom Kippur

ROSH HASHANA: PRAYERS

ROSH HASHANA: PRAYERS: WHAT TIME TO START

Rosh Hashana: Prayers: What Time To Start: Ma'ariv and Kiddush

Ma'ariv and evening kiddush for Rosh Hashana are not started until after dark.

ROSH HASHANA: PRAYERS: SPECIAL BOWING

Rosh Hashana: Prayers: Special Bowing: Musaf

For special bowing during Rosh Hashana musaf, please see Waist-Bowing and Knee-Bowing.

ROSH HASHANA: SHOFAR

Rosh Hashana: How Many Shofar Blasts To Hear

Men are required to hear at least 60 shofar blasts on Rosh Hashana (*l'chatchila*) in order to fulfill the commandment of hearing shofar: 30 before the musaf amida and 30 afterward. But they fulfill their requirement (*b'di'avad*) if they have heard at least 30 on each day of Rosh Hashana.

Women only need to hear 30 shofar blasts on each day of Rosh Hashana.

NOTE Although 100 shofar blasts are blown each day of Rosh Hashana, hearing all 100 is a non-binding custom. You do not need to hear the first blasts or any other particular set, but you must hear blasts that include:

- 3 tashrat (teki'a-shevarim-teru'a-teki'a) +
- 3 tashat (teki'a-shevarim-teki'a) +
- 3 tarat (teki'a-teru'a-teki'a).

Interruptions after Shofar Blessing

Once the blessings have been said before (and for) blowing the shofar on Rosh HaShana, no one in the congregation may speak or do any action (hefsek) that will interrupt the entire process of blessings and the series of blowing the shofar. Any speaking that is not related to the shofar blowing or to the prayer service is forbidden.

Woman Blowing Shofar

A woman who knows how, may blow the shofar for herself and for other women but not for men.

REASON This is because women, who are not required by the Torah to hear shofar but who have universally accepted that custom, may not fulfill the obligation for men, who are required by the Torah to hear the shofar.

Practicing Shofar on Rosh Hashana

You may practice blowing a shofar on Rosh Hashana (unless it coincides with Shabbat!).

ROSH HASHANA: EVENING KIDDUSH

ROSH HASHANA: EVENING KIDDUSH: FRUIT FOR SHEHECHEYANU ON SECOND NIGHT

Rosh Hashana: Evening Kiddush: New Fruit for SheHecheyanu on Second Night

Place a “new” fruit--over which you may say she'hecheyanu--at the table for kiddush on the second night of Rosh Hashana.

REASON So the she'hecheyanu of kiddush also covers the fruit.

NOTE B'di'avad, still say she'hecheyanu even if you do not have a new fruit.

ROSH HASHANA: SYMBOLIC FOODS (SIMANIM)

Rosh Hashana: Symbolic Foods (Simanim): Which Foods

Eating the special symbolic foods (*simanim*) on Rosh Hashana evening is a universally accepted custom.

These may include:

- Apple Dipped in Honey
- Beets
- Black-eyed Peas
- Carrots
- Dates
- Fish Head
- Leeks
- Pomegranate

Rosh Hashana: Symbolic Foods (Simanim): HaMotzi

On Rosh Hashana, before eating the symbolic foods (*simanim*):

- Make kiddush,
- Wash your hands,
- Say ha'motzi, and
- Eat bread.

Then eat the symbolic foods (*simanim*), saying the appropriate blessings (borei pri ha'eitz, borei pri ha'adama) before eating the *simanim*.

Rosh Hashana: Symbolic Foods (Simanim): God's Name

SITUATION You made up your own segulot for Rosh Hashana.

WHAT TO DO You may say them with God's name or without, in the *yehi ratzon*.

ROSH HASHANA: CHALLA CUSTOMS

Rosh Hashana: Challa Customs: Round Challa

It is a custom to make round challa for Rosh Hashana and other Jewish festivals (except Passover!), unless Rosh Hashana falls on Shabbat.

Rosh Hashana: Challa Customs: Challa Dipped in Honey

Eating challa dipped in honey on Rosh Hashana is a universal custom but is not halacha.

ROSH HASHANA: TASHLICH

Rosh Hashana: Tashlich: Introduction to Tashlich

Tashlich is a universal custom with force of halacha. Don't feed fish, don't throw crumbs into the water.

Rosh Hashana: Tashlich: When To Say

Ideally, say *tashlich* on the afternoon of the first day of Rosh Hashana (unless that is Shabbat, in which case say it on the second day of Rosh Hashana). You may say it until the end of the day of Hoshana Rabba.

Rosh Hashana: Tashlich: How Much To Say

The minimum amount of the *tashlich* service to say is the first paragraph (*mi eil kamocho*).

Rosh Hashana: Tashlich: Where To Say

Tashlich should be said near a running natural stream or a lake but not at a *mikva*.

ROSH HASHANA: END

Rosh Hashana: End: Baruch HaMavdil Bein Kodesh L'Chol and Birkat HaMazon

Saying *Baruch ha'mavdil bein kodesh l'chol* after dark at the end of *Rosh Hashana* (as for *Jewish festivals*) does not affect the additions you will then say in *birkat ha'mazon*.

SITUATION You washed your hands, said *ha'motzi*, began eating your meal on *Rosh Hashana* afternoon, and it is now dark.

WHAT TO DO You may say *Baruch ha'mavdil bein kodesh l'chol* and do *melacha*, and then continue to eat your meal or say *birkat ha'mazon* INCLUDING *ya'aleh v'yavo* and *ha'rachaman hu yichadeish alenu et ha'shana ha'zot l'tova v'livracha*.

TEN DAYS OF REPENTANCE

Forgetting Amida Additions for Ten Days of Repentance

If you forget a change or addition to the *amida* during the *10 Days of Repentance* (between *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur*), the only one for which you must return or repeat the *amida* is *ha'melech ha'kadosh* (third blessing).

YOM KIPPUR

INTRODUCTION TO YOM KIPPUR

Introduction to Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement. In ancient times, it was more festive than now and unmarried people of both genders would meet and try to find their future spouses.

Yom Kippur is a serious but also a happy day, since all Jews who repent (do *teshuva*) have their sins forgiven on that day.

Teshuva has four main parts:

- *Charata* Regretting what we have done and feeling bad about it.
- *Vidui* Recognizing and admitting that we have done something wrong.
- *Kabala* Resolving not to repeat that mistake.
- *Azivat hachet* Being in the same situation as before but avoiding doing the sin.

The *Torah* tells us that there is an inherent property to *Yom Kippur* that causes spiritual purification and removes sins.

All Jews can become like angels on *Yom Kippur*. In order to imitate angels (which are spiritual beings), we abstain from five activities that are associated with physical beings. We do not wash, anoint our bodies, eat or drink, have intimate relations, or wear leather shoes. To further imitate angels, when we say the *shema*, we say *Baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed* out loud, as opposed to the rest of the year, when we say it quietly.

For more on fast days, see [Fast Days](#).

PRE-YOM KIPPUR

PRE-YOM KIPPUR: ASKING FORGIVENESS

Asking Forgiveness

- If you know you have offended or otherwise injured someone, ask for forgiveness before Yom Kippur (if doing so will bring up bad feelings from the past, you may not do so--but you might not be forgiven for that injury).
- If you may have offended, ask for forgiveness.
- If you are certain that you did not, don't ask for forgiveness.
- If you did not ask someone for forgiveness (whom you should have asked) before Yom Kippur, you should do so afterward.
- If a person wrongs you intentionally, you do not need to forgive him or her unless the person repairs the wrong and is genuinely regretful for having done the evil.

PRE-YOM KIPPUR: NULLIFYING VOWS (HATARAT NEDARIM)

Nullifying Vows (Hatarat Nedarim)

Hatarat nedarim (nullification of vows) should be done before Rosh Hashana (but it may be done any time of the year) in front of three adult male shomer-Shabbat Jews. You may make a condition that you never want to make a vow of any type, but this might not be effective or valid. The formula may be said in English or any other spoken language.

PRE-YOM KIPPUR: KAPAROT

Kaparot

Kaparot with a chicken or money should be done before Yom Kippur, but you may do it before then or any other time. This is a universal Jewish custom.

PRE-YOM KIPPUR: MEAL (SE'UDA HAMAFSEKET)

Meaning of pre-Yom Kippur Meal (Se'uda HaMafseket)

We eat a festive meal for the final meal before Yom Kippur to celebrate that we will be forgiven for our previous sins on Yom Kippur.

Mezuman/Minyan at pre-Yom Kippur Meal (Se'uda HaMafseket)

A mezuman or minyan is permitted at the pre-Yom Kippur meal (se'uda ha'mafseket).

REASON It is a festive meal.

Challa Dipped in Honey for pre-Yom Kippur Meal (Se'uda HaMafseket)

Eating challa dipped in honey is a non-binding custom for the pre-Yom Kippur festive meal (se'uda ha'mafseket).

Pre-Yom Kippur Meal: Shir HaMa'alot

Shir ha'ma'alot should be said before birkat ha'mazon at the final meal (se'uda ha'mafseket) before Yom Kippur (and also at a meal after Yom Kippur ends).

Wishing Easy Fast

You may wish "an easy fast" for Yom Kippur since, although Yom Kippur is supposed to be a day of afflicting our souls, there are degrees of affliction!

PRE-YOM KIPPUR: YAHRZEIT CANDLE

Pre-Yom Kippur: Yahrzeit Candle

On Yom Kippur, it is a universal custom to light one candle if one or both parents are deceased. Every married couple also lights one candle for themselves and their children (if any).

YOM KIPPUR

YOM KIPPUR: WHEN TO START

Yom Kippur: Starting Fast

Yom Kippur fasting starts with candle lighting for women and at least 7 minutes before sunset for men.

Yom Kippur: Delaying Start Past Candle Lighting

Lighting the candles starts the holiday of Yom Kippur. If you want to start the holiday later, you must:

- Make a condition when lighting candles that you are not yet starting the holiday (by saying “I am lighting Yom Kippur candles but not starting Yom Kippur until 7 minutes before sunset”-this may only be done in urgent situations) and
- Omit the she'hecheyanu blessing at candle lighting. Men say she'hecheyanu later (in *kol nidre*).

NOTE Women then say she'hecheyanu at least 7 minutes before sunset! (One may not make a condition for she'hecheyanu!)

NOTE If a woman lit candles for Yom Kippur more than 7 minutes before sunset (as is normally done at 18 or even 40 minutes before sunset), but made a condition (*tenai*) that she would still eat or do melacha until somewhat later, she must still stop eating and doing melacha by no later than 7 minutes before sunset.

YOM KIPPUR: WHAT TO WEAR

Yom Kippur: What To Wear: Leather Shoes

You may not wear leather shoes on Yom Kippur.

Yom Kippur: What To Wear: Kittel for Men

All married men should wear a kittel on Yom Kippur during all prayer services (this is a universal custom). Some men do not wear a kittel during the first year of marriage.

YOM KIPPUR: IF YOU MUST EAT

Yom Kippur: No Kiddush If You Must Eat

If you must eat on Yom Kippur (for health reasons), **do not** make kiddush and do not use two loaves of bread, even if Yom Kippur coincides with Shabbat.

Yom Kippur: Birkat HaMazon If You Must Eat Bread

If you must eat a meal including at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread on Yom Kippur, say birkat ha'mazon afterward. Add ya'aleh v'yavo (and if Yom Kippur coincides with Shabbat, also add retzei).

YOM KIPPUR: WASHING

Yom Kippur: Washing To Remove Tum'a

On Yom Kippur (as on Tish'a b'Av), if you must wash your hands to remove:

- Tum'a: You may wash your hands only up to the knuckle that connects your fingers to the rest of your hand (thumb: second knuckle; fingers: third knuckle).
- Dirt from your hand: You may wash wherever the dirt is on your hand.

YOM KIPPUR: PRAYERS

YOM KIPPUR: TORAH READING

Yom Kippur: Torah Reading: Forbidden Relationships

On Yom Kippur, at mincha, we read in the Torah about forbidden relationships to remind ourselves that even on the holiest day of the year, we may be subject to temptations and sins.

YOM KIPPUR: BOWING

Yom Kippur: Bowing for Musaf Alenu

For how to bow at Yom Kippur Musaf Alenu, see [Waist-Bowing and Knee-Bowing](#).

YOM KIPPUR: ENDING

Yom Kippur: Ending: Havdala

After Yom Kippur, say the full havdala.

NOTE You must light a candle from a flame that was burning since before Yom Kippur began. If you do not have one, skip the blessing on the flame.

If Shabbat coincides with Yom Kippur, you should light the candle from a flame that was burning from before Shabbat began. If you do not have one, you may light a new flame after Shabbat and Yom Kippur are over. Don't say the blessing on spices.

Post-Yom Kippur Meal: Shir HaMa'alot

Shir ha'ma'alot should be said after eating a meal that you began after Yom Kippur ended.

See [Fast Days](#).

SUKKOT

INTRODUCTION TO SUKKOT

Introduction to Sukkot

Sukkot means "huts." The Jewish festival of Sukkot celebrates and commemorates the shelters in which the Israelites lived for 40 years after leaving Egypt.

Symbols

The main symbols associated with Sukkot are living in a sukka (eating and, when possible, sleeping in the sukka) and the lulav and etrog.

Sukkot is observed at fall harvest time. When many Jews were feeling wealthy due to their produce, we were commanded to live in temporary shelters--in part, to ward off feelings of arrogance or pride in what we had accomplished in the material world. Instead of thinking or feeling that our hard work or great wisdom has made us wealthy, we are reminded that whatever we have comes from God, and that God will take care of us, even in a flimsy "house."

The lulav and etrog have many meanings. Here are two:

Likening to the Human Body

The four components are compared to four parts of the human body:

- Palm branch: Spine.
- Myrtle leaves: Human eyes.
- Willow leaves: Human lips.
- Etrog: Human heart.

When we hold the four parts of the lulav/etrog together, we are symbolically taking the various components of our bodies together to serve God.

Likening to Types of Jews

The four components are likened to four types of Jews:

- Etrog smells nice and tastes nice--like a tzadik who is knowledgeable in Torah and does mitzvot;
- Myrtle smells nice but does not have a good taste--like a person who does mitzvot but is not knowledgeable in Torah;

- Palm tree (date palm) has a nice tasting fruit but no scent--like someone who has knowledge but lacks mitzvot;
- Willow does not smell nice nor has a good taste--like a person who has neither.

By holding them together, we show that all types of Jews are to be consider as one nation.

SUKKOT: PRAYERS

SUKKOT: PRAYERS: WHAT TIME TO START

Sukkot: Prayers: What Time To Start: Ma'ariv and Kiddush

- Ma'ariv on both nights of Sukkot may be said from 1 1/4 hours before sunset.
- Kiddush in the sukka may not be said until after dark on both nights.

SUKKA

SUKKA: BEING INSIDE

Sukka: Being Inside: Requirements

There is no requirement to be in a sukka except when eating bread or mezonot, and possibly sleeping in the sukka, but there is some spiritual benefit from being in the sukka at other times.

SUKKA: EATING

Sukka: Eating: What To Eat

There is no requirement to eat any food other than mezonot or bread (and some opinions say also drinking wine) in a sukka. Eating other foods in a sukka is considered to be saintly behavior (midat chasidut).

Men: Eating Outside the Sukka

Bread: Men may not eat bread or a full meal outside the sukka during Sukkot.

Mezonot: Men may not eat more than 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of mezonot (within four minutes) outside the sukka during Sukkot, but they may eat 1.8 fl. oz. or less, wait nine minutes, and then eat another quantity up to 1.8 fl. oz.

Women: Eating Outside the Sukka

Women and girls may eat bread or mezonot outside of a sukka. They do not need to eat any meals in the sukka, but if they do, it is a mitzva and they say leisheiv ba'sukka.

Sukka: Eating: Uncomfortable Weather

Except for first night of Sukkot (and also the second night outside of Eretz Yisrael), there is no need to be discomforted at all by rain, cold, or heat. You may eat even bread outside of the sukka without waiting to see if the conditions will become more comfortable. This includes on Shabbat.

SUKKA: BLESSINGS

Sukka: Blessings: When To Say

Do not say the blessing leisheiv ba'sukka except when you will eat bread or mezonot. Even drinking wine is not an exception, so do not say leisheiv ba'sukka even for havdala (unless you will also eat mezonot at the same time).

NOTE We do say leisheiv ba'sukka at kiddush, but that is in anticipation of eating bread at the meal to follow.

Sukkot: Blessings: SheHecheyanu

First Night: Say she'hecheyanu after saying leisheiv ba'sukka (in kiddush), since she'hecheyanu covers the sukka and the Jewish festival.

Second Night: Say she'hecheyanu before leisheiv ba'sukka (since it only covers the Jewish festival itself).

NOTE There is no blessing on building a sukka; it is covered by the she'hecheyanu in the kiddush.

Sukkot: When To Say Leisheiv BaSukka

When you sit down in a sukka, only say the blessing leisheiv ba'sukka:

- If you are going to eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml, or about 1/4 - 1/5 cup) of bread or mezonot within four minutes, OR
- Immediately after saying kiddush and before drinking the wine in anticipation of eating mezonot or bread, OR
- Before eating any food or beverage (except salt or water) when visiting any other person in his/her sukka.

Sukkot: Blessings: Forgetting Leisheiv BaSukka

If you washed hands, said ha'motzi, and ate some bread in a sukka but forgot to say the blessing leisheiv ba'sukka, you may still say that blessing until you have finished your meal; but you should eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) more of bread (within 4 minutes) after saying leisheiv ba'sukka.

Birkat HaMazon If You Ate Sukka Meals Indoors

If you ate your meal inside the house on Sukkot, you do not need to go to the sukka to say birkat ha'mazon.

SUKKA: SLEEPING

Sukkot: Sleeping at Someone Else's House

If you sleep at another person's house or sukka during Sukkot, you should consider their sukka as being yours. You do not say the blessing leisheiv ba'sukka except if you eat bread or mezonot there.

SUKKA: BUILDING

SUKKA: BUILDING OR FIXING

Building or Fixing a Sukka on Sukkot

A Jew may fix or build a sukka on chol ha'moed.

A non-Jew may fix or build a sukka on chol ha'moed or even on the Jewish festival days. A Jew may explicitly tell the non-Jew how to accomplish the repairs or the building of the sukka.

SUKKA: SHAPES

Permitted Sukka Shapes

A sukka may have many sides and may even be circular, but it may not have a pointed top (shaped like a teepee).

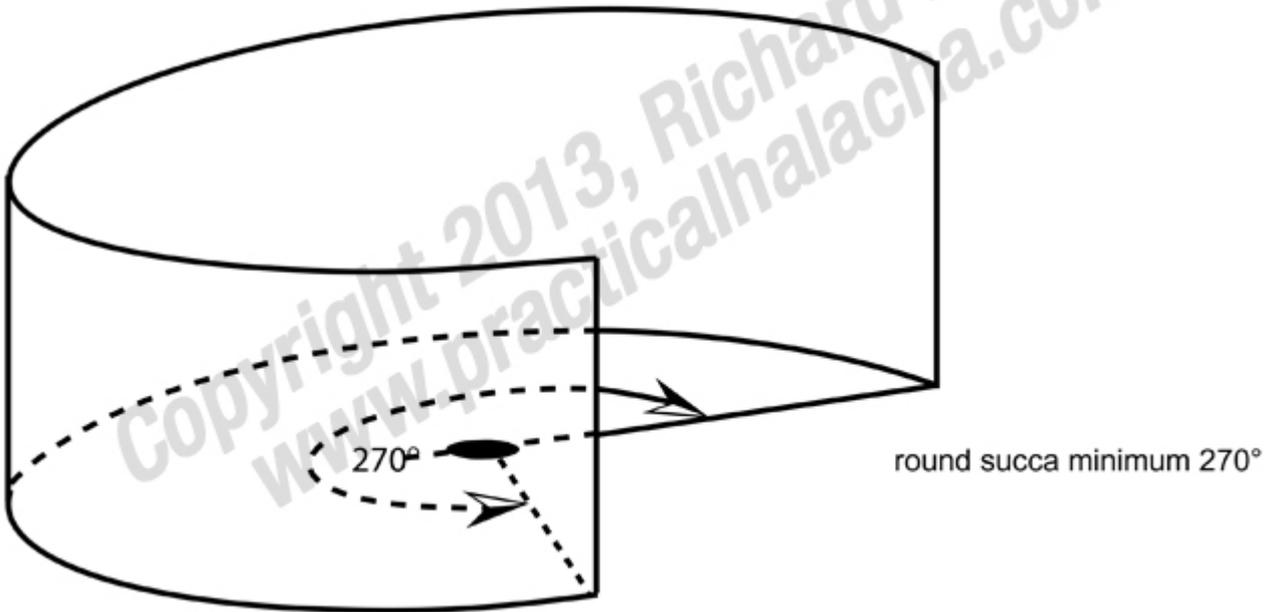
SUKKA: DIMENSIONS

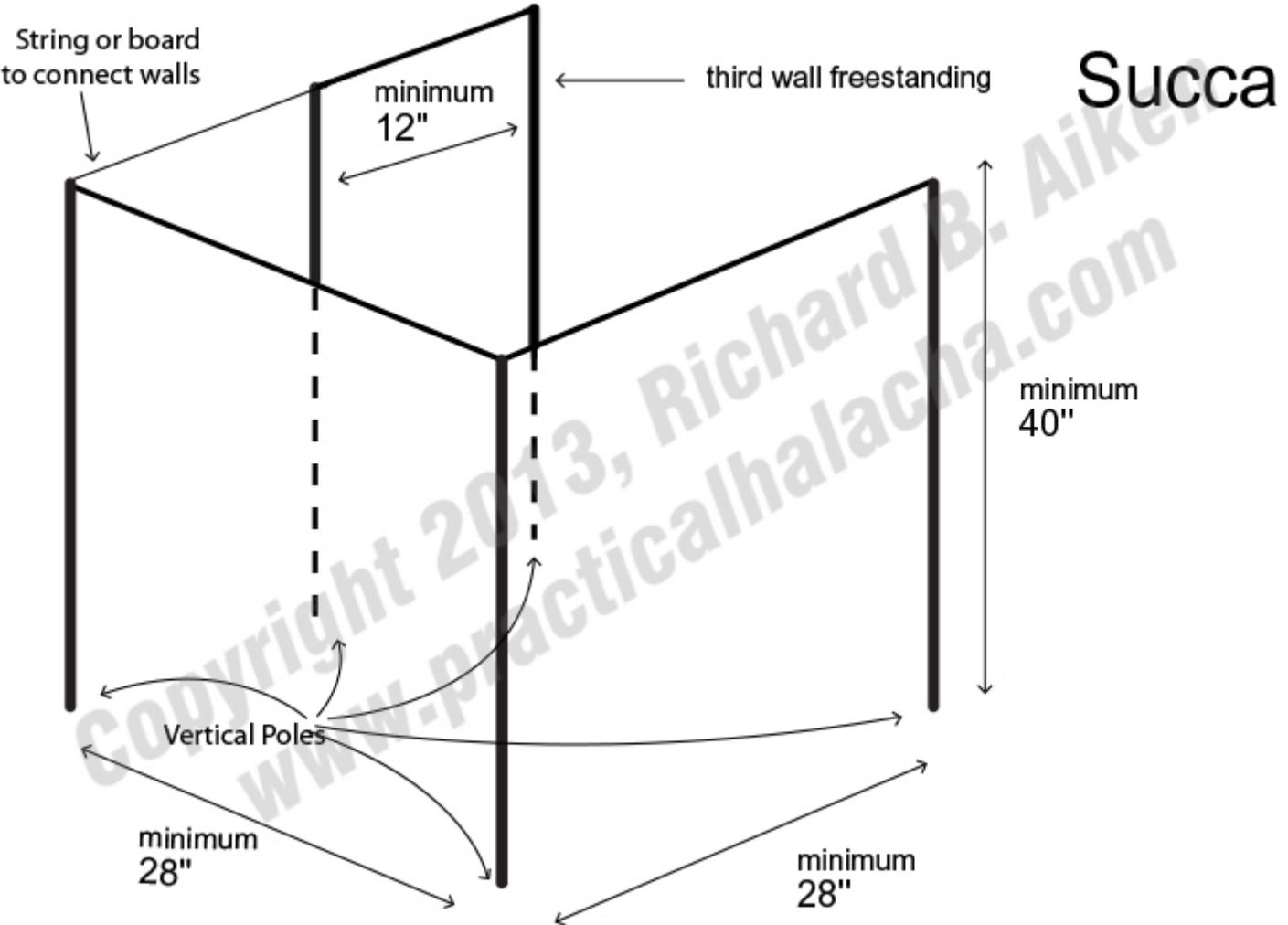
Sukka: Dimensions: Minimum/Maximum

- A sukka must have at least three walls, but one of those walls may be as little as 1 tefach wide.
- A round sukka must extend to at least 270 degrees.
- Sukka height: More than 10 tefachim (40" or 1 m) high and less than 20 amot (33'4" or 10 m) tall.
- Minimum sukka width: 7 tefachim x 7 tefachim (28" x 28" or 71.1 cm x 71.1 cm).
- Maximum wall-to-ground gap for sukka: walls must be within 3 tefachim, or 10 ½" (27 cm) of the ground.

- Maximum permissible angle (slope) of a roof on a sukka is less than 45 degrees from horizontal.
- Schach: Must cover the sukka so that there is more shade than sun when the sun is directly overhead and must have at least enough space between the schach elements for rain to penetrate.

Round Sukca





SUKKA: WALLS

Sukka: Walls: Tree Trunk

You may use the trunk of a tree as part of a sukka, but consult a rabbi about the spacing and curvature of the roots.

Sukka: Walls: Flapping

The walls of a sukka must be able to withstand wind without flapping up from the bottom to more than 10.5 inches above the ground.

Sukka: Walls: Bracing

The sukka does not need to be freestanding. When setting up a sukka, you may brace the walls with rope, boards, against tree or house... in any way you wish. You may not brace or attach supports to the walls on the festival but you may directly ask a non-Jew to do that work for you.

SUKKA: SCHACH

Sukka: Schach: Timing

Sukka: Schach: Timing: Within 30 Days

You must put schach on your sukka within 30 days of Sukkot. If you are using a porch that has slats year round as a roof for your sukka, you must lift up and put back the slats within 30 days of Sukkot.

Sukka: Schach: Materials

Non-Kli

You may not use a kli for sukka schach.

A kli is any item created with the intention of being used as a tool or utensil to make an activity easier.

EXAMPLES

- Bamboo if it had been used for any other purpose.
- Wooden ladder.
- Walking stick.

Non-Edible

A sukka's covering (schach) must consist of non-edible branches, leaves, or other materials of plant origin such as boards. You may use wooden boards (such as 2" x 4"s) to hold up schach, even though lumber is intended to be used for construction.

Size

Boards or tree trunks—whether used as schach or used to hold up schach--must be not more than 15 inches (38 cm) wide. A board--whether used as schach or used to hold up schach--more than 15 inches wide invalidates the area below it and you would have to sit under kosher schach in order to fulfill the mitzva. In the case of a board more than 15 inches wide: If the sukka has only three walls, the board may invalidate the sukka. Consult a rabbi.

Fresh

You may not use branches whose leaves will dry up in less than 8 days, intending to replace the branches with fresh ones during chol ha'moed; the custom is to use evergreen leaves only if you want to use leaves as schach.

Fasteners

Schach on the sukka must stay by itself without fasteners or connectors, even in a place with normally high wind. Any man-made fasteners--such as plastic, metal, or even hemp cord or rope--will invalidate the schach. If the schach will stay without them, then you may use fasteners or connectors as reinforcements.

Year-Round Structures

You may use a pergola, gazebo, or other type of awning frame or roof structure that exists year-round for a sukka as long as the other conditions (size, slope, materials, timing, etc.) are kosher. You must first remove any permanent roof coverings before putting on the schach.

NOTE The slope of the sukka roof must be less than 45 degrees from horizontal.

Sukka: Schach: Gap

Sukka: Schach: Gap: What Invalidates

A gap in schach of 10.5 inches by 10.5 inches or larger will not invalidate the entire sukka, but you may not sit under that part of the sukka when eating or saying the blessing leisheiv ba'sukka. A gap of more than 14 inches wide may invalidate the sukka.

Sukka: Schach: Normal Wind (Ru'ach Metzuya)

Ru'ach metzuya is defined as a normal wind for each location and season (this is relevant for schach on Sukkot).

SUKKA: OVERHANGS

Sukka: Overhangs: Vines/Trees

Vines or tree branches that overhang even a small part of a sukka may make it not kosher. A tree that overhangs a large part of the sukka invalidates the portion below the tree and may invalidate an entire side or even more. Consult a rabbi.

Sukka: Overhangs: Wood Structures

You may not normally use a sukka that has any wood structure such as a pergola/gazebo above the schach, but there are exceptions: ask a rabbi.

Sukka: Overhangs: Balconies

A sukka built under a balcony, even if the balcony is many stories above the sukka, is not kosher.

SITUATION

Only part of a sukka is under the balcony.

STATUS

To be kosher, the sukka must have a footprint at least 7 by 7 tefachim and must have at least three walls that are not under the balcony.

NOTE If you have only two walls with the overhanging balcony, consult a rabbi.

Sukka: Overhangs: Women and Children

Women and children of either gender may sit under an invalidated part of the sukka since they are not required to sit in the sukka at all. However, if they wish to say the blessing leisheiv baSukka, they must sit under a valid part of the sukka while they say the blessing. They must also eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. of bread or mezonot while under the valid part.

SUKKA: CAR

How To Make a Car into a Sukka

To make a car into a sukka:

- Open two doors on the same side of the car and put schach on top/across the doors.
- Make sure the doors reach to within 10 ½ inches (26.7 cm) of the ground or curb (so you might need to park at a curb).
- Make sure the schach over the doors is at least 40 inches (1 m) above the curb.

SUKKA: INTIMACY

Sukka: Intimacy

Intercourse is permitted in a sukka.

SUKKA: LEAVING

SUKKA: LEAVING: FIRST NIGHT

Sukka: Leaving: First Night: Rain

Rain on the first night of Sukkot is only considered a bad omen in Eretz Yisrael.

REASON It does not normally rain there at that time of year.

Sukka: Leaving: First Night: Rain, Cold, Bees

You may leave the sukka due to extreme cold or heat, rain, or bees. **You should not stay in a sukka if it is raining or very cold or will otherwise make people suffer.**

If it is raining on the first night of Sukkot and the rain is sporadic, wait until midnight before saying kiddush indoors.

If it is raining on the first night of Sukkot and the forecast predicts rain all evening, you do not need to wait to see if the rain will stop before saying kiddush. Instead:

- Say kiddush in the sukka (without saying leisheiv ba'sukka), even in the rain.
- Wash hands and say ha'motzi.
- Eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread in the sukka.
- Go inside the house and finish your meal inside.

NOTE You do not need to say birkat ha'mazon in the sukka. If the rain stops, go back outside, say leisheiv, eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) more of bread in the sukka, and finish your meal in the sukka.

SUKKA: SHMINI ATZERET

Sukka: Shmini Atzeret

Outside Eretz Yisrael, you should eat your meals in the sukka on Shmini Atzeret, but do not make a blessing on the sukka.

FOUR SPECIES: LULAV AND ETROG

LULAV: BEAUTY

Lulav: If First Day of Sukkot Is Shabbat

You do not need to buy a fancy or expensive lulav and etrog if the first day of Sukkot is Shabbat, since the Torah requirement for the etrog to be beautiful is only on the first day of Sukkot.

LULAV: SIZES

Palm Branch Sizes

Minimum length for lulav (palm branch): Spine must be at least 16" long, not including the length of the leaves. At least 4" of the spine of the lulav must be above the tops of the willows and myrtles.

Myrtle and Willow Branch Sizes

Each of the myrtle and willow branches must be at least 12 inches long.

LULAV: CHOOSING

Lulav: Choosing: Condition

A lulav, willow branches, or myrtle branches are only disqualified/pasul if the leaves are so dry that they will crack if you bend them. Being moldy does not disqualify them.

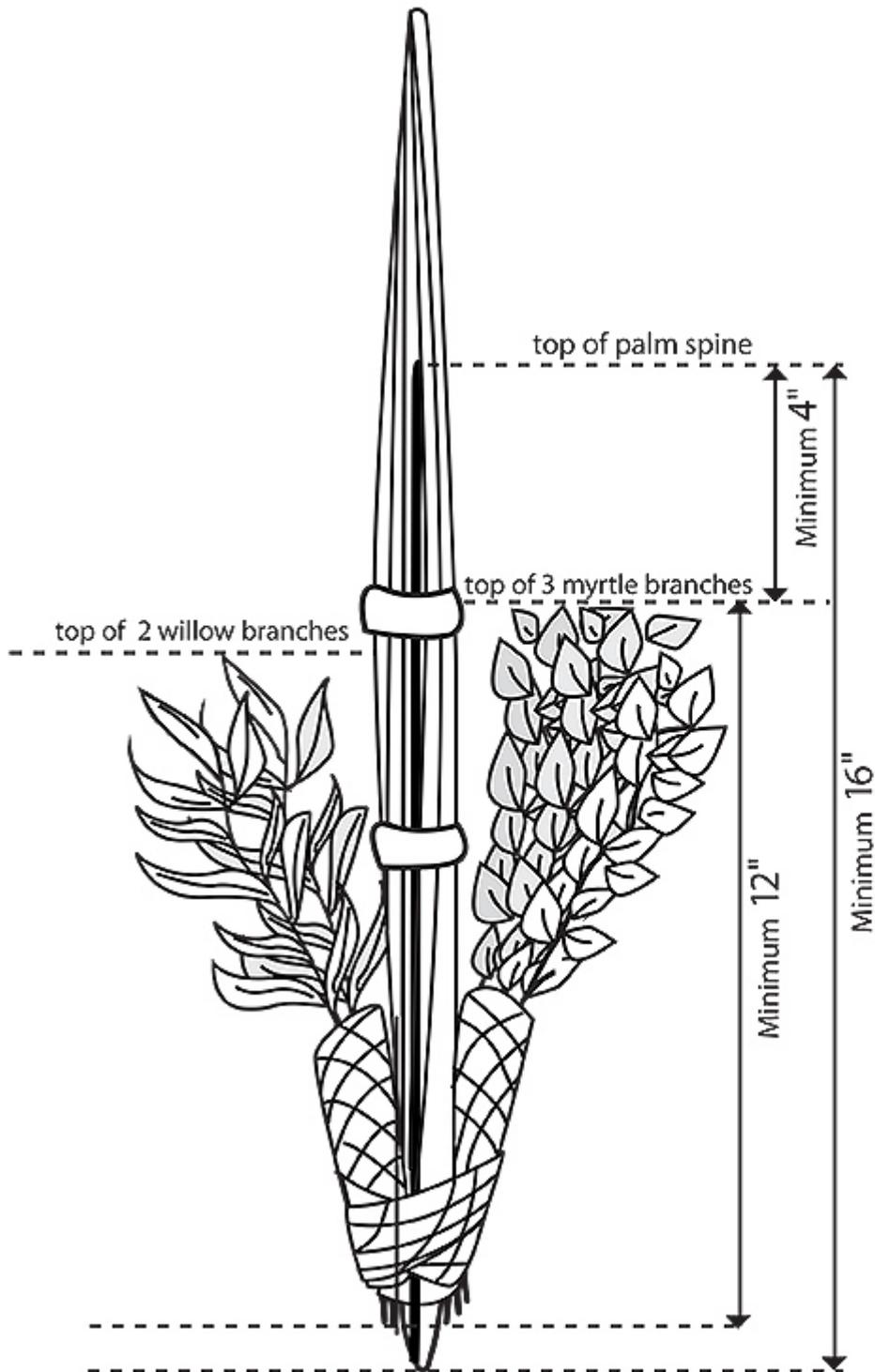
LULAV: SETTING UP

To Set Up a Lulav

To set up a lulav: hold with spine facing you, with three myrtle branches (hadassim) on the right and two willow branches (aravot) on the left. It is customary to put the myrtle and willow branches into a holder made of palm leaves.

NOTE Before Sukkot begins, open any sealed plastic bags that contain the willow and myrtle branches, as you may not cut them open on the festival days (the first and second days outside of Eretz Yisrael).

Lulav



LULAV: BORROWING

Lulav: When You May Borrow

You may borrow a lulav on all days of Sukkot except the first day (or first two days outside of Eretz Yisrael). On the first (two) day(s), you may acquire a lulav and etrog by having a friend “give” them to you as a gift, even if you will later “give” them back to your friend, also as a gift.

NOTE If you intended to use someone else's lulav on the first day of Šukkot, it is considered as if the lulav is yours, even without doing the normal acquisition.

Lulav: Husband and Wife

A man's wife does not own the lulav with him (and a wife's husband does not own her lulav), but it is assumed that each gives their lulav to the other (on the first and second day of Sukkot) as a gift with a condition that the recipient will give the lulav back to the other spouse as a gift once finished.

LULAV: HOW TO BLESS

LULAV: WHO SHOULD BLESS

Lulav: Who Should Bless: Women

Women and girls do not need to bless over or wave the lulav; but if they do, it is a mitzva.

LULAV: WHERE TO BLESS

Lulav: Where To Bless: Sukka or Synagogue

Say blessings on the lulav and etrog in the sukka or in synagogue.

LULAV: WHEN TO BLESS

Lulav: When To Bless: Daytime

Only say the blessing on the lulav during the day.

Lulav: Shabbat

Don't pick up the lulav or say the blessing on Shabbat.

LULAV: HOLD, BLESS, SHAKE

Lulav: Hold, Bless, Shake

To fulfill the commandment of lulav and etrog, you must hold them together the way they grow: stems down. But since you fulfill the commandment as soon as you hold the Four Species together this way, you must first pick up the etrog inverted (stem up) and then say the blessing, as follows:

- Hold the lulav with the spine facing you and the myrtle on the right, willows on the left, and the etrog with the pitom (opposite the stem) down;
- Say the blessings for the lulav;
- Turn the etrog right side up (stem-side down) and hold the lulav and etrog together; and
- Shake the Four Species together.

NOTE Waving (or shaking) the lulav is a universally accepted custom with the force of halacha. We show that God is present in all directions by waving the lulav in the four compass directions, plus up and down. There are various customs of the sequence in which to wave the lulav. One common sequence is east; south; west; north; up; down. Wave the Four Species three times in each direction.

NOTE Although the lulav's spine should face you as you hold it, you have still fulfilled the requirement of lulav if the spine was facing away or if the willows and myrtles are on the incorrect sides of the lulav.

Lulav: Hallel at Home or in Synagogue

Ideally, take your lulav and etrog to synagogue and say hallel with the minyan. B'di'avad, it is OK to say hallel and the blessings and wave the lulav at home.

Lulav: How To Wave During Hallel

Wave the lulav in all six directions each time when saying Hodu l'Adonai... and, later, Ana Adonai... and again in the final Hodu in Hallel:

- Hold together the lulav and etrog during the entire procedure, pitom up, etrog in left hand.
- At each word in Hodu l'Adonai... and at each syllable in Ana Adonai, shake the lulav/etrog together three times, advancing through the sequence of east, south, west, north, up, down.

For Hodu l'Adonai:

- At Hodu, shake three times to the east;

- At l'Adonai, don't shake but hold the lulav and etrog up while standing straight;
- At ki, shake three times to the south, etc..

For Ana Adonai,

- At “A,” shake three times to the east;
- At “na, shake three times to the south;
- At Adonai, stand straight and hold the lulav and etrog up;
- At “ho,” shake three times to the west;
- At “shi,” shake three times to the north, etc.

LULAV: STORING

Lulav: Storing: Replacing into Water

You may put the myrtle and willow branches into water after using them only if they were in water before the Sukkot holiday began. You may not add water on Shabbat, but you may on the other Jewish festival days. You may change the water only on chol ha'moed.

LULAV: DISPOSING

Lulav: Disposing

You may dispose of a lulav in any way that is not degrading. So, you may drop it into a field or put it on a lawn--unless animals might eat it or step on it or if it will be subject to poor treatment before it decays. Don't dispose of a lulav or etrog directly into the garbage. Burn, bury, or wrap them in a bag or one layer of plastic and you may throw it into normal garbage.

HOSHANOT

Hoshanot: Joining

Hoshanot were done in the Temple in Jerusalem and the community is required to do hoshanot. Individuals are not required to join, but it is the proper practice to join if holding a lulav and etrog.

HOSHANA RABBA

HOSHANA RABBA: HOSHANOT

Hoshana Rabba: Hoshanot: Main Observance

The main observance of hoshanot is wrapping five willow branches in a palm leaf and beating them.

Hoshana Rabba: Hoshanot: Lulav Willow Branches

You may use the willow branches (aravot) from a lulav for hoshanot, but you must add three more to the two already on the lulav.

SHMINI ATZERET

Introduction to Shmini Atzeret/Simchat Torah

Timing

In Eretz Yisrael, Shmini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are observed on the same day. Outside of Eretz Yisrael, Simchat Torah is the second day of what becomes a two-day festival.

Prayers

We begin mentioning rain in the second paragraph of the musaf amida of Shmini Atzeret and continue until

the first day of *Passover*.

Universal Customs

The universal custom is to complete the reading of the *Torah* and to begin reading it again on *Simchat Torah*. Dancing and singing with the *Torah* scrolls is also a universal custom.

Shmini Atzeret/Simchat Torah: What Time To Start: Ma'ariv and Kiddush

Ma'ariv on *Shmini Atzeret* and on *Simchat Torah* may be said from 1 1/4 hours before sunset. *Kiddush* must be said after dark.

Shmini Atzeret: Eating in Sukka

For whether to eat in your *sukka* on *Shmini Atzeret*, see *Sukka: Shmini Atzeret*.

PASSOVER

INTRODUCTION TO PASSOVER

Introduction to Passover

Introduction to Passover: Passover Names

Passover celebrates the seven or eight days starting with the 14th of *Nisan*, when God took the Israelites out of Egypt about 3300 years ago. The holiday has several names:

- *Chag HaPesach*--Holiday of "Skipping Over" (reflecting that God passed over the Jewish homes and did not kill the first-born sons, unlike those of the Egyptians);
- *Chag HaAviv*--Festival of Spring (the Jewish calendar is based on the moon and is adjusted to the solar cycle so that *Passover* always comes in the spring);
- *Chag HaMatzot*--Holiday of Unleavened Bread; and
- *Zman Cheiruteinu*--Time of our Freedom.

Introduction to Passover: Passover Observance

Passover observance includes removal of *chametz*, the *Passover* sacrifice and its reminders, and the *Passover seder*:

Chametz

Chametz Gamur and *Ta'aromet Chametz*

The *Five Grains*, once fermented into items such as bread or beer, are genuine *chametz* (*chametz gamur*) and are forbidden on *Passover* by the *Torah* (*d'oraita*). *Ta'aromet chametz* (a mixture containing *chametz*) includes foods such as breakfast cereal and are also forbidden on *Passover*.

Rules for *Chametz*

- You may not own or see (your own) *chametz* during the entire period of *Passover*.
- You may not benefit in any way from *chametz* during *Passover*, whether it belongs to a Jew or to a non-Jew. If the *chametz* was owned by a Jew during *Passover*, you may not benefit from that *chametz* even after the holiday has ended.

What To Do with *Chametz*

Ideally, any *chametz* should be used up before *Passover*, given to a non-Jew, or destroyed. But if the *chametz* has significant value, the custom is to sell that *chametz* to a non-Jew. You do not need to sell *kitniyot*, but you must sell any genuine *chametz* and any mixtures of *chametz* (*ta'aromet chametz*).

Passover and Nullification by 1/60th

During the year, 1/60th or less of an undesired substance is considered to be inconsequential and nullified by

the other substances. But on *Passover*, any amount of leaven mixed in food is forbidden.

However, the chametz in food acquired before *Passover* can be nullified before *Passover*, but ONLY if:

- It is 1/60th or less of the total volume of food,
- The food is liquid mixed in other liquid, or solid in other solid, AND
- The chametz/non-chametz elements cannot be easily separated from each other.

Four Steps To Eliminating Chametz

There are four means of eliminating chametz:

- **Bedika: Searching**
You try to find any chametz.
- **Bitul: Verbal and Intentional Nullification**
Since you may have overlooked some chametz during bedika, declare that any chametz in your possession is not important to you and has no value.
- **Bi'ur: Burning**
By burning and therefore destroying the chametz, we fulfill the Torah commandment of “tashbitu” (making it cease to exist).
- **Mechira: Selling**
By changing the ownership, we no longer own chametz on *Passover* and we create the opportunity to re-acquire the chametz after *Passover* has ended if the non-Jewish buyer agrees.

Chametz Symbolism

Fermented grains represent (among other things) arrogance and pride: the puffing up of fermented grains is symbolic of people puffing up themselves. In Judaism, one way to get rid of a bad personal trait is to utterly destroy it and so we symbolically remove and destroy any fermented grain foods from our houses and ownership.

Destroying chametz is not a violation of “do not destroy” (bal tashchit) since it is done to perform a commandment.

What Are Kitniyot

Kitniyot are foods that look similar to the five chametz grains or that could be ground into a flour that could look like flour from those grains, such as beans, peanuts, rice, corn, mustard seeds, and other food plants that are grown near the Five Grains.

What To Do with Kitniyot

Kitniyot may not be used on *Passover* but do not need to be sold or removed from one's ownership. Kitniyot should be stored away from kosher for *Passover* food.

Passover Sacrifice

In Temple times, the *Passover* sacrifice was to be eaten with one's family and possibly with neighbors, depending on the number of people present. The only two instances of kareit (being cut off spiritually) for not doing a positive commandment are for not doing a brit mila and not bringing a *Passover* offering (in Temple times).

Seder

The *Passover seder* (order) was prescribed in ancient times as a means for helping all Jews, of all ages and both genders, to re-experience the transition from having been slaves to becoming free and from having ascended from idol worshippers to being monotheistic.

PASSOVER: COOKING AND EATING UTENSILS

Passover: Special Pots

You may not use cooking utensils on *Passover* that have been used for cooking chametz during the year unless they have been kasherd. For details, click [kashrus/kk-passover-kashering.htm](https://www.kashrus.com/kk-passover-kashering.htm)>here. You do not need to sell the chametz that is on the utensils unless it totals more than 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup).

Passover: Kitniyot in Passover Utensil

SITUATION Kitniyot were cooked in a *Passover* utensil.

SITUATION 1 The kitniyot's volume was less than 50% of the volume of food cooked in that utensil.

STATUS The food may be eaten and the utensil may be used on *Passover* (no need to kasher).

SITUATION 2 The kitniyot's volume was more than 50% of the volume of the food cooked in that utensil.

STATUS The food is not permitted to be eaten.

SITUATION 2A The kitniyot's volume was more than 50% of the volume of the food cooked in that utensil, and the total volume of the food cooked (kitniyot + non-kitniyot) was less than the normal volume of food which is cooked in that utensil.

STATUS The utensil may be used even without kashering, as long as you wait at least 24 hours after the utensil has been cleaned.

SITUATION 2B The kitniyot's volume was more than 50% of the volume of the utensil itself and more than 50% of the normal volume of food cooked in it.

STATUS You may not eat the food (until after *Passover*) and must kasher the utensil after waiting 24 hours.

NOTE You may only kasher a utensil on *chol ha'moed* but NOT on the festival days themselves.

PASSOVER: FOODS AND SOAPS

PASSOVER: FOOD ITEMS

Cumin

Cumin is not used on *Passover* due to its similarity to kitniyot. This is a custom.

Flour (raw)

Raw flour is suspected of being chametz and therefore may not be owned during *Passover*.

Frozen Vegetables

Frozen vegetables, such as spinach or broccoli, may not be used on *Passover* unless certified as kosher for *Passover*.

Matza (Oat)

There is no question that oat matza properly made and supervised according to Jewish law is kosher for eating on *Passover*.

Matza (Unopened)

Kosher for *Passover* matza in unopened packages stays kosher for *Passover* and may be used in subsequent years.

Quinoa

Quinoa is not chametz because it does not ferment without adding yeast and it is not one of the original Five Grains.

Seltzer

Plain seltzer (with no additives other than water and carbon dioxide) that has been produced before *Passover* does not need kosher supervision.

If produced during *Passover*, it might need kosher supervision.

Water (Plain)

Plain water (in the USA) never needs kosher supervision, not even for *Passover*.

Yeast

Yeast is not normally chametz but may not be used on *Passover*.

PASSOVER: SOAP/TOILETRIES

Dish Soap

Dish soap made from kosher ingredients but without *Passover* supervision may still be a problem on *Passover* due to possible alcoholic ingredients.

Chametz Soap

You may not use (including you may not ingest even tiny amounts of) soap that contains chametz on *Passover*. But since it is not fit for a dog to eat, you do not need to sell it.

Toothbrush

You do not need a new toothbrush for *Passover* as long as it is clean.

Toothpaste for Passover

Toothpaste does not need to be specially made kosher for *Passover*.

Laundry Starch

You may use non-chametz starch on clothing during *Passover* but not on tablecloths, napkins, or other items that might contact food.

REASON The starch might be kitniyot.

PASSOVER: HOW TO PREPARE

PASSOVER: GETTING RID OF CHAMETZ

PASSOVER: CLEANING

Passover: Preparing for the Search

Clean the house before searching for chametz. Mark off the cleaned areas as you work. (This is just a suggestion, not a requirement!)

Passover: What Chametz To Remove

You must remove significant chametz when cleaning for *Passover*. But you do not need to remove small crumbs unless they may be inadvertently eaten during *Passover*--if they are on a kitchen counter, a table, etc.

NOTE It is the custom to remove all chametz from the house.

Passover: When You Do Not Need To Clean

You do not need to clean your house if you will:

- Leave your house 30 days or more before *Passover*, and

- Will not return to your house until after *Passover* has ended, and
- Have sold your chametz before the holiday begins.

PASSOVER: SEARCHING FOR CHAMETZ (BEDIKAT CHAMETZ)

Passover Chametz Search: Who May Search

One member of each house must search for any chametz (bedikat chametz) on behalf of the entire household. This may be a man, woman, or even a minor child, as long as he or she is sufficiently responsible to conduct the search in all of the details.

Passover Chametz Search: When To Search

Search your house for any leavened food or crumbs the night before first seder night. If the first seder begins Saturday night, you must search for chametz on Thursday night.

Passover Chametz Search: Where To Search

You must look for chametz (leavened foods) in any place where food might have been carried. If you have small children, you must search your entire house. However, you do not need to search in any place where no food was brought, nor in any closets that will be locked during *Passover* and the leavened food in them sold.

Passover Chametz Search: Whether To Search

If you are staying in someone else's house for *Passover* and the owner is away for the holiday, you must do bedikat chametz for the house--even if the owner has not been there for more than 30 days and even if you will not be eating in that house. The same rule applies for any place that you have rented for any part of *Passover* and that does not have a resident owner who has done the bedika there.

EXCEPTION If you are staying in a hotel or other accommodation that is thoroughly cleaned before *Passover*, you do not need to do bedika chametz.

Passover Chametz Search: Putting Out Chametz To Find

Before beginning the official chametz search, put out 10 pieces of chametz wrapped to prevent crumbs from falling off.

NOTE The entire procedure of putting out chametz is a non-binding custom.

Passover Chametz Search: Which Blessing To Say

Before searching for chametz, say the blessing al bi'ur chametz.

Passover Chametz Search: How To Search

While the search for chametz is traditionally done by candlelight, you may use a flashlight. You should not use a normal room light.

REASON The idea is to use a directional light source, which will highlight any chametz.

PASSOVER: NULLIFYING CHAMETZ

Passover: Nullifying Chametz: Which Language for Kol Chamira

The kol chamira formula, in Aramaic, is said to nullify any leaven that was missed during the search. If you do not understand the Aramaic, you should also read the translation in English (or whatever your own language is).

Passover: Nullifying Chametz: Who Says Kol Chamira

Everyone at bedikat chametz, including guests who will be there for the holiday, says the kol chamira formula for nullifying any chametz that they own.

NOTE A similar nullification is said the next morning (morning of the day before *Passover*), when the chametz from the search is burned.

PASSOVER: BURNING CHAMETZ

Passover: Burning Chametz: What To Do with Chametz

If you own any chametz, you must burn some of it in order to fulfill the commandment of burning chametz: this is a mitzva from the Torah!

NOTE If you have too much chametz to conveniently burn, you may throw some of the chametz into the garbage (but not into your own garbage can, only a public one--where permitted).

You must throw the chametz into the garbage **before** you burn the remainder. You may, alternatively, throw the chametz into a public area or pond (if permitted by the owner or by law).

Passover: Burning Chametz: Wife Covered by Husband

At the burning of the chametz before *Passover*, a wife is covered by her husband's saying kol chamira and burning chametz, unless she has chametz of her own.

Passover: Burning Chametz: Husband Covered by Wife

It is preferable for a husband to say kol chamira. However, he is covered by his wife's saying kol chamira, as long as he has asked his wife to do so.

NOTE If the wife burns the chametz, she should inform her husband at the time she actually burns the chametz (she may inform him by phone and does not have to do so in person).

PASSOVER: SELLING CHAMETZ

Passover: Selling Chametz: Different Countries for You and Your Chametz

If you live in one country and go to another country for *Passover*, you must sell your chametz so that the chametz in each country is sold and re-acquired at the correct time based on where you are located but also on where your chametz is. Consult a rabbi.

Passover: Selling Chametz: Selling by Mail

Appointing the rabbi (if the rabbi agrees!) as an agent to sell your chametz does not require an acquisition and may be effected through the mail.

Passover: Selling Chametz: Selling Animals and their Food

You must sell dog (or other animal) food, if it contains any chametz, for *Passover* to a non-Jew.

NOTE You may sell your dog (or other animal) to a non-Jew for *Passover* (in order to allow the animal to eat chametz on *Passover*), but not to the same person to whom you sold the food.

PASSOVER: ACQUIRING CHAMETZ DURING PASSOVER

Passover: Getting Rid of Chametz: Acquiring Chametz during Passover

If you inadvertently buy chametz on *Passover*, you must burn it.

If chametz was brought to you, such as by mail delivery service, DON'T accept it. Consider it as ownerless/hefker. You may not bring it into your house or yard. If it is still there after *Passover* has ended, you may take it for yourself.

NOTE If you inadvertently bought kitniyot during *Passover*, just put it away until *Passover* has ended and then you may eat it.

PASSOVER: KASHERING

Passover: Dishes and Pots

See [Passover: Special Pots](#).

For more details on [kashering](#) for *Passover* from the Star-K, click [here](#).

NOTE On *Passover*, gender and [chametz](#) status DO get transferred through a stream of hot liquid back into the pouring container.

Passover: When To Finish Kashering

When [kashering](#) an oven or utensils for *Passover*, you may [kasher](#):

- By [Libun](#)

Anytime, including on [chol ha'moed](#) (but not on [Jewish festivals](#) or [Shabbat](#)).

- By [Hag'ala](#)

Until one hour before [halachic midday](#) on *Passover* eve (but [b'di'avad](#) it is OK until just before sunset of *Passover* eve).

Passover: Kashering Pots and Utensils To Change from Milk to Meat (or vice versa)

You may make certain utensils [kosher](#) for *Passover* if they were [chametz](#) or non-[kosher](#). For a list of materials that can be [kashered](#), see the sections entitled "**Items/Materials that Can Be [Kashered](#)**" and "**Items/Materials that Cannot Be [Kashered](#)**" here: [Introduction to Food Nullification: Utensils \(\[Kashering\]\(#\)\)](#)

NOTE You may not change utensils that are already [kosher](#) directly from [milk](#) to meat or meat to [milk](#). Rather, you must:

- First make the utensil non-[kosher](#) (or [chametz](#)), and then
- [Kasher](#) it.

Once [kashered](#), the utensil will usually be neutral/[pareve](#) as far as gender and you may choose to make it [dairy](#) or meat.

Passover: Kashering an Oven

To [kasher](#) an oven for *Passover*:

- Clean it completely, including any hard deposits, and
- Heat the oven for 40 minutes at its highest temperature.

Passover: Kashering an Oven: Cleaning

To determine whether an oven is clean:

If there are black or brown spots, scratch them:

- If the substance crumbles, the spots are OK.
- If the spots do not crumble, consider the oven NOT clean.

NOTE If you use the oven's self-clean cycle, you do not need to remove the hard deposits from the oven before [kashering](#).

If the oven is not self-cleaning, you must remove (clean off or burn off) any deposits on the walls, racks, and window. If the stains or deposits do not come off after two cycles of using a strong oven cleaner such as Easy Off, the oven is considered sufficiently clean. **Weaker oven cleaners that do not remove deposits may not be relied on.**

Passover: Kashering an Oven: Temperature

The order of preference for the heat settings is

- Self-cleaning (if possible) on the self-cleaning cycle.
- Next choice is broil or the highest heat setting.

For more details on kashering for *Passover*, see

[kashrus/kk-passover-kashering.htm](http://www.star-k.org/kashrus/kk-passover-kashering.htm)"><http://www.star-k.org/kashrus/kk-passover-kashering.htm>

PASSOVER EVE: WHAT TO STOP DOING WHEN

PASSOVER EVE: WHEN TO STOP EATING MATZA

When To Stop Eating Matza

You may not eat matza after daybreak on the day before the *Passover seder*: about 13 hours before sunset of the first seder night.

PASSOVER EVE: WHEN TO STOP EATING/OWNING CHAMETZ/KITNIYOT

When To Stop Eating/Possessing Chametz

After the fourth halachic hour on the eve of *Passover*:

- You may not eat chametz or kitniyot.
- You may not eat non-chametz food cooked in a chametz utensil.

By the fifth halachic hour on the eve of *Passover*:

The chametz must be burned.

NOTE A halachic hour is a local daytime hour calculated by dividing the total number of daylight hours by 12.

PASSOVER EVE: WHEN TO STOP EXPERT WORK

Expert Work after Noon before Seder Night

You may not do any types of expert or professional work after halachic midday before the first *Passover seder*. These types of prohibited work are whatever would be prohibited on chol ha'moed.

NOTE You may tell or ask a non-Jew to do such work.

PASSOVER EVE: WHEN TO STOP SHAVING

When To Stop Shaving

You should not shave or get a haircut on the afternoon before *Passover* unless a non-Jew shaves you or cuts your hair.

PASSOVER NIGHT(S)

PASSOVER NIGHT(S): MA'ARIV

Timing of Ma'ariv on Seder Night(s)

- Ma'ariv on the first night of *Passover* may begin at sunset. But since the seder may not be started until after dark, the custom is to begin ma'ariv a little before dark.
- The second seder may also not be started until after dark. Ma'ariv on the second night of *Passover* may be said from plag ha'mincha, 1 1/4 hours before sunset.
- Ma'ariv on the seventh and eighth days of *Passover* may be started as early as plag ha'mincha, 1 1/4 hours before sunset.

Hallel after Ma'ariv

People who have the custom of saying hallel after ma'ariv on the first night of *Passover* also say hallel on the second night (outside of Eretz Yisrael).

HaMapil on Passover

On the first two nights of *Passover*, before going to sleep, just say shema and the *ha'mapil* blessing.

REASON The first night (two nights outside of Eretz Yisrael) is considered to have special Divine protection, so we omit the extra paragraphs in the final parts of the prayer.

PASSOVER NIGHT(S): EATING MATZA

When Eating Matza Is Obligatory

The only time when matza must be eaten to fulfill the commandment of eating matza is on seder night(s). There may be a mitzva to also eat matza on the other days of *Passover* (but there are conflicting opinions about that).

However, men must eat matza in order to fulfill the commandment of eating two meals a day on each of the festival days.

PASSOVER: SEDER

SEDER: PRINCIPLES

Seder: Purpose

It is praiseworthy to tell the story of *Passover* even if you know all the details and interpretations (as did the great rabbis of the Talmud), because of the principle of “in order to remember” (lema'an tizkor): that we should remember everything God did for us when taking us out of Egypt.

The Three Discussion Points

The most important part of the seder is discussing:

- *Passover* offering (Pesach),
- Unleavened bread (matza), and
- Bitter herbs (maror).

These three segments should be read from the *Passover hagada* in the Hebrew. If anyone does not understand the Hebrew, these paragraphs and the concepts they express must be explained in whatever language he or she can understand.

Children at the Seder

Children are an integral part of the seder. We try to get children to ask questions and then we teach them the answers. The Torah says to do this!

Acknowledging God's Miracles

We acknowledge God's miracles in sending the plagues against the Egyptians and their gods and in taking the Children of Israel out of slavery and Egypt.

Telling Our History

We tell our history beginning with Jacob (Yaakov) and Laban (Lavan) and on to slavery and, finally, to achieving freedom.

SEDER: PRACTICES

SEDER: PRACTICES: HALACHOT

Leaning to the Left

Every male (13 years old and above) at the seder is required by halacha to lean to the left side while:

- Drinking each of the four cups of wine.

- Eating matza for each of these mitzvot: motzi, matza, koreich, afikoman.

Ideally, lean onto something to your left, such as a chair or couch. A pillow is nice but optional.

NOTE Women and girls are not required to lean at any time during the meal.

SEDER: PRACTICES: CUSTOMS

Seder Customs

Here are some seder customs:

1. Have someone else pour the water over your hands for washing before karpas.
2. Have someone else pour your wine for you.

SEDER PLATE

Five Foods of the Seder Plate

Seder plate consists of five foods:

Shank Bone

Shank bone, meat, or a neck represents the *Passover* lamb offering.

NOTE Any part of any kosher animal or bird may be used for this purpose except liver. You may even use roasted lamb, but you may not eat it.

Egg

Egg represents the holiday offering (chagiga).

Bitter Herbs

Bitter herbs (maror), such as romaine, horseradish, or endive, represent the bitterness of slavery.

Charoet

Charoet (sweet mixture of nuts and fruits) reminds us of the mortar the Jews used to build the Egyptian storage cities.

Vegetable

Vegetable such as parsley or potato (karpas). The vegetable does not represent anything and is there to motivate the children to ask questions.

SEDER: THREE MATZAS

Introduction to Three Matzas (Matzot)

The seder table also has a stack of three matzas (matzot), representing, among other meanings:

- Cohen-Levi-Yisrael: The three divisions of Jews
- Abraham-Isaac-Jacob: The three forefathers

These matzot are used later in the seder for the steps of Motzi and Matza (top and middle matzas); the middle matza becomes the "Afikoman."

SEDER: STEPS

The 15 Steps in the Seder

Kadeish

U'rchatz

Karpas

[Yachatz](#)

[Magid](#)

[Rachtza](#)

[Motzi](#)

[Matza](#)

[Maror](#)

[Koreich](#)

[Shulchan Oreich](#)

[Tzafun](#)

[Bareich](#)

[Hallel](#)

[Nirtza](#)

KADEISH: FOUR CUPS OF WINE

KADEISH: MAKING KIDDUSH

Passover Kiddush

Passover, like all Jewish festivals, is differentiated from weekdays by saying kiddush.

Everyone Must Drink at Seder

At the Passover seder, all Jews above the age of bar mitzva or bat mitzva (including women--unlike on other Jewish festivals) must drink wine for kiddush and for the other three times in the seder when the borei pri ha'gafen blessing is said.

NOTE On the other Jewish festivals, only one person needs to drink the wine when kiddush is said, and that will cover and fulfill everyone else's requirement for that kiddush.

NOTE Only children and people who will get sick if they drink alcohol are permitted to drink grape juice at seder.

Alcohol Content of Seder Wine

You may dilute the seder wine to a minimum of 4% alcohol.

Red Wine or White for Seder

If you have equally good red wine and white wine, the red is preferred for the four cups at the seder. If your white wine is better or if you prefer white wine, use that.

Drinking More

You may drink more wine between the first and second cups, between the second and third cups, but not between the third and fourth cups.

KADEISH: FOUR CUPS, FOUR ROLES

Four Cups, Four Roles

Each of the four cups has a different role:

- First Cup: Kiddush to sanctify the holiday.
- Second Cup: Sanctifying the hagada.
- Third Cup: Sanctifying Birkat ha'mazon.
- Fourth Cup: Sanctifying Hallel.

KADEISH: FOUR CUPS, FOUR EXPRESSIONS

Four Cups, Four Expressions

The four cups of wine relate to the four expressions God used when telling what he would do to bring the Israelites out of Egypt:

- *V'hotzeiti* I will send them out.
- *V'hitzalti* I will save them.
- *V'ga'alti* I will redeem them.
- *V'lakachti* I will take them.

KADEISH: FIFTH CUP

Fifth Cup

The fifth cup of wine at se_de_r, for E_li_ya_hu (E_li_ja_h) the prophet, symbolizes v'heiveiti--"I will bring them."

REASON In the future, everyone will drink five cups of se_de_r wine. (Some say the term v'heiveiti is not part of the redemption and some say it is a stage that has not happened yet.)

The cup of E_li_ya_hu (which is not intended to be drunk by E_li_ya_hu) should be used for kiddush the next morning. Various customs dictate when to fill E_li_ya_hu's cup; it may be filled anytime from the beginning of the se_de_r.

KADEISH: HOW MUCH TO FILL AND DRINK

Four Cups: Minimum Quantity To Fulfill Mitzva

Minimum wine to fulfill the se_de_r mitzva:

- Each person must drink four cups of wine at the se_de_r;
- Each cup must hold at least 4 fl. oz. (119 ml);
- For each blessing on the wine, you must drink at least 2 fl. oz. (59 ml) within 30 seconds of when you begin to drink each cup.

Majority of the Cup/Rov Kos

The se_de_r is the only time in the year that you must drink most of your cup (rov kos) of kiddush wine. (For kiddush on Shabbat and Jewish festivals, you need drink only 2 fl. oz., or 59 ml). So if you have a cup larger than 4 fl. oz. (119 ml), you may have to drink a lot of wine--more than half of each cup for four cups!

NOTE You may drink other liquids between the first and second cups of wine at the se_de_r, but it is not recommended.

KADEISH: LEANING TO LEFT

Leaning To Left while Drinking Four Cups

Every male at the se_de_r is required to lean to the left side while drinking each cup of wine.

U'RCHATZ: WASH HANDS (NO BLESSING)

U'rchatz (No blessing)

Wash hands from a cup of water but do not say a blessing on washing.

REASON We are about to eat food that is wet and Jews may not eat wet food if their hands have spiritual impurity (tum'a).

KARPAS: EAT THE VEGETABLE

Karpas Blessing

Dip the karpas in the salt water and say the blessing borei pri ha'adama; keep in mind that this blessing will also apply to the bitter herbs you will eat later in the se_de_r.

How Much Karpas To Eat

Eating any amount of karpas fulfills the mitzva of eating karpas at seder, but you may not eat more than 0.6 fl. oz. (17 ml, or 1/12 cup).

YACHATZ: BREAK THE MATZA

Breaking the Middle Matza

Break the middle of the three *matzas* and hide the larger part.

REASON As with most of the actions we do at the seder, this is to evoke curiosity in children. It also represents the idea that poor people can't afford a whole loaf of bread or might save some food for the next day.

MAGID: TELL THE STORY

Four Questions

The Four Questions are actually only one question and that question is:

Why is this night different from all other nights?

Seder in Bnei Brak

The teachers in Bnai Brak were so engrossed in telling the *Passover* story that they did not notice that it was after sunrise.

REASON They may have been in a windowless room since they were risking their lives by celebrating *Passover*, against Roman law.

Like 70 Years Old

Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya says he is “like 70 years old” because even though he was only 18 years old, his hair turned white overnight as if God approved his appointment as Sanhedrin head.

Four Sons

Only three of the Four Sons' questions are mentioned in the Torah (which all related to the *Passover* sacrifice), since the fourth (smallest) child cannot ask questions. Regarding this child, the hagada says, "Aht p'tach lo" (in the feminine).

REASON The mother is supposed to be a child's primary teacher while the child is young.

There is a difference in attitude between the wise son and the evil son: The wise son says "Eloheinu" (OUR God); he is asking a question and seeking an answer. The evil son makes a statement (sort of a rhetorical question), instead of asking a question for which he seeks an answer.

Why is there a “wise” (chacham) son and not a “righteous” (tzadik) son, which would be the logical counterpart to the “evil” (rasha) son?

We don't know who is a tzadik. We cannot be sure by external appearance or even by seeing certain behaviors. We can tell who is a chacham by hearing him speak or by discussing Torah with him.

Yet, regardless of the sons' level of observance, it is a commandment to teach them about going out of Egypt.

Calculating the End (of Slavery)

God told Avraham (Abraham) that his children would be living in “lands not their own” and would be enslaved for 400 years. Yet the Torah states that the Israelites were in Egypt for 210 years. So we say God “calculated the end” (chisheiv et ha'keitz) of the enslavement: He started the counting from the birth of Avraham's son, Yitzchak (Isaac), until the Exodus (a total of 400 years), as follows:

Time from Birth of Avraham's Son to Going Down to Egypt

- Yaakov (Jacob) was born when Yitzchak was 60 years old.
- Yaakov told Par'o (Pharaoh) (when he and the rest of his family entered Egypt) that he was 130 years old.
- 60 + 130= **190 years before going down to Egypt**

Time in Egypt

210 years in Egypt

Time from Birth of Avraham's Son to Exodus

190 Before going down to Egypt

+ 210 In Egypt

= 400 years from Yitzchak's birth to the Exodus.

NOTE Yitzchak and Yaakov did not yet “own” Eretz Yisrael. Since the Israelites were not given Eretz Yisrael until after the Exodus, Avraham's offspring were living in “lands not their own” for 400 years.

V'Hi She'Amda and Lefichach

When we lift up our wine cups at v'hi she'amda and at lefichach, we cover the matza.

REASON So the matza won't feel “embarrassed,” since bread/matza is more important than wine.

Let Us Deal Cleverly (Hava Nitchakma)

Hava nitchakma (let us deal cleverly) was an attempt at a clever way to keep the Israelites as slaves.

REASON The Egyptians were afraid the Israelites might join the Egyptians' enemies in a war.

Ten Plagues

Each of the plagues was against one of the Egyptian gods, to show that they were actually powerless.

Spilling Drops of Wine

We spill 10 drops of wine when reading the list of plagues.

REASON Wine symbolizes happiness and so we drink less wine to show that we are sad that the Egyptians suffered.

D'Tzach-Adash-B'Achav

In “the plague of the first-borns” (makat bechorot), did the first-borns suffer by dying or did their families suffer more?

In Rabbi Yehuda's abbreviations of the ten plagues, d'tzach-adash-b'achav, the abbreviation ends with the Hebrew letter “vet” for bechorot (first-borns), implying that it was the families who suffered, since if it ended with a “mem” for makat bechorot, it would have been the first-borns who suffered.

Dayenu

In dayenu, we say that at each level of what God did for us, it would have been enough. Since we didn't get the Torah until one of the last stages, this seems incorrect, since of what value is money, wandering in the desert, and all of the other details if we don't have the Torah?

The answer is that we need to be grateful to God for each miracle that we received, and that at each stage, we owe praise and thanks to God.

Also, in one sense, we already had the Torah (in some version, even though not in the form in which Moses/Moshe wrote it later).

Pesach, Matza, and Maror

Pesach, matza, and maror should be read and explained with special attention.

REASON They are the main parts of the seder and of the commandment to have a seder.

In Every Generation

The hagada tells us that in every generation, a person must see himself as if he had personally gone out of Egypt. If so, why didn't our Sages suggest how to visualize or recreate the experience?

It is not possible to actually see ourselves as having left slavery. Rather, we should feel our obligation to do the mitzvot (commandments) as the Israelites felt when they left Egypt, as they switched from being slaves to serving Hashem. We can be freed (*b'nei chorin*) from physical or spiritual slavery.

Why Matza and Not Bread

Question: Why didn't the Israelites bake bread (the Torah says that they did not have time for the dough to rise)? They knew 14 days ahead of time (on Rosh Chodesh Nisan) that they would be leaving, and they knew it would be middle of night (since God said that is when they would leave).

Answer: The Israelites did not do anything to prepare, except what God told them to do: the Passover offering and putting blood on their doorposts.

RACHTZA: WASH HANDS (WITH A BLESSING)

How To Wash Your Hands for Rachtza

To wash hands for rachtza:

- Fill the washing cup with at least 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of water.
- Pour enough water (may be as little as 1.3 fl. oz.--39 ml, or 1/6 cup) from the washing cup to completely cover your entire first hand (either hand may be first, but it is the custom to wash your right hand first).
- Pour enough water to completely cover the second hand.

You do not need to pour more than once per hand and you do not need to break up the *revi't* into more than one pour for each hand.

Handwashing Blessing

Say the blessing on washing hands, ending in al netilat yadayim.

MOTZI MATZA: BLESS ON/EAT MATZA

MATZA: WHY

Matza: Meaning

Matza represents:

- Food of poor people, and
- The unleavened bread that the Israelites ate when leaving Egypt.

NOTE A pun reflects this dual meaning of poor bread plus the story of leaving Egypt, since "lechem oni" may mean "bread of poor people" or "bread of (many) answers."

MATZA: WHAT KIND

When Shmura Matza Is Necessary

The only time you must use shmura matza is for the four commandments of motzi, matza, koreich, and afikoman.

NOTE You may use any other kosher for Passover matza, even for the rest of seder. There is no need for using shmura matza for the other days of Passover.

Hand Shmura Matza or Machine Shmura Matza

Hand shmura matza has some advantage in that it was made with the intention of being for a mitzva, but machine shmura matza has the advantage of being less likely to become chametz since it is automated and

not touched by human hands.

MATZA: HOW MUCH

How Much Matza To Eat

Motzi, Matza

For motzi and matza together, you must eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of matza within a 4-minute period from when you begin eating.

Afikoman

For afikoman, you must eat another 1.9 fl. oz of matza; b'di'avad, at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) is sufficient.

NOTE This amount is about 1/2 of a machine shmura matza, or 1/3 of a hand shmura matza.

NOTE If your mouth is too dry to eat that quickly, you may drink water with the matza.

MOTZI/MATZA: BLESSINGS

Why Two Blessings over Matza

We say two blessings over the matza: ha'motzi lechem min ha'aretz and al achilat matza.

REASON The blessing on motzi is one of enjoyment (nehenin); the blessing on matza is a blessing on a commandment (mitzva).

How To Do Motzi and Matza

The seder leader says the blessing "ha'motzi" while holding the three (which are now 2 1/2) shmura matzas, drops the bottom one, and says the next blessing, al achilat matza. Everyone takes a small piece from the two top matzas and eats it, along with enough additional shmura matza to fulfill the minimum requirement.

MAROR: EAT BITTER VEGETABLE

Maror: What To Eat

The ideal bitter vegetable for maror at the Passover seder is horseradish. Horseradish for maror:

- Must be fresh enough to be sharp.
- Should be ground (if ground ahead of time, it must be stored in a covered container until the seder).
- Must not have liquid (horseradish with beets added is not suitable for use as maror).

NOTE Many people have the custom to use romaine lettuce for maror (be careful to check for bugs on the romaine).

Maror: How Much To Eat

The minimum amount to fulfill the mitzva of eating maror at seder is 0.65 fl. oz. (19 ml), or about the volume of 1/3 of an egg.

NOTE If you choose to use romaine instead of horseradish for maror, the minimum amount is about 2-3 stems (depending on their size), or enough leaves if crushed to make up 0.65 fl. oz.

NOTE It is even better to eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup).

Maror: How To Eat It

Say the blessing "al achilat maror."

Dip the maror into the charoet and shake off all but a little bit of the charoet.

Do not lean when eating the maror.

NOTE The blessing for maror was included in the borei pri ha'adama blessing, which was said on the karpas earlier in the seder.

KOREICH: EAT THE SANDWICH

Koreich: How Much Matza To Eat

You need eat only 0.95 fl. oz. (28 ml) of matza within four minutes of beginning to eat it to fulfill the commandment of koreich.

Koreich: How Much Maror To Eat

For koreich, use the same amount of maror as for the maror commandment. See [Maror: How Much To Eat](#).

How To Eat Koreich

To eat the koreich:

- Put some bitter herbs on the matza.
- Lean to the left when eating the koreich.

SHULCHAN OREICH: EAT THE FESTIVAL MEAL

Lamb and Other Meat at Seder

Don't eat roasted meat of any kind at the seder, including roasted poultry.

REASON So it will not be confused with the *Passover* offering.

NOTE You may eat lamb as long as it is not roasted.

What Constitutes Non-Roasted Meat at Seder?

Meat is not considered to be roasted if, when the baking began, there was at least 1/4" of liquid in the cooking utensil with the meat.

TZAFUN: HIDDEN (AFIKOMAN)

When To Finish Afikoman

You should ideally finish afikoman by midnight at the *Passover seder*, but you may eat it later than midnight if you have not finished (or even started!) your meal by then.

Eating or Drinking after Afikoman

After eating the afikoman on *Passover*, you may not eat again until daybreak, but you will still drink two more cups of wine and you may drink water anytime through the night.

BAREICH: SAY BIRKAT HAMAZON

Forgetting Afikoman

If you said birkat ha'mazon at the seder but had forgotten to eat the afikoman, you must:

- Wash your hands,
- Say ha'motzi,
- Eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of matza,
- Say birkat ha'mazon again, and then
- Drink the third cup of wine.

OPENING THE DOOR/ SH'FOCH CHAMATCHA

Sh'foch Chamatcha

Open the door at this point.

REASON To show our trust in God to protect us, since the first night of *Passover* is called a night of watching (*leil shimurim*), when God provides special protection for the Jewish people.

NOTE You should open the door unless you are in an unsafe neighborhood. If the neighborhood is dangerous, it may be forbidden by Jewish law to live there at any time.

HALLEL: SAYING HALLEL PSALMS

Hallel Divided at Seder

At the *seeder*, *hallel* is divided into two parts. The first two *psalms*, read before the meal, deal with the *exodus* from Egypt. The remaining *psalms*, read after the meal, concern other miracles and the future of the Jewish nation.

Hallel at Night at Passover Seder

There are many opinions as to why we read *hallel* at night: most are related either to praising God for saving the Jewish people or to accompanying the *Passover* sacrifice in the *Temple* in Jerusalem.

NIRTZA: ACCEPTED

Acceptance of Seder and Commandments

We hope that God accepts our *seeder* and all of the commandments that we have done on this night.

PASSOVER: CHOL HAMOED AND ENDING DAY(S)

PASSOVER: CHOL HAMOED AND ENDING DAY(S): PRAYERS AND BLESSINGS

PASSOVER: CHOL HAMOED AND ENDING DAY(S): BLESSINGS FOR MATZA BREI

Matza Brei Blessing

The blessing on *matza brei* is *mezonot*, as long as the pieces of *matza* are smaller than 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) each. If even one of the pieces is larger than 1.3 fl. oz., wash your hands and say *ha'motzi* before eating it.

PASSOVER: ENDING DAY(S): SHEHECHEYANU

Passover: Ending Day(s): SheHecheyanu

Do not say *she'hecheyanu* when lighting candles or saying *kiddush* on the last two days of *Passover* outside of *Eretz Yisrael* or the last day of *Passover* in *Eretz Yisrael*.

NOTE These are the only *Jewish festival* days on which *she'hecheyanu* is not said.

PASSOVER: CHOL HAMOED AND ENDING DAY(S): HALLEL

Shortened Hallel on Seventh Day of Passover

We omit parts of two of *hallel's psalms* on *chol ha'moed* and the seventh (and eighth) day(s) of *Passover*.

REASON The Egyptians drowned on the seventh day. We thus dampen our celebration of God's saving us because we feel sorry that people had to die, even though they were evil.

NOTE Since *chol ha'moed* is less important than the final days of *Passover*, we diminish *hallel* on *chol ha'moed* by omitting the same passages.

POST-PASSOVER

WHEN YOU MAY BUY CHAMETZ FOOD AGAIN

Store Owned by Jew Who Owned Chametz

You may buy chametz food from a store owned by a Jew who owned chametz during *Passover* as long as two weeks or more have passed since *Passover* ended.

REASON It is assumed that the old chametz has already been sold by then.

NOTE If you are certain that chametz in the store was there at any time during *Passover*, you may not buy it.

Store Owned by Someone Who Did Not Own Chametz

You may buy chametz from a store owned by non-Jews (or by Jews who did not own chametz during *Passover*) as soon as the holiday has ended.

OMER

INTRODUCTION TO OMER

Introduction to Omer

Omer is counted for 49 days, from the second day of *Passover* to the day before *Shavuot*. Omer connects the two holidays both physically and spiritually. In Biblical times, an omer (a specific measure of volume) of barley was brought as an offering to the Temple in Jerusalem on the second day of *Passover*. Once the barley offering had been brought, all grain changed status from “chadash” to “yashan” and could be eaten.

Due to tragedies that occurred during the omer period, especially the death of 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva during the second century, we observe a semi-mourning period during 33 days of the 49 days of the omer.

OMER: COUNTING

Halacha and Custom in Counting Omer

The only halacha of “counting the omer” is to say the blessing and then count the omer. Anything else is custom.

"Counting the Omer" Blessing

The blessing over counting the omer is “al sefirat ha'omer.”

How To Count Omer before Dark

The ideal time and way to count the omer is to wait until dark, stand up, say the blessing, and then count the omer for that day.

SITUATION You want to count the omer before dark (as is often done in *synagogues* at the end of *ma'ariv*).

STATUS Since the correct practice is to count the omer after dark, you should:

- Count again with a blessing sometime after dark, or else
- Count during the following day (but before sunset) without a blessing.

WHAT TO DO Do the counting without saying the blessing and make a condition (mentally or verbally, either is OK) that if you remember to count the omer again after dark, the first time you counted, does not count (!) Then, if you do remember after dark, say the blessing and count the omer for that day a second time.

If You Forget To Count Omer at Night

SITUATION You forgot to count omer at night.

WHAT TO DO

- Count the next morning/daytime without a blessing. Then,

- Resume saying the blessing the subsequent night.

If You Do Not Count Omer before Next Day Sunset

SITUATION You forgot to count omer at night and didn't count the following day before dark.

WHAT TO DO Do not say the omer blessing any more that year, but do continue to count the omer without the blessing.

OMER PERIOD

OMER PERIOD: HOW TO DETERMINE

Methods of Counting the Omer Period

The mourning period during the counting of the omer (sefirat ha'omer) lasts for 33 days, but there are three ways to count them:

1. Second night of *Passover* until Lag ba'Omer (33rd day of counting the omer).
2. Rosh Chodesh Iyar until the third day before Shavuot (excludes Lag ba'Omer).
3. Second day of Iyar until Shavuot.

You may change your observance from year to year, if necessary.

OMER PERIOD: WHO COUNTS

Women and Girls Counting Omer

Women and girls are not required to count the omer. But if they do, they say the blessing (if appropriate) and it is a mitzva for them.

Boy Who Becomes Bar Mitzva during Omer

SITUATION

A boy becomes bar mitzva during the omer. He has been counting the omer and has said the omer blessing without missing a day.

WHAT TO DO

He continues counting as he had been doing.

NOTE Boys should be counting the omer with a blessing from before they become bar mitzva, so there should not be any break.

OMER PERIOD: RESTRICTIONS

OMER PERIOD: FORBIDDEN ACTIVITIES

Forbidden Activities During Omer Period

These are forbidden during the chosen omer period:

- Haircuts
- Shaving
- Listening to any music, even pre-recorded
- Getting married.

OMER PERIOD: PERMITTED ACTIVITIES

Buying Clothes Allowed during Omer

You may buy and wear new clothes during sefirat ha'omer.

Cutting Nails Allowed during Omer

You may cut your nails during sefirat ha'omer.

Saying SheHecheyanu Allowed during Omer

You may say she'hecheyanu during sefirat ha'omer.

Swimming Allowed during Omer

You may swim during sefirat ha'omer.

PESACH SHENI

Significance of Pesach Sheini

Only significance of Pesach Sheini now: No tachanun is said.

SHAVUOT

INTRODUCTION TO SHAVUOT

Introduction to Shavuot

Shavuot (Yom HaBikurim in the Torah) celebrates and commemorates the giving of the *Ten Commandments* to the Israelites at Mt. Sinai.

Beginning with the second night of *Passover*, the Israelites who left Egypt underwent 49 days of spiritual improvement and purification until they were ready to receive the Torah from God (Shavuot ends this 49-day “omer” period). We can undergo a similar process of spiritual development each year during these 49 days (how to do that is beyond the scope of this website). According to our tradition, the Israelites in Egypt had sunk to the 49th level of spiritual impurity (tum'a). The Israelites had to raise themselves in 49 daily stages to be worthy of receiving the Torah. Several books and siddurs portray the 49 days of the omer as corresponding to the Seven Sefirot embedded in the seven weeks. This awareness can help us work on and maximize the power inherent in each day of the omer to fix that particular *sefira* in ourselves. We thus relive this transition from slavery to freedom and the service of God each year as we try to perfect our midot (personal characteristics) to again be worthy of receiving the Torah on Shavuot.

Symbolism of the Shavuot Offering

In the Temple in Jerusalem, the only communal sacrifice of leavened bread was on Shavuot. Leavening in dough is compared to arrogance in humans (people puff themselves up to look more important than they actually are). During *Passover* we destroy, and refrain from eating, leaven--just as we try to destroy/remove arrogance from our personalities. After *Passover*, we continue to work on our personal traits (midot) until we reach Shavuot, when we celebrate receiving the Torah. At Shavuot, we Jews have a right to feel important, since we are spiritually elevated by virtue of having been given the Torah.

Shavuot: Universal Customs

The universal custom is to eat at least one dairy food during Shavuot.

Possible reason At the time the Israelites received the Torah, they did not have any kosher meat (they had not been required to eat kosher until then) and so the only food they were permitted to eat was dairy food. Another universal custom is to stay awake all night (if possible) studying Torah.

Shavuot: Symbols

Unlike other Jewish festivals, Shavuot has no concrete symbols and no specific unique commandments/mitzvot, other than sacrifices that were brought in the Temple in Jerusalem.

SHAVUOT: PRAYER SERVICES

Shavuot: Timing of Ma'ariv

On the first night of *Shavuot*, *ma'ariv* may not be started until dark. On the second night, *ma'ariv* may be said from 1 1/4 hours before sunset.

ISRU CHAG

Isru Chag: Tachanun and Eulogies

Do not say *tachanun* or give eulogies on *isru chag* (day after a *Jewish festival* ends).

JEWISH FESTIVAL CHECKLIST

Preparing for Jewish Festivals

Here are some suggestions (they are NOT *halachot!*) of what to prepare in advance of *Jewish festivals*. Add or delete to suit your needs!

Candle Lighting

- Check candle lighting time
- Set the candles in their holders (and have matches nearby)

Set the Table

Set the table, including the *challa* and its cover

Kitchen Preparation

- Sharpen knives
- Tear paper towels
- Refrigerator: Turn off or unscrew lights; disconnect any LEDs or fans
- Turn on *blech*, stove, oven, etc., for whatever you will need
- Set up hot water urn
- Turn off stove, oven, if needed

Food Preparation

- Thaw frozen meat, fish, and other food that might take hours to defrost before being cooked
- Cook whatever can be cooked ahead of time
- Squeeze lemons; do any other *boreir*-type preparations
- Chill wine
- Open bottles and cans that will be needed on the *Jewish festival*

Cleaning

- Make beds
- Sweep or vacuum
- Dump garbage

Clothing

- Do laundry
- Empty pockets of muktza
- For men, set out Jewish festival talit

Muktza

Check that nothing you will need is beneath a muktza item

Personal Care

- Cut hair and nails, if needed
- For men, shave or trim beard and mustache, if needed
- Tear dental floss
- Tear toilet paper or put out tissues in bathrooms
- Open any new boxes of tissues

Electronics

- Set heat or air conditioning
- Turn on or off lights, or set timers for them
- If desired, turn off or disconnect:
 - Alarms
 - Cellphones and phones
 - Computers
 - Microwave detectors
 - Other electronics

RABBINIC HOLIDAYS

CHANUKA

INTRODUCTION TO CHANUKA

Introduction to Chanuka

Chanuka commemorates the miracle of God's saving the Jews during the time of the Greek empire. The Greeks wanted to destroy Judaism and Jewish practices and have the Jews follow the Greek culture and religion. A small group of Jews defeated the Greek army, which was the world's greatest military force at the time. Contrast Chanuka with Purim (on Purim, the Jews' physical lives were in danger while on Chanuka, their religion was being threatened).

CHANUKA: BACKGROUND

Chanuka: Main Miracle

The main miracle of Chanuka was in defeating the Greeks; the oil's burning for eight days was secondary.

Chanuka: Why Eight Days

Eight days were required for the people who had contact with dead people to become ritually pure in order to make new olive oil.

Chanuka: Why Asher Kidshanu

Chazal have the authority to make laws, so we say “Who sanctified us with His mitzvot and commanded us” (asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu) for Chanuka blessings and other purposes that Chazal instituted after

the Torah was given.

CHANUKA: CUSTOMS

Chanuka: Customs: Foods

It is a non-binding custom to eat potato pancakes (latkes) on Chanuka; in Israel, it is also a non-binding custom to eat jelly-filled doughnuts (sufganiot).

CHANUKA: CANDLES

CHANUKA CANDLES: MEANING

Chanuka: Candles: Meaning

The reason for lighting Chanuka candles is to publicize the Chanuka miracle (pirsumei nisa).

CHANUKA: CANDLES: WHAT TO LIGHT

Chanuka: Candles: What To Light: Menora Shape

All eight candle holders of a chanuka menorah must be on the same level. The menora itself may be curved horizontally.

The shamash must be slightly raised or lowered or to the side of the menora or in the center, as long as it clearly is not part of the other eight candles.

NOTE You may put oil lights directly onto a windowsill or other level surface, but candles must be in or on some type of holder.

CHANUKA: CANDLES: HOW MANY TO LIGHT

Chanuka: Candles: One per House

The basic commandment is for one Chanuka candle to be lit per house per night. The extra candles (matching the number of days in Chanuka) and having every male light his own menora is an enhancement and a custom.

NOTE Having every male in the family light his own Chanuka candles is a universally accepted but non-binding custom among Ashkenazi Jews.

Chanuka: Candles: One Shamash per Area

You only need one service (shamash) candle for any amount of Chanuka candles/oil lamps (menorot) in the same area.

CHANUKA: CANDLES: WHO SHOULD LIGHT

Chanuka: Candles: Who May Light

Anyone in the household who has reached bar or bat mitzva age can light Chanuka candles, thereby fulfilling the halachic requirement that one candle per household per night must be lit.

Chanuka: Candles: Light for Yourself

Light Chanuka candles for yourself, even if there are no other people around. If there are other people asleep in the house who have not fulfilled the mitzva of lighting Chanuka candles, you should wake them so they can see the candles. **Do not wake children below gil chinuch.**

Chanuka: Candles: Obligation for Women To Light

Women, like men, are required to light Chanuka candles or have them lit for them.

NOTE It was not traditionally customary for women and girls to light when men were present. The custom is that in a house in which the husband lights Chanuka candles, the wife does not also light.

However, a wife is required to light if her husband is not present, and girls (above 12 years old) are required to light if no men are present.

Chanuka: Candles: Wife May Light for Husband

A wife may light Chanuka candles for her husband if he is not home.

NOTE If your wife lit for you and you return late at night, you do not need to light for yourself.

CHANUKA: CANDLES: WHERE TO LIGHT

Chanuka: Candles: Light in Own Home, Except...

Light Chanuka candles in your own house, unless you are not in the city in which you live.

NOTE Even though the menora is for publicizing the miracle, Chazal set the observance to take place in each person's home (and not in groups at one home with several families together).

Chanuka: Candles: Place Anywhere

You may place Chanuka candles anywhere (but they should be lit wherever you are staying). Outside of Eretz Yisrael, it is customary to place them by a window, ideally facing the street.

NOTE Consult a rabbi as to whether candles should be lit inside an aquarium or other box as is sometimes done in Israel, since the candles should not be lit in a place where the wind would blow them out if not for the box around them.

CHANUKA: CANDLES: WHEN TO LIGHT

Chanuka: Candles: Light After Dark

Chanuka candles should be lit after dark (except on Fridays).

NOTE You may light chanuka candles as much as 1 ¼ hours before dark (not 1 ¼ hours before sunset!) but the ideal and proper time is after dark.

NOTE Although eating a snack, working, and other activities are permitted before lighting the candles, nothing should be done that might make you forget to light the candles, and it is best to light the candles as soon as possible.

Chanuka: Candles: Latest Time To Light

Latest time to light Chanuka candles: 102 minutes before sunrise (so they will burn for 30 minutes before daybreak).

Chanuka: Candles: If You Fell Asleep before Lighting

Wake up sometime during the night and light the Chanuka candles if you fell asleep before dark.

CHANUKA: CANDLES: HOW LONG MUST BURN

Chanuka: Candles: Must Burn 30 Minutes

Chanuka candles must burn for at least 30 minutes after dark.

Chanuka: Candles: Relighting Candle That Burned Out

A Chanuka candle (or candles) that is expected to burn for at least 30 minutes does not need to be replaced or relit, even if it burns out in less than 30 minutes.

Chanuka: Candles: Relighting Candle that Blew Out

You do not need to relight Chanuka candles that blew out after having burned for less than 30 minutes after dark, if they had been lit in a place where they would not be expected to have blown out.

If they were lit in a windy or drafty place, you must relight them in a different place and say the blessings again.

CHANUKA: CANDLES: WHAT YOU MAY DO WHILE...

Chanuka: Candles: Do Not Use Light

You may not use light from Chanuka candles for any purpose (do not read by them; do not light other candles from them, except from the shamash).

Chanuka: Candles: No Work While Candles Burning

Do not do any “work” while the Chanuka candles are burning.

REASON In order to show that we are not using the candles for any other purpose.

NOTE “Work” may include some housework but usually means skilled labor done by professionals that may not be done on chol ha'moed and that requires light to do it.

CHANUKA: CANDLES: HOW TO LIGHT

Chanuka Candles: Light Left to Right; Add Right to Left

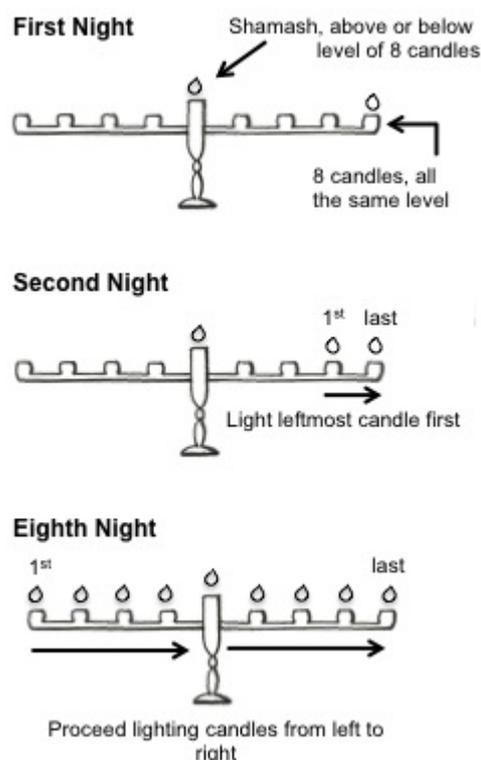
Light Chanuka candles from left to right, as you face it, not as it will be seen from outside the window. Add the new candle from right to left. For example, on the first night, put the candle on the extreme right of the menora.

To set up and light Chanuka candles:

- Set up the candles starting from the right side of the menora.
- Light the shamash candle and hold it while you say the blessings:
 - Lehadlik ner shel Chanuka.
 - She'asa nisim l'avoteinu ba'yamim ha'heim ba'zman ha'zeh.
 - (And on the first night, add) She'hecheyanu.
- Light the left-most candle first and proceed to the next candle on the right, and so on.
- Once you have lit the first candle each night, say ha'neiroi hallalu (this is a halacha).

NOTE Once the menora has been lit, you may not turn or move it, even to the window.

NOTE Saying Ma'oz Tzur is a widespread custom but is not required.



Chanuka: Candles: Lighting on Friday

On Friday of Chanuka, light Shabbat candles after Chanuka candles; at least one Chanuka candle must burn until at least 30 minutes after dark.

If a man forgets to light the Chanuka candles, he may still light them until sunset or until he says Mizmor shir l'yom haShabbat, whichever comes earlier.

But women start Shabbat when they light the Shabbat candles and so they may not light Chanuka candles after lighting Shabbat candles.

Chanuka: Candles: SheHecheyanu on Later Days

Say she'hecheyanu the first time you light Chanuka candles each year:

- Even if your first time is the second or subsequent nights.
- Even if someone lit for you the previous night.

CHANUKA: SYNAGOGUE MENORA

Chanuka: Synagogue Menora: Where

A Chanuka menora in a synagogue should be set up at the front of the synagogue, oriented east-west, and lit while standing on the south side and facing north (the person lighting will be facing toward the inside of the synagogue).

Chanuka: Synagogue Menora: How Long To Burn

The Chanuka candles in synagogue do not need to burn for 30 minutes after dark or even for any 30-minute period but that is the ideal minimum duration for burning.

Chanuka: Synagogue Menora: SheHecheyanu in Synagogue

If you light the Chanuka menora in the synagogue on the first night of Chanuka, say she'hecheyanu in synagogue. When you go home, if you light only for yourself, do not say she'hecheyanu again. However, if you light for your wife or for any adults including children above the age of bar or bat mitzva, say she'hecheyanu again.

CHANUKA: HALLEL

Chanuka: Hallel on Rosh Chodesh

When Chanuka coincides with Rosh Chodesh, say full hallel (as is done on all days of Chanuka, instead of the "half-hallel" that is said on Rosh Chodesh).

FAST DAYS

INTRODUCTION TO FAST DAYS

Introduction to Fast Days

Introduction to Fast Days

The purpose of Jewish fast days is to make us reflect on our behavior and improve it by:

- Eliminating negative actions and thoughts, and
- Taking more care in our observance of the commandments.

God told the Jewish people on many occasions that He did not want their pointless sacrifices or fast days but rather wanted the Jews to improve their behavior. If people fast but still have reprehensible behavior, the people have missed the point and purpose of bringing sacrifices and having fast days.

All fast days may be circumvented for health reasons. Consult a rabbi.

Fast days come in several varieties:

- Major fast days: Yom Kippur and the Ninth of Av (Tish'a B'Av).
- Minor fast days: There are four minor fast days; see below.
- Fast for First-Born
- Individual Fasts

The Major Fasts

Yom Kippur and the Ninth of Av begin before sunset and are both slightly longer than 24 hours. Yom Kippur is a festive day while, on the Ninth of Av, Jews mourn for the destruction of both Jerusalem Temples (the first was destroyed by Babylonians; the second, by the Romans). On both fasts, it is forbidden to:

- Eat or drink.
- Wear leather shoes (but you may wear any other clothing made of leather).
- Bathe (or even to wash anything more than fingers; you may not use a deodorant--not even a spray type--since it is similar to washing).
- Have marital relations.
- Use cosmetics or body scents.

The Minor Fasts

The four minor fasts begin 72 minutes before local sunrise. They technically end at dark but functionally end after ma'ariv (and for the Fast of Esther, after hearing the megila). Unlike most times in the Jewish calendar, this 72 minutes is normal time and NOT based on the current length of the day (sha'a zmanit):

- **Fast of Esther (Ta'anit Esther):** Day preceding Purim (or sometimes earlier).
- **Fast of Gedalia (Tzom Gedalia):** Usually the day after Rosh Hashana.
- **Tenth of Tevet (Asara b' Tevet):**
- **Seventeenth of Tamuz (Shiv'asar b'Tamuz):** Beginning of the Three Weeks of semi-mourning before Tish'a b'Av.

On all fast days, eating and drinking are forbidden. The Tenth of Tevet and the Seventeenth of Tamuz additionally have the same restrictions as the Nine Days. So you may wash or bathe on the Fast of Esther and on Tzom Gedalia but not on the Tenth of Tevet and the Seventeenth of Tamuz. (See Nine Days: Restrictions).

NOTE On a fast day that has been delayed for Shabbat, there may be leniencies for:

- The mohel, sandak, and father of a baby getting a brit mila to eat after mincha.
- Pregnant or nursing women (this leniency applies to eating throughout the day).

Fast for First Born

Fast for first-born males 13 years old and older, on the day before Passover. This includes first-born cohanim and Levites (levi'im). The fast begins 72 normal minutes before sunrise and ends with kiddush at the seder. However, the widespread custom is to attend a siyum on the day before the first seder so that the first-born men do not need to fast on that day.

Personal Fasts

Fast by a groom and bride on their wedding day is an example of personal fasts. This fast begins 72 normal minutes before sunrise and ends with drinking wine under the chuppa.

FAST DAYS: TIMING

FAST DAYS: WHEN THEY START

Fasts that Start 72 Minutes before Sunrise

All fasts start 72 minutes (normal time) before sunrise except for the Ninth of Av and Yom Kippur. These include:

- 17th of Tamuz
- 10th of Tevet
- Tzom Gedalia
- Fast of Esther
- Fast by a groom and bride on their wedding day
- Fast for first-born males on the day before Passover. This includes first-born cohanim and Levites (levi'im).

NOTE Unlike most times in the Jewish calendar, this 72 minutes is normal time and NOT based on the current length of the day (sha'a zmanit).

Fast Days and Crossing International Dateline

Your fast-day times are determined by where you ARE, not where you started traveling or where you are heading. This means that when you reach sunset (plus enough time for the sky to get dark), your fast is over.

FAST DAYS: PRACTICES

FAST DAYS: TEETH BRUSHING

Fast Days: Brushing Teeth without Water

You may brush your teeth on Yom Kippur and all other fast days without water and without toothpaste. (You may not use water to brush your teeth even on Tenth of Tevet and 17th of Tamuz.)

Fast Days: Flossing on Fast Days

You may floss your teeth on Yom Kippur as long as your gums don't bleed and on other fast days even if they do bleed.

FAST DAYS: EATING

Fast Days: Tasting Food

You may not taste food (even a minimal amount) on a fast day, even if you are cooking for the end of the fast, such as on Tish'a b'Av.

Fast Days: Health Difficulties

You may eat or drink as necessary on the fasts of the Tenth of Tevet, 17th of Tamuz, and Tzom Gedalia if you are sick, faint, or dehydrated, but only enough to resolve your health difficulty. Consult a rabbi.

Fast Day: Forgetting

If you forgot and broke your fast on any fast day, you may not continue eating after you remember that you should be fasting.

FAST DAYS: PRAYERS

Fast Day: Sim Shalom

Say "sim shalom" instead of "shalom rav" at mincha on a fast day, even if you are not fasting at mincha.

Tzom Gedalia: Katveinu

On Tzom Gedalia, when saying avinu malkeinu, say "katveinu" and not "zachreinu."

Tenth of Tevet: Friday

When Tenth of Tevet occurs on a Friday, you may not start Shabbat early in order to cut short the fast. That is, you may not eat until dark, as is normally the case.

Aneinu

On a fast day, if you are not fasting:

- Do not say aneinu.
- Do say *Sim shalom*.

VaYechal

If at least six of the men in a mincha minyan on a fast day are fasting, read the Torah portion Va'yechal (Exodus 32: 11-14). If fewer than six are fasting, omit it.

THREE WEEKS/TISH'A B'AV

THREE WEEKS: THREE STAGES OF MOURNING

Seventeenth of Tamuz to Tish'a B'Av: Three Stages of Mourning

Before Tish'a b'Av we are in a type of mourning so the laws are similar to mourning for a parent. There are three stages:

The “Three Weeks”: The least severe stage starts three weeks preceding the Ninth of Av

The “Nine Days”: The next-most severe stage begins on Rosh Chodesh Av.

“Week” of Tish'a b'Av: The most severe mourning is during the “week” of Tish'a b'Av (beginning after Shabbat preceding Tish'a b'Av).

THREE WEEKS: RESTRICTIONS

Three Weeks: Restrictions

Forbidden during the Three Weeks :

- Saying she'hecheyanu;
- Shaving;
- Haircuts;
- Listening to music (even recorded);
- Getting married.

Three Weeks: Moving into New Dwelling

You may move into a new home or apartment, whether owning or renting, during the Three Weeks before Tish'a b'Av. Ideally, you should not move into a new place during the Nine Days but if necessary, it is permitted.

Three Weeks: Swimming

If you are swimming for:

- Pleasure, you may swim during the Three Weeks but not during the Nine Days.
- Exercise (you don't particularly enjoy swimming or you are not doing it for fun or to cool off), you may be permitted to swim even during the Nine Days. Consult a rabbi.

Three Weeks: Socializing

Activities for socializing are not prohibited during the Three Weeks before Rosh Chodesh Av (but the activities might be prohibited for other reasons such as if they are dangerous).

THREE WEEKS: RISKY ACTIVITIES

Three Weeks: Dangerous Activities

We are discouraged from doing dangerous activities during the Three Weeks before and including Tish'a b'Av. But since it is forbidden to do dangerous activities anyway, there are few relevant activities that are forbidden. Some people do not travel during this time but it is not forbidden to do so. Non-urgent surgery

should be scheduled for after this period.

FIRST NINE DAYS OF AV

Nine Days: Restrictions

Restrictions during the Nine Days before Tish'a b'Av are the same as for Three Weeks, plus:

- You may not eat meat or drink wine.

EXCEPTIONS

- You may drink wine on Shabbat (but not on Rosh Chodesh Av or erev Shabbat .)
- You may drink wine for havdala (but ideally give the wine or grape juice to a child between ages 6 and 10).
- You may eat meat or drink wine at a brit, siyum, or pidyon ha'ben.

- You may not wear freshly laundered clothes, or wear or buy new clothes.

NOTE You may wear clean socks and underwear. Ideally, throw them on the floor first but, *b'di'avad*, it is OK to wear them even if you did not.

- You may not wash yourself for pleasure.

NOTE Showering or bathing to clean one's soiled body is permitted (except on Tish'a b'Av). So you may bathe or shower during the Nine Days if you are dirty, sweaty, or smelly.

- You may not do any activities that involve luxury.

- You may not say she'hecheyanu except on Shabbat.

NOTE Therefore you should not buy new fruits or new items that you will enjoy during the Nine Days. But if you DO eat a new fruit or buy something new, you must say she'hecheyanu anyway.

Nine Days: Court Cases

Try not to be involved in a court case opposing a non-Jew during the Nine Days.

REASON The Nine Days are considered to be an inauspicious time for Jews. But if you cannot avoid it, it is not forbidden and you may proceed.

Nine Days: Kiddush Levana

If you are not likely to see the moon on any of the days from the 10th to the 14th of Av, you may say kiddush levana during the Nine Days.

Nine Days: New Projects or Investments

You should not start new projects or make investments during the Nine Days if they can be delayed without incurring a loss.

REASON The Nine Days are considered to be an inauspicious time for Jews.

Nine Days: Painting Your House

You may not paint your house during the Nine Days. Ask a rabbi for possible exceptions.

Nine Days: Swimming

For laws on swimming during the Nine Days, see Three Weeks: Swimming.

TISH'A B'AV

Tish'a B'Av: Pre-Fast Meal

You may say *birkat ha'mazon* with a *mezuman* or with a *minyán* during the *Nine Days*. But you may not do so at the meal preceding *Tish'a b'Av* (*se'uda ha'mafseket*).

REASON Only bread dipped in ashes and a hard-boiled egg should be eaten and that is not a meal for socializing or togetherness.

Tish'a B'Av: On Saturday Night

When *Tish'a B'Av* begins on Saturday night, the custom is as follows:

- Say *baruch ha'mavdil* when *Shabbat* ends.
- Say the blessing on the candle after *ma'ariv*.
- Do not say the remainder of *havdala* at all. Instead:
 - Wait until Sunday night, after the fast is over, and then
 - Say only the blessing on the wine and the paragraph of *ha'mavdil* blessings.

NOTE You will not say the blessings on the spices for *havdala* for that week.

Tish'a B'Av: Flying

You should not fly on *Tish'a b'Av*, even if you are flying to Israel to make *aliya*.

Tish'a B'Av: Hand Washing

On *Tish'a B'Av*, as on *Yom Kippur*, if you must wash your hands to remove:

- *Tum'a*, you may wash your hands only up to the knuckle that connects your fingers to the rest of your hand (thumb: second knuckle; fingers: third knuckle).
- Dirt from your hand, you may wash wherever the dirt is on your hand.

Tish'a B'Av: Teeth Brushing

On *Tish'a b'Av*, you may not brush your teeth using water. You may use a dry toothbrush. You may floss your teeth.

Tish'a B'Av: Tefilin

Tish'a b'Av is similar to the day of burial of a person and so *tefilin* are not worn in the morning. The afternoon has a lower level of mourning and so *tefilin* (and *talit gadol*) are worn at *mincha*.

Tish'a B'Av: What To Do until 12 Noon

Activities for *Tish'a B'Av* until *halachic midday*:

- **Thinking:** Until *halachic midday*, you should do things and think about things that will keep you in bad spirits or will make you sad.
- **Sitting:** You may not sit on any kind of seat that is higher than 12 inches (30 cm) above the floor or ground until after *halachic midday*.

Tish'a B'Av: What To Do after 12 Noon

After *halachic midday* on *Tish'a B'Av*, you may do any activities except the five activities forbidden on *Tish'a B'Av* (washing, anointing, eating/drinking, marital intercourse, wearing leather shoes) or the *Nine Days*. But you may not greet anyone, or reply to someone else's greeting to you, including saying "hello," "good morning," "how are you," etc., until after dark.

PURIM

INTRODUCTION TO PURIM

Introduction to Purim

Purim commemorates the saving of the Jews in the Persian Empire from Haman's plan to wipe them out completely. The story is a classic example of how God intervenes in human history in a hidden manner. The essential element was that the Jews were saved from physical destruction/death (contrast with Chanuka, where the Jews were not being threatened with physical death but with the destruction of their religious beliefs and practices).

Halachot

- Giving charity to poor people.
- Giving gifts of ready-to-eat food to friends.

REASON To promote friendship and a feeling of community.

- Reading the megila of Esther at night and the next day.
- Eating a festive meal.
- Giving three half-dollars (or whatever the local unit of coin currency is where you live) to charity in commemoration of the half-shekel, which was given by all Jews to the Temple when it stood in Jerusalem.

NOTE This is not actually an observance of Purim, but it has become traditional to give the 3 half-dollars on Purim.

Widespread Customs

- Dressing up in costumes.
- Making noise during the reading of Haman's (and his wife's) name in the megila, in order to wipe out their names.
- Drinking more wine than normal.

NOTE Jewish women are required to fulfill all of the commandments of the holiday, just as men are, since the women were also saved.

PURIM: AD DLO YADA

Getting Drunk Ad Dlo Yada

The idea of getting drunk ad dlo yada is that, even when optimal mental functions are impaired by alcohol, a person's essence is on such a high spiritual level that he or she can see God's hand in the actions of the evil Haman just as in the actions of the good Mordechai.

NOTE Jews should never get drunk, even on Purim, but they should drink a little more than they normally would.

PURIM: COMMANDMENTS

Purim: Commandments

There are four mitzvot for Purim:

1. **Shalach Manot** (Gifts of food to promote friendship)

Send to one person at least two readily edible foods that will be appreciated by the recipient. Sending gifts of food (mishlo'ach manot) must be done on Purim day. The earliest time to send mishlo'ach manot is after hearing the morning megila reading (so that the commandment of giving gifts to friends is also covered by the blessing of she'hecheyanu over the megila).

2. Gifts to Poor People

Give some money to at least two poor people or to a fund designated to give to poor Jews on Purim. The earliest time in the day to give gifts to the poor on Purim is daybreak.

3. Hearing the Megila Twice (evening and morning)

- If you miss hearing a word or even syllable of the megila on Purim, say it to yourself and then catch up to the reader.
- If you are not near a minyan and do not have a megila scroll, you should read the megila from a book. But you will not have fulfilled the commandment of reading the megila and so you do not say any of the blessings.

4. Eating at a Purim se'uda.

- The minimum amount to eat and drink for a Purim meal is at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread, any amount of meat (if you enjoy meat), and some wine (any amount more than you normally drink).
- The earliest time you may eat the Purim meal is from daybreak; the latest time you must begin is before sunset. You must eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread and some wine (and meat if you enjoy it) before sunset. You may continue your meal after sunset as long as you ate the bread before sunset.

HOLY WRITTEN OBJECTS

INTRODUCTION TO HOLY WRITTEN OBJECTS

Introduction to Holy Written Objects

By surrounding ourselves with reminders of the commandments and with objects for observing the various Jewish rituals, we can be constantly aware of what we should be doing to live our lives as Jews.

There are two categories of items used for mitzvot:

- Holy items (tashmishei kedusha), such as tefilin and its boxes, Torah books and commentaries, and Torah scrolls and covers.
- Items used for mitzvot (tashmishei mitzva), such as lulav, etrog, and talit/tzitzit.

Women

Sacred scrolls (Torah, mezuzah, tefilin) may not be written by women for sacred purposes. However, if they were written by a woman, you may study from them. You may not use them for public Torah reading, putting on tefilin, or affixing to doorposts (for mezuzah).

Disposal

Both tashmishei kedusha and tashmishei mitzva should be disposed of in a respectful manner. Tashmishei kedusha should ideally be buried. Newspapers with Torah or Torah commentary must be double-wrapped and then may be put in the trash, since they contain material that should not be buried with holy writings (only a newspaper's Torah or Torah commentary contain inherent holiness).

To dispose of tashmishei mitzva, you may wrap in one layer of plastic and throw it in normal garbage.

SHEIMOT

SHEIMOT: WHAT ARE SHEIMOT

Sheimot: Definition

Sheimot/sheimos are written items with:

- God's name in Hebrew or even in other languages;
- Three consecutive words of Torah in Hebrew (or commentaries on the Torah in any language); or
- Halacha in any language.

Sheimot: Illegible

If a normal person is not able to read your handwriting, then even if you wrote holy words, Torah, or halacha, they are not considered sheimot.

SHEIMOT: TREATMENT

SHEIMOT: HOW TO TREAT

Sheimot: Summary of Treatment

Sheimot must be treated carefully, protected from unclean places, and buried or—in some cases—double-wrapped rather than trashed. See individual listings below for details.

SHEIMOT: HOW TO DISPOSE OF

Sheimot: Disposal

These holy writings (tashmishet kedusha) may not be thrown directly into the trash, but should ideally be buried with like items (sheimot):

- Holy writings that contain God's name.
- Parts of Tanach (24-book Jewish Bible).
- Explanations of the Torah or commandments.

However, if a printed or written page (in contrast to parchment scrolls such as tefilin, Torahs, or mezuzas) contains God's name plus secular content, it must be double wrapped in plastic before being thrown in the trash.

REASON It would be a disgrace to bury Torah words with secular content.

NOTE You may find collection boxes (marked “sheimot/sheimos” or “geniza”) at a local Jewish school or synagogue into which you can deposit your sheimot items.

NOTE Tashmishet mitzva—items used to do a mitzva (such as talit or tzitzit)—must be wrapped in:

- One layer of plastic if they will be thrown away in dry trash, or
- Double layer of plastic if they will be thrown away into wet garbage.

Sheimot/Bury

Do not throw into trash, even if double wrapped:

- Handwritten scrolls of Torah, tefilin, mezuza.
- Printed Torah, Talmud, siddur, books of halacha, or Torah commentaries.

Rather, put them into a sheimot collection box or wrap in plastic and bury in a place where they will not be dug up. It does not need to be a cemetery.

Double Wrap and Throw into Trash

Double wrap and throw into trash:

- Newspapers and flyers that have Torah psukim or Torah commentaries and also have non-Torah content.

REASON Non-Torah material should not be buried as sheimot.

- Children's school handouts with psukim from the Torah or halachot that also contain non-Torah content (if they ONLY contain words of Torah, they should be buried as sheimot).

Single Wrap and Throw into Trash

For disposal of items used for mitzvot (tashmischei mitzva), you may wrap in one layer of plastic and throw it in normal garbage:

- Lulav,
- Etrog, or
- Talit/tzitzit (but NOT tefilin!)

HOLY BOOKS

HOLY BOOKS: DEFINITION

Holy Books: Definition

A Jewish holy book is any book that contains:

- God's name in any language, not just Hebrew,
- Any lines (psukim) of Torah,
- Midrashim,
- Halacha in any language, or
- Mishna/Talmud and their commentaries.

HOLY BOOKS: PLACEMENT

HOLY BOOKS: ORIENTATION

Holy Books: Correct Orientation

Put holy books in their correct location:

- Remove a holy book from an inappropriate place to a place suitable for holy books.
- Turn right-side up a holy book that is upside down or backside up.
- Do not use any holy book--even of lower priority or holiness--to prop up or raise the top of a non-holy or less-holy book (for example, so you can read it better).

REASON It is disrespectful to use a holy book as a book holder.

HOLY BOOKS: ON SEAT

Holy Book: Raise from Seat

You may place a siddur or chumash flat on chair seat or bench on which no one is sitting, but it is an act of piety to stand it up on its edge.

To sit on a bench or other seat where a holy book rests, raise the book up at least a little; a single piece of paper is sufficient elevation.

NOTE If you are sitting on a bench and someone puts a holy book on the bench, you must stand up or raise the book off the bench. You may not stand a siddur, chumash, or other holy book up on its edge on a bench or pew in order to be allowed to sit on that bench.

HOLY BOOKS: STACKING ORDER

Holy Books: Stacking Order

When piling up several holy books, put them in this order (top to bottom):

- [Torah](#) (Jewish Bible)
- [Nach](#)/Prophets
- [Talmud](#), [siddur](#), and any other holy books.

Holy Books: Carrying Order

When carrying holy books, you may put a [Torah](#) or [Talmud](#) below other books to prevent their falling or to make them easier to carry. For piling books on top of each other, see [Holy Books: Stacking Order](#).

HOLY BOOKS: MODEST DRESS

Holy Books: Being Undressed

You should not be naked or have intercourse in a room with holy books, unless:

1. There is a wall or divider between yourself and the holy books within 10.5 inches of the ground and at least 40 inches tall (or as tall as needed to block a line of sight between yourself and the book), or
2. You cover the books with two layers of paper or some other material.

REASON It is not proper respect to the holy books.

NOTE This is true even if the couple is covered, as is the proper practice, and even if they are more than 4 [amot](#)/7 feet away, since the entire room is considered to be one domain.

HOLY BOOKS: DISPOSAL

Holy Books: Disposal

For holy book disposal, see [Sheimos](#): Disposal.

MEZUZA

INTRODUCTION TO MEZUZA

Introduction to Mezuzah

A [mezuzah](#) (pl., [mezuzot](#)) is a small, [sofer](#)-inscribed parchment scroll containing the two [Torah](#) paragraphs commanding us to put [mezuzot](#) on our doorposts and gates: [Deuteronomy/Devarim](#) 6:4-9 and 11:13-21 (these are the first two paragraphs of the [shema](#) prayer.) Each doorway that is related to where people live must have a [mezuzah](#).

[Mezuzot](#) are placed on the right side of doorways as you enter in apartments, buildings, or even recreational vehicles that you rent for 30 days or more (or that you purchase/own), in which you sleep.

A [mezuzah](#) has protective value in that it reminds us to think about God each time we walk past a doorway or gateway, and so the particular name of God written on the [mezuzah](#) (*shin-daled-yud*) likewise can serve as an acronym for God's role as "*Shomer dirot Yisrael*"—Watcher over the dwelling places of Israel.

MEZUZA: PARTS

Mezuzah: God's Name on Outside

A [mezuzah](#) scroll should be rolled from left to right so that God's name appears on the outside.

Mezuzah: Covers

Mezuzot are not required by halacha to have covers (sheitels). Covers are only for decorating and protecting the parchment; their use is recommended in the Shulchan Aruch.

NOTE Covers may be necessary to protect the mezuzot where the weather is humid, hot, or rainy.

MEZUZA: WHICH BUILDINGS REQUIRE

Mezuzah: Where People Live

Only buildings in which people live need a mezuzah, so you do not need to put them on offices, *synagogues*, or stores (unless people also live there). No mezuzah is needed on an eruv.

Mezuzah: Buildings Regularly Used with a Person's Home

Mezuzot must be placed on any buildings used with a person's home.

EXAMPLES

- A barn with animals that is near a house, if you use their milk or meat for food.
- A coop with birds that is near a house if you eat their meat or eggs.
- A shed for firewood.

NOTE There may be exceptions due to size or other factors--consult a rabbi.

NOTE A structure that only stores items not used regularly, such as a shed for storing a sukka--even if attached to a house--does not need a mezuzah.

NOTE Do not put mezuzas on a sukka or any other temporary structure. If you have a pergola or gazebo that is at least 50 sq. ft. of area inside and that you use during much of the year, consult a rabbi.

Mezuzah: Hotel Rooms

We do not normally affix mezuzot to hotel rooms, even when we would be required to (as when staying for more than 30 days).

REASON To do so might damage the hotel property.

WHAT TO DO Do not affix a mezuzah even with long-lasting tape.

NOTE You may not affix a mezuzah if you will not be allowed to remove it when you leave.

MEZUZA: WHICH DOORS

Mezuzah: Which Doors: All Doors Except...

Each door needs a mezuzah except for a:

- Bathroom, or a
- Room less than 50 square feet.

NOTE Do not affix a mezuzah to a door that is sealed closed.

Mezuzah: Which Doors: Balcony

Any covered balcony over 50 square feet requires a mezuzah.

Mezuzah: Which Doors: Arches

Place a mezuzah on doors or gates, even if they have an arch on top instead of a straight lintel.

MEZUZA: PLACEMENT

Mezuzah: Placement: Right Side of Doorway

Attach a mezuzah to the right side of the doorway as you follow the main traffic through the house. If there is one continuous path to go further into the house, place all of the mezuzot on the right side as you go further into the house.

Mezuzah: Placement: Balcony

Place a balcony door mezuzah on the right side of the doorway as you enter the house from the balcony, if the balcony has an outside entrance. If the balcony does not have an outside entrance, put the mezuzah on the right side as you exit the house.

NOTE If the balcony has a roof, you may be able to put it on the right side as you go out. Consult a rabbi.

Mezuzah: Placement

Mezuzah: Placement: Door Frame

Place the mezuzah outside the door but within the door frame. If not possible, you may place the mezuzah inside the door frame.

NOTE You may recess a mezuzah into the door frame.

NOTE If the doorframe is wider than 4" (10 cm), place the mezuzah toward the outer edge of the frame, not centered in the middle.

NOTE You may attach a mezuzah to a piece of wood that extends the doorway.

Mezuzah: Placement: Height

Place the mezuzah at shoulder height for the average person. Leave at least one tefach (4", or 10 cm) between mezuzah and lintel.

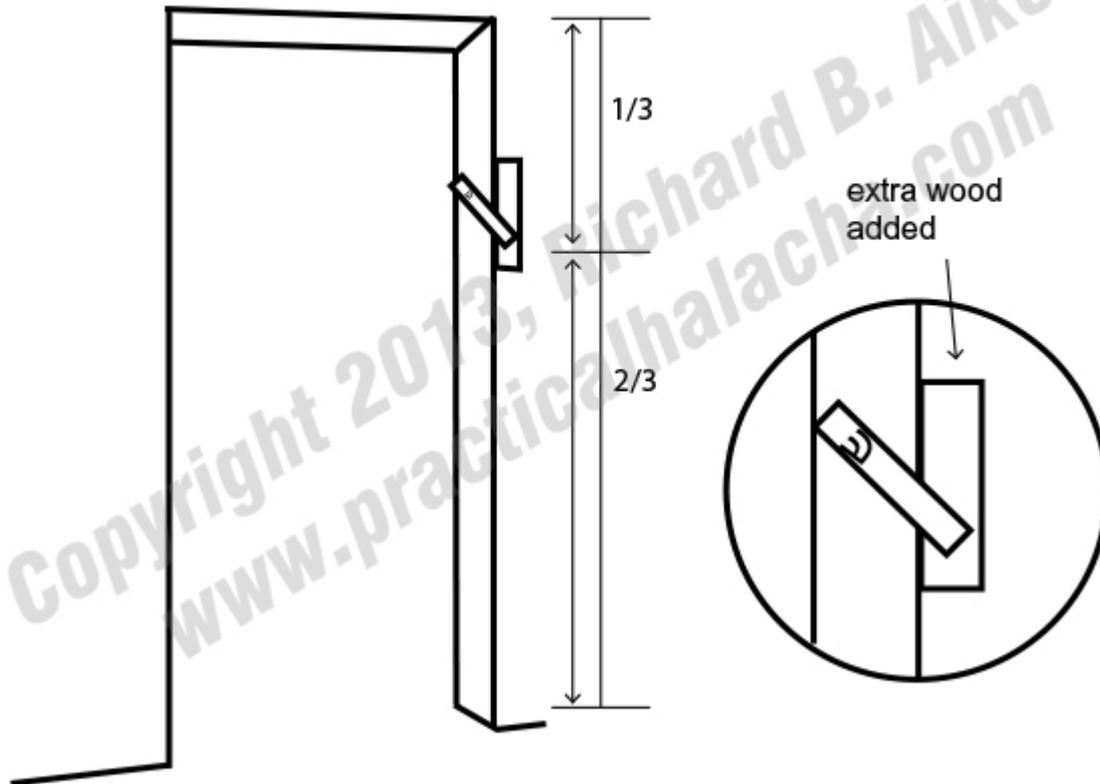
If possible, affix a mezuzah just above where the top 1/3 of the doorpost meets the middle 1/3.

NOTE This rule is superseded by the rule that the mezuzah must be near shoulder height.

Mezuzah: Placement: Angle

Place the mezuzah on a 45-degree angle from the vertical, with the top of the mezuzah toward the inside of the main room. If you cannot, any angle toward the entrance is OK.

Mezuza



MEZUZA: WHEN TO AFFIX

MEZUZA: WHEN TO AFFIX IN ERETZ YISRAEL

Mezuza: When To Affix in Eretz Yisrael

In Eretz Yisrael, whether you buy or rent, you must affix mezuzot immediately upon moving in.

MEZUZA: WHEN TO AFFIX OUTSIDE ERETZ YISRAEL

Mezuza: When To Affix Outside Eretz Yisrael: Buying (or Renting for More Than 30 Days)

Outside of Eretz Yisrael, you must affix a mezuzah immediately once you begin "living" in your house--determined by the first time you eat or sleep in the house. If you buy a house but do not move in immediately (for any reason--repairs, you are still in your previous house, etc.), you should affix a mezuzah but do not say the blessing. Then, when you do move in, remove the mezuzah and re-affix it and say the blessing.

You need not affix a mezuzah if you will be renting for less than 30 days, and you may delay putting up a mezuzah until the 30th day if you will be renting longer than that. Here are the types of rentals that will require a mezuzah by the 30th day:

- A home,
- An apartment, or
- Other accommodation--such as a camper, trailer, recreational vehicle (RV), etc.--in which you will live at some time.

NOTE If you are renting a vehicle/trailer that you will live in but might not keep it for 30 days, put on mezuzas as needed immediately but do not say a blessing (this is the same for in Eretz Yisrael or outside). Then, even if you keep it for more than 30 days, do not do anything additional (don't remove them and replace; don't say a blessing).



If you live in a vehicle for more than 30 days, you must affix mezuzas next to each of the doors.

Mezuzah: When To Affix Outside Eretz Yisrael: Renting for Fewer Than 30 Days

Outside of Eretz Yisrael, you do not need to affix a mezuzah (even without a blessing) to an apartment, house, or other accommodation that you rent for less than 30 days.

Determining 30-Day Mezuzah-Affixing Period

If you are living in a rented house, apartment, RV, etc., and remove all of your possessions used for living (such as clothing, bedding, and toiletries) at some time before 30 days have elapsed, the place is not considered to be your domicile. You restart counting the 30 days from the day you move the personal items back inside.

SITUATION You rent a vehicle for 30 or more days but live and sleep there only five days a week (and remove all your personal items to spend Fridays and Shabbats with a family or in a hotel)

WHAT TO DO You will not be considered to be living there; you must affix a mezuzah only if you leave some personal effects in the vehicle continuously for at least 30 days.

MEZUZA: BLESSING

Mezuzah: Blessing

When you attach a mezuzah to the correct doorpost, affix it at the bottom first and then say the blessing likbo'a mezuzah.

NOTE Do not say the blessing if there is no door in the doorway

Mezuzah: Blessing If Mezuzah Falls Off

Say the blessing again when you replace a mezuzah that falls off.

Mezuzah: Blessing If You Removed Mezuzah

Don't say a new blessing when you replace a mezuzah that you took off (for example, to have it checked).

MEZUZA: KISSING

Mezuzah: Kissing: Custom

Kissing a mezuzah (and tefilin) is not halacha but rather a custom to show our love for those mitzvot.

Mezuzah: Kissing: Which To Kiss

If your custom is to kiss mezuzot, only kiss them when entering or leaving a house. Do not kiss the mezuzot on the interior room doorways.

MEZUZA: CHECKING

Mezuzah: Checking: How Often

Have your mezuzot checked twice every seven years.

MEZUZA: BEDROOM

Mezuzah: Bedroom

You may not be naked or have intercourse in a room with a mezuzah inside the room, unless:

1. There is a wall or divider within 10.5 inches of the ground and at least 40 inches tall between yourself and the mezuzah, or
2. The mezuzah is covered by two layers (kis b'toch kis) of paper or other material.

NOTE This is true even if the couple is covered, as is the proper practice, and even if they are more than 4 amot/7 feet away, since the entire room is considered to be one domain.

MEZUZA: REMOVAL

Mezuzah: Removal: Do Not Remove When...

Do not remove your mezuzot if you:

- Leave your house, even for a long period such as a year.
- Sell your house to a Jew.

TEFILIN

TEFILIN: MITZVA

Tefilin: Torah Mitzva

Have in mind that you are doing a mitzva of the Torah while putting on tefilin.

TEFILIN: HOLINESS

TEFILIN: HOLINESS: TEFILIN STRAPS

When Tefilin Straps Become Holy

The straps on tefilin become holy objects once they have been used.

TEFILIN: HOLINESS: TEFILIN BOXES

Tefilin: Holiness: Head and Arm Tefilin Boxes

The box for holding the head tefila (tefila shel rosh) has a higher level of holiness than does the box for holding the arm tefila (tefila shel yad). You may not intentionally switch the boxes.

Tefilin: Holiness: Switching Boxes by Mistake

If you inadvertently put the arm tefila (tefila shel yad) into the box for the tefila shel rosh, take it out and put it into its proper box.

TEFILIN: HOW TO PUT ON

Arm Tefila: How To Put On

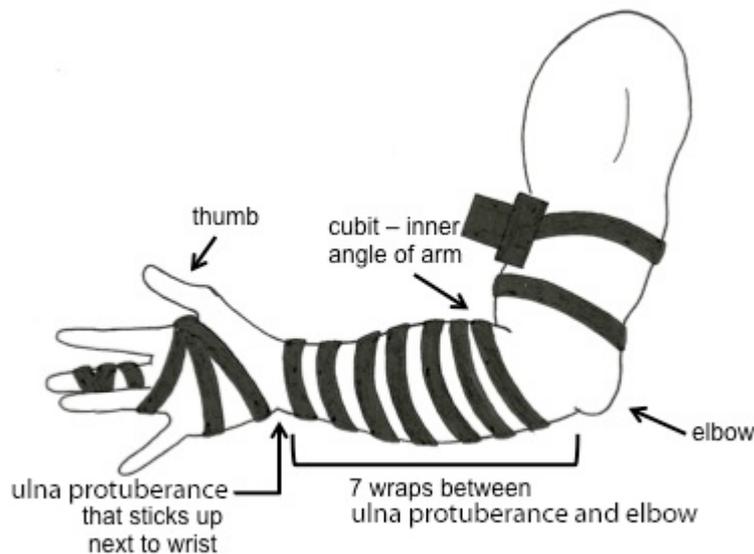
1. Place arm tefila box (bayit) on center of bicep of whichever arm you do not write with (knot on the arm tefila should touch the side of the box). If you are ambidextrous, put the tefila on your left arm.
2. Say the first blessing, "lehaniach tefilin."
3. Tighten the strap.
4. Wrap the strap around your arm seven times between your cubit (inside of your arm, opposite the elbow) and your wrist.

NOTE If you wrap more times, it is OK.

NOTE You may wrap the tefilin strap over a wristwatch or put a watch on top of the tefilin strap.

NOTE Tefilin straps should not overlap with each other and should not be wrapped on top of the ulna protuberance, but if they do--it is permitted.

5. Wrap the excess around the palm of your hand (tuck in the end to keep it tight and out of the way).



Tefilin

Head Tefila: How To Put On

1. Place the tefila on your head tightly enough so it does not slip off under normal motion.
2. Center the head tefila box on your forehead (as it appears to an average person. There is no need to look in a mirror.)

3. Place the head tefila box with its front edge above your hairline (or where your hairline was when you were 13!), not further back than half-way on your skull from front to back.
4. Ideally, place the knot at the back on your occipital bone (base of your skull), but you may place it lower as long as it is still on top of your hair.
5. Say the second blessing, al mitzvat tefilin.
6. Tighten the tefila on your head and say, Baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed

REASON “Al mitzvat tefilin” is a questionable blessing (safek bracha).

NOTE Tefilin head straps should reach at least to your navel (left strap) and mila (right strap).

Arm Tefila: How To Finish

- Unwrap the excess strap from your palm and wrap it three times around your middle finger while saying the three “v'eirastich li” phrases, one for each wrap.
- Wrap the strap around your palm in the shape of the Hebrew letter “shin.”
- Wrap the excess around your palm and tuck in the end of the strap to keep it tight and out of your way.

NOTE You may not say amen or reply to kaddish or kedusha if you have said the blessing on your arm tefila but have not yet said the blessing on your head tefila.

Tefilin: Left-Handed Men

Left-handed men must put tefilin on their right arm.

Tefilin: Broken Arm

Even with a broken arm, do not switch the arm on which you wrap your tefilin.

NOTE If your (normally) weaker arm becomes permanently stronger than the other arm, switch to wearing tefilin on the newly weaker arm.

TEFILIN: FALLEN

Tefilin: Fallen: Fast

If tefilin without their covers on fall onto the ground, the custom is to fast for one day. If the covers are on the tefilin, there is no custom to fast.

TEFILIN: ADJUSTING OR REPLACING

TEFILIN: ADJUSTING

Tefilin: Adjusting: Saying Blessing

If you adjust your tefilin, do not say the blessing again.

TEFILIN: REPLACING

Tefilin: Replacing: Tefilin You Had To Take Off or That Fell Off

If you take off your tefilin because you have to, such as to go to the bathroom, or if one or both of the tefilin fall or slide off your arm or head, say:

- Both blessings again when you replace the head tefila (tefila shel rosh) on your head.
- Only the first blessing when replacing the arm tefila (tefila shel yad) on your arm.
- Each blessing in its correct place if you took off both.

REASON We say the blessing again for tefilin that fell off because there was discontinuity in thought (hesech da'at) when they fell off.

NOTE If you took the tefilin off between bar'chu and the end of amida and replaced them without saying the blessings:

- Wait until after you have finished the amida, and then
- Move each of the tefilin slightly, first the arm tefila and then the head tefila, and
- Say the appropriate blessings.

Tefilin: Replacing: Tefilin You Took Off by Choice

If you take off your tefilin without being required to do so and with the intention of replacing them, do not say the blessings when you replace them on your head and arm.

NOTE If you took the tefilin off between bar'chu and the end of amida, see the note to [Tefilin: Replacing: Tefilin You Had To Take Off or That Fell Off](#).

TEFILIN: REMOVING

Tefilin: Removing: Earliest Time

The earliest time to remove tefilin on normal weekdays is after saying u'va l'tzion.

EXCEPTION If you wear tefilin on chol ha'moed, remove them after the amida in shacharit.

TEFILIN: STORING

Tefilin: Storing: How To Put Away

Put tefilin into its bag so that the knot on the arm tefila (tefila shel yad) faces away from the head tefila (tefila shel rosh).

REASON So that the arm tefila does not abrade the head tefila.

NOTE This is not a halacha, just good advice.

TEFILIN: CARE

Where Tefilin Must Be Black

Tefilin must be black as follows:

- Tefilin must be black on all of the exposed surfaces, but not on the bases/bottoms.
- Tefilin straps must be completely black on one surface.

TEFILIN: CHECKING

Tefilin: Checking: When

It is customary to check tefilin twice in each seven year period. Tefilin do not usually require checking, but you should periodically check:

- Tefilin of the type that can become pasul (due to white-washed parchment).
- Tefilin that are moved a lot, such as from place to place where there are large changes in temperature.
- Tefilin in humid climates, such as Florida.

NOTE Ask a sofer for advice about any of these cases.

TEFILIN: KISSING

Tefilin: Kissing

Kissing tefilin is not halacha but rather a custom to show our love for the mitzva.

TEFILIN: WHEN TO TOUCH

Tefilin: When To Touch: Shacharit

When praying on weekday mornings, touch and “kiss” the tefilin at:

- Places in the shema that mention tefilin, and
- *Potei'ach* in *ashrei*.

REASON When wearing tefilin, you should be constantly conscious that you are wearing them. One way of reminding ourselves that we are wearing tefilin is to touch them at these times.

NOTE To “kiss” tefilin, touch the box with one or more fingers and then kiss those fingers.

TEFILIN: ACTIVITIES WHILE WEARING

Tefilin: Activities While Wearing: Distractions

You may not do any activities while wearing tefilin that would distract you (hesech da'at) from remembering that you are wearing tefilin.

Tefilin: Activities While Wearing: Eating

You may eat a snack while wearing tefilin, but you may not eat a full meal (with bread).

TEFILIN: ROSH CHODESH AND CHOL HAMOED

TEFILIN: ROSH CHODESH

Tefilin: Removing before Rosh Chodesh Musaf

Remove tefilin before musaf on Rosh Chodesh.

TEFILIN: CHOL HAMOED

Tefilin: Chol HaMoed: Remove before Hallel

Remove tefilin before hallel on chol ha'moed.

EXCEPTION On chol ha'moed Pesach, on the day when tefilin are read about (kadeish li...), many people keep tefilin on until after the Torah has been read.

Tefilin: Chol HaMoed: In Eretz Yisrael

If you move to Eretz Yisrael (where no one wears tefilin on chol ha'moed) to live there permanently, do not continue to wear tefilin on chol ha'moed (if that was your custom).

If you are only visiting Eretz Yisrael but not living there permanently, follow your custom.

SITUATION Your custom is to wear tefilin on chol ha'moed, You are in Israel during chol ha'moed.

WHAT TO DO You still put on tefilin, but only in private, not in public.

Tefilin: Chol HaMoed: Blessing

If you wear tefilin on chol ha'moed (German and Lithuanian customs), do as follows:

- Jews of German descent: Say the tefilin blessings, and

- Jews of Lithuanian descent: Omit the teflin blessings.

TORAH SCROLL (SEFER TORAH)

TORAH SCROLL: TOUCHING

Torah Scroll: Touching

Don't directly touch the parchment of a Torah scroll with your hand or other part of your body, unless there is no other way to handle the scroll.

TORAH SCROLL: STANDING

Torah Scroll: Standing

Stand when a Torah is being moved.

NOTE When the ark is open, you do not need to stand if the Torah or Torahs are stationary, but the custom is to stand anyway.

TORAH SCROLL: LIFTING

To Lift Up the Torah

To lift up the Torah:

- Grip the handles close to the plate at the top of the lower handles.
- Roll the Torah so that three columns are exposed and one of the seams is between the two rollers (this is a custom).
- Lever up the Torah (you may slide the Torah down the table toward yourself if that makes it easier).
- Show the Torah to people on your right and then on your left.

If you want to turn in a circle, turn to counter-clockwise as seen from above.

- At the end of rolling (glila) closed the Torah, there should be a seam between the two rods on which the Torah is rolled (such that if it were to tear, it would likely tear at the seam and no words of Torah would be torn).

TORAH SCROLL (SEFER TORAH): WRITING

Torah Scroll (Sefer Torah): Priority for Writing

Writing a Torah scroll (sefer Torah) is a mitzva but is not a priority; there are other activities that have a higher priority for Jewish observance.

NOTE The commandment that each Jew write a sefer Torah is not fulfilled by paying someone else to write a few letters of the sefer Torah for you.

NOTE If you hire someone to write the entire sefer Torah for you, that fulfills your requirement.

SOFER

Sofer: Woman

A woman may not be a sofer. Even though women are obligated in the commandments of megila, they may not be sotrot for megilot nor for the Prophets (nevi'im) section of the Torah.

Sofer: Non-Observant Jew

INTERPERSONAL/BEIN ADAM L'CHAVEIRO

INTRODUCTION TO INTERPERSONAL (BEIN ADAM L'CHAVEIRO)

Introduction to Interpersonal (Bein Adam L'Chaveiro)

Commandments are of two types; those governing:

- Interpersonal behavior (*Bein adam l'chaveiro*), which this section presents, and
- Behavior between people and God, which most of the rest of this website deals with (but interpersonal behavior is also a commandment between people and God).

BUSINESS/PROPERTY

INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS/PROPERTY

Business Ethics

The *Torah* requires ethical behavior in business, as it does in all other areas of interpersonal behavior. We must be honest in business. We may not cheat or mislead the customer or misrepresent what we are selling. We may follow whatever are the accepted norms for honest people in our area of business.

AMENITIES AND OFFICE SUPPLIES/UTILITIES

AMENITIES

Amenities: Hotel Room

You may take whatever amenities are in your hotel room, as long as they are expected to be taken.

Amenities: Employees' Authority

Hotel employees are assumed to be authorized to give you whatever they give you.

OFFICE SUPPLIES/UTILITIES

Office Supplies: Personal Use

You may take office supplies for your personal use if your employer allows you to. If you are uncertain, ask!

Office Supplies: Permission from Boss

If your boss gives you permission to take or use things in an office where he is not the owner, we assume the boss has the authority to allow you to do whatever he tells you.

Office Supplies: Employee Directing Employee

An (non-owner) employee may not tell another (subservient) employee to take or use things for the benefit of that superior employee, unless the superior employee has the authority to take the items for himself.

EXAMPLE A doctor may not tell a secretary to take hospital envelopes and postage and mail personal items for the doctor.

Utilities: Personal Use

You may use telephone and other services that do not cost your employer anything as long as you do not have any work to do for your employer.

BET DIN

Jewish Court or Secular Court

A Jew must go to a Jewish court before going to a secular court if the issue is suitable for judging at a Jewish court.

BILLING

Billing: Personal Time

Someone who bills for his or her time may not charge a client for time used for personal purposes.

EXAMPLE A lawyer must receive the client's OK before billing that client for time he used eating a meal in order to work more hours for the client.

Double Billing

If you normally bill for your travel time, it is unethical to bill another client for work you did for the second client during the travel.

BUYING STOLEN ITEM

Buying Stolen or Knock-Off Items

You may not knowingly buy a stolen item, nor an item that is illegally trademarked (for example, a knock-off purse or watch). However, if it is not certain that it is illegally marked or stolen, you may buy it.

Finding Out a Bought Item Had Been Stolen

If you bought an item and later found out that it had been stolen, you must return the item to the original owner, but that owner must refund to you the amount of money you paid.

NOTE If the article was insured and the previous owner had already received payment for the loss, you do not need to return it.

CLERICAL ERRORS

Clerical Errors and Non-Jewish Business

If a non-Jewish business makes a mistake in your favor, it is considered a saintly trait to correct the mistake. It is especially a kiddush HaShem to return the money to them if they know that you are Jewish.

Clerical Errors and Jewish Business Owner

If a business makes a mistake in your favor, you must correct it if the:

- Business owner is Jewish, and
- Error is more than 1/6th of the item's value.

NOTE It is recommended to correct the error even if the owner is not Jewish.

NOTE In some situations, you must correct the error to a Jewish owner even if the error is less than 1/6th of the item's value—consult a rabbi.

NOTE If the owner (Jewish or non-Jewish) forgot to charge you at all, you must return the item or pay for it.

COMPETITION

Creating Competing Business

Generally, you may not go into a business if an existing business owner will go out of business or cannot survive on what income he/she will have remaining.

EXCEPTION If a better Torah teacher is available than the current one, the better one may be hired.

DAMAGES

Abusing Rental Cars

You may not abuse a rental car. This means you may not use it in any damaging way that you would not do to your own car.

Recovering Damages

When a company damages something of yours, you are entitled to do what you need to in order to get compensated--as long as it is legal. This is ethical and honest and you do not need to actually do what the company wants or tells you to do.

ENCROACHING (MASIG GVUL)

Encroaching (Masig Gvul)

Masig gvul can mean:

- Actually stealing property, or
- Stealing business from someone else.

NOTE This is complicated, so consult a rabbi if needed.

GAMBLING

Gambling and Jews

Gambling may not be approved for Jews; some types are completely forbidden. Consult a rabbi.

INHERITANCE

Timing of Giving

Property may be given away in any manner and amounts desired during a person's lifetime. A Jew must give his property away before death if he does not want to make the inheritance according to Jewish law (such as double portion to a father's first-born son, etc.--consult a rabbi for details). A person should reserve some money to fulfill the Torah commandment of inheritance. Consult a rabbi.

NOTE In inheritance issues, the first-born son means the first-born son of the father (although pidyon ha'ben refers to the first-born son of the mother).

NOTE A mother can leave whatever she wants to her children without being required to give twice as much to a son who is the first-born of his father.

American Will

Since a person cannot give away property after his/her death (since he/she does not own it anymore), an American will has no halachic validity. An American will should be written to keep the inheritance out of the hands of the government and lawyers. In order for a secular will to be effective under halacha, an acquisition should be made that starts to take effect beginning at the time of the kinyan and finalize one hour before the person's death.

Rabbinic guidance is recommended.

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LABORERS

Paying Day Laborer

You may pay a laborer at whatever time intervals you agreed upon; you do not need to pay the laborer each day before sunset unless you agreed to do that. If you did not make any agreement, follow local custom. If there is no local custom, pay by the end of the work day.

LOANS

LOANS: WITNESSING/WRITING DETAILS

Loans: Witnessing/Writing Details

You must have a witness or write down the details of an agreement before loaning money or material goods. Both parties should count the money together unless there is a written record, as with electronic transfers, checks, etc.

NOTE If the amount is so small that the lender would not mind its not being paid back, it is customary to lend without a written record or witness.

LOANS: CHARGING INTEREST (RIBIT)

General Law on Heter Iska

A Jew is not permitted to charge interest (ribit) for a loan made to another Jew. A heter.iska should be used in any case where a loan has been made between Jews if more money will be paid back than what was received.

NOTE In some cases, if you prepay for a purchase and thereby get a discount, it might be considered as interest paid on a loan, and you would need a heter.iska.

Charging Interest: Loans or Borrowed Items

Prohibitions of charging interest (ribit) apply only to loans of money or a commodity (halva'a), not to borrowed items (she'eila):

1. Loan/Halva'a

You do not get back the exact item you loaned but, rather, some equivalent of the original, such as money. The borrower may not give back more than he/she borrowed and the recipient may not accept more. Even saying “thanks” is considered to be a form of interest.

2. Borrowed Items/She'eila

The original item is returned to the loaner (for example, borrowing a car), and there is no prohibition of paying more than what was originally received.

Heter Iska in Normal Language

If you use a heter.iska for a loan, the document should be in English or whatever is the normal language of both parties.

RETURNING LOST OBJECTS (HASHAVAT AVEIDA)

Returning Lost Objects (Hashavat Aveida)

You are required to return a lost object (hashavat aveida) to its Jewish owner if you can. This is a Torah commandment.

NOTE It is saintly behavior to return lost objects to non-Jews, too, if it will be a kiddush Hashem.

NOTE You should tell a person if his or her cigarettes fall out of a pocket, even though the cigarettes are dangerous to the smoker's health.

SHMITA AND DEBTS

Shmita and Cancellation of Debts

Shmita applies to debts in our era, but the normal requirement of forgiving debts may be circumvented via a document (prozbul).

TAKING ITEMS

Taking Items

You may not take items that do not belong to you even if they are worth less than a shava pruta, unless the items have no perceived value.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

ACKNOWLEDGING THE GOOD (HAKARAT HATOV)

Giving Gifts

Acknowledging the good that other people do or have done for us applies to all people, Jewish and non-Jewish. You may give a gift to any person who has done something nice or good to you as acknowledgment of what they did for you in the past or in anticipation of what they might do for you in the future.

BEARING A GRUDGE

Do Not Bear a Grudge (Lo Titor)

You may not bear a grudge (*lo titor*).

EXAMPLE Someone did something not nice to you and some time later asks you for a favor.
You may not make the person feel bad about what he or she did previously, even if you do grant the favor.

NOTE This applies to monetary issues and the custom is to apply it to non-monetary issues.

COUNTING PEOPLE

Counting Jews

Jews should not be counted by number individually, but they may be counted as groups. The prohibition is only verbally, out loud.

EXAMPLE

You should not say “There are 53 people here.” You may say, “There are more than 50 people.”

NOTE You may use a sentence, such as *Hoshiya et amecha* (counting each person as a word in the 10-word phrase).

DEROGATORY SPEECH (LASHON HARA)

Introduction to Lashon HaRa

Lashon ha'ra is saying (or communicating in any way--even by rolling your eyes, winking, etc.) anything derogatory or negative about someone that can hurt him or her in any way--by causing embarrassment, loss of money, lowered esteem, bad reputation, etc.

Lashon ha'ra in which you attribute the negative statement about the person to whom you are speaking to someone else is called *rechilut* (gossip).

Lashon ha'ra that is false is called *motzi shem ra*. Saying something that is true is not *lashon ha'ra* if it is being said for a positive purpose (even though the same words would be *lashon ha'ra* if they were only intended to hurt another person and had no positive purpose).

Lashon ha'ra, including *rechilut*, is forbidden to be said about *shomer Shabbat* Jews except for a positive purpose; *motzi shem ra* is forbidden to say about anyone--Jewish or not, *shomer Shabbat* or not, whether for a positive purpose or not.

Speaking *Lashon HaRa*

When You May Say *Lashon HaRa*

Lashon ha'ra, including *rechilut*, even if truthful, is not permitted except for a constructive or positive purpose. (*Motzi shem ra* is never permitted.) Its purpose cannot be to hurt a person. It is permitted and recommended to tell the facts about someone:

1. To protect others from being hurt (being cheated, molested, etc.), or
2. For a positive purpose that cannot be achieved through any other means.

Lashon HaRa To Protect Others from Being Hurt

You may say truthful *lashon ha'ra* (including *rechilut*, if it is necessary to divulge the name of the person who told you):

- To prevent a bad person from telling children bad things or to keep children from learning bad behavior from the bad person;

- To avoid being implicated in what the bad person is doing;
- To prevent other Jews' suffering a loss by using a worker who did bad work for you.

NOTE You may not say that X is a bad/inexperienced workman, even if that is the truth, unless the listener needs to know this to protect himself or herself.

- If a businessman cheats you or lies to you, you should warn other Jews about him (but only if you suspect they want to do business with him).
- If you know something bad about someone who a third person wants to date or marry, in many cases you are required to tell what you know (but this can be very complicated and dangerous and a rabbi should be consulted about what to do in many cases)!

When You May Add Facts to Correct Possible Lashon HaRa

If the reasons behind an action are not clear and someone may get the wrong/negative impression of someone in question, then you should tell the facts and tell the entire story.

EXAMPLE

Someone (A) insults another person (B) in public. Entire story is that B beat up A previously. Knowing the full story changes how people might view A.

NOTE If it is only your opinion, state that instead of declaring it as fact.

Lashon HaRa To Allow Gain

Saying lashon ha'ra for a positive purpose includes gain for yourself or for someone else; you may talk about others in cases such as these:

- **Psychotherapy** You may say truthful lashon ha'ra or rechilut to a psychotherapist since you don't know what is important. Outside of therapy and with non-therapists, you may say anything that will bring about a positive result (and only if there is no other way to achieve that result).

EXAMPLES

Abusive Parent

If a child needs to know what an abusive parent did or is doing in order to heal from damage, or if a therapist says it is necessary for the child to be told what the abusive parent did.

Abusive Spouse

If it will help the healing process for an abused spouse to talk about what he or she suffered.

- **Upset** If you are upset by what a person did to you and it will help you to calm down by telling what was done to you (that is, you will gain by feeling better).

NOTE If you want to ask someone for information that could be lashon ha'ra, you should say why you are asking so the other person will understand that it is for a positive purpose and is therefore not lashon ha'ra.

Lashon HaRa and Specific Cases

Children, Shomer Shabbat Person, Groups

Even truthful lashon ha'ra, including rechilut, may not be said about a Jewish child or a shomer Shabbat person or group of people unless for a positive purpose that cannot be achieved any other way.

- A parent should not rebuke or criticize a child if it will embarrass the child in front of others.
- A child (whether young or adult) may not correct a parent who is saying lashon ha'ra, unless the parent would want to be reminded that the parent is saying lashon ha'ra. Even then, it must be done respectfully.
- You may make statements about groups of people in general, even if negative, as long as the purpose is to protect other people from them. But what you say must be true.

NOTE It is not lashon ha'ra to talk truthfully about someone who cannot be identified. (You may say “someone,” but only if that person is not identifiable.)

Lashon HaRa: Public Knowledge

You may mention information that is public knowledge. But your intent should not be to spread the word, but rather just to pass along interesting information.

EXAMPLE

Saying, “Did you hear that the president of the synagogue just got convicted of...”

Lashon HaRa: Mass Media

You may read in the paper, see on TV, or hear on the radio an account of someone's bad behavior (since you cannot know whether it will affect you or be important for you to know until you read or hear the information, it may be OK; ask a rabbi). You may not accept it as being the complete truth, but you should be wary.

Lashon HaRa: Shomer Shabbat Public Figure

You may not tell or listen to lashon ha'ra about a public figure who is a shomer Shabbat Jew unless there is a purpose.

You may give your opinion about a shomer Shabbat politician as long as you state it as your opinion and as long as giving your opinion may help other people.

Lashon HaRa: Shomer Shabbat Organization

You may not say any of the three types of speaking ill about an organization, school, synagogue, etc., whose members or employees are shomer Shabbat--except for a positive purpose.

EXAMPLES

You may not say any of the three types of lashon ha'ra about a Jewish school's cost, bad teachers, etc., unless it may be relevant to future students (and even if it is relevant, you may still not say motzi shem ra).

You may not say, “I don't like that shul because there is lots of talking,” unless you think the person will appreciate knowing since he or she will not want to go to a shul with lots of talking.

Lashon HaRa: Asked for Opinion

If you are asked for your opinion, you may give it if it is relevant (has a useful purpose) to the person asking. Otherwise, no comment.

If you are asked your opinion about a Torah lecture or lecturer, you may give your opinion only AS your opinion, not as criticism.

Lashon HaRa: Told in Confidence

If you have been told something in confidence, even if you think it is best for the person who told you if you pass it along, you may still not re-tell anyone else. You may say, “I cannot speak about that” if you are asked. Consult a rabbi.

Lashon HaRa: Getting Back at Someone

If someone hurts you, you may get back at the person at the time of the action against you. But afterward, it would be revenge and is forbidden.

EXAMPLE

Someone tells you, “You are good for nothing.” You may say, “You are worse than I am,” if it makes you feel better.

Lashon HaRa: Bet Din Summons

If someone with whom you have a problem refuses a *hazmana* (summons) from a *bet din*, you may publicize a letter from the *bet din* saying the person refused the *hazmana* so that the recipient might agree to go to the *bet din* due to public embarrassment.

Lashon HaRa: Bet Din for Abuse

All matters between Jews should, ideally, initially go to *bet din* but only if the *bet din* is capable of resolving the problem. In cases of suspected child or spousal (or other) abuse, you may report it to the police if there is no *bet din* that is capable of dealing with the problem immediately: You are not required to wait while a *bet din* gets around to your case. The key is to expedite the case.

NOTE Some cities have special *batei din* for such matters.

NOTE Beware of governmental agencies that may take away children from their homes, even without evidence.

Listening to and Believing Lashon HaRa

Listening to and believing any category of *lashon ha'ra* is also forbidden. If you do hear something bad about someone else, do not believe that it is definitely true--but you may believe that it might be true. When you hear *lashon ha'ra*:

- You can try to change the subject, since pointing out that *lashon ha'ra* is being said may not stop it from being said.
- If you see a *shomer Shabbat* Jew doing something that seems to be forbidden, you should judge him/her favorably and assume that there is a good interpretation to what is being done.

EXAMPLE

SITUATION

You see someone who is not *shomer mitzvot* get in a car on *Shabbat*.

WHAT TO DO

Make the logical assumption that he/she is going to drive (and not for a *halachically* permissible purpose).

SITUATION

You see a *shomer Shabbat* person get in a car on *Shabbat*.

WHAT TO DO

Assume there is a good, *halachic* reason for it. However, you may not ignore reality or make implausible or unlikely excuses for bad behavior.

EVIL EYE (AYIN HARA)

When Ayin HaRa Is Significant

Ayin ha'ra is only significant if a person is worried about being affected.

HONORING THE ELDERLY

Standing for the Elderly

You do not need to stand up for old people (as a form of honoring them) unless the old person is over 70 years old and is *shomer mitzvot*. This applies to women, too, if they are 70 years old or more and are *shomrot*

HONORING PARENTS

INTRODUCTION TO HONORING PARENTS

Introduction to Honoring Parents

Honoring your father and mother—the fifth of the *Ten Commandments*—heads the *mishna's* list of *mitzvot* for which you receive reward in this world as well as in the next. It is one of only two *mitzvot* for which long life is promised (the other is *shilu'ach ha'kein*—shooing away a wild mother bird before taking her eggs). This *mitzva* especially refers to giving your parents food and drink as well as helping them get dressed, get covered, and go out and in. But it also includes:

- Not sitting in your father's chair.
- Not calling your parents by their first names.
- Not disagreeing with, not correcting, or not contradicting your parents if doing so will upset them.
- Agreeing with them by taking sides in an argument (doing so is considered disrespectful since they do not need your agreement).
- Not waking them up when they are sleeping--unless they would want you to do so.

Whatever applies to fathers also applies to mothers, such as not sitting in the parent's chair.

NOTE Many of these *halachot* may be overridden at the parent's request; for instance, you may correct your parent or call him or her by first name if he or she wants you to do so.

All parents—whether biological or adoptive, Jewish or non-Jewish—must be treated well, acknowledging the good they did for the child (*hakarat ha'tov*). If any parent opposes the observance of Jewish laws, the child should limit contact with the parent.

HONORING PARENTS: NAMES

Honoring Parents: Names: Saying Your Parents' Names

Children should not normally call their parents by name, nor say their parent's name without mentioning that this is their parent, as follows:

- When praying for your brother's recovery from illness (*refu'a*), say:
 - Your brother's name,
 - *Ben imi* (son of my mother) or *ben imi morati* (son of my mother, my teacher), and
 - Your mother's name.
- When praying for your sister's recovery from illness, say:
 - Your sister's name,
 - *Bat imi* (daughter of my mother) or *bat imi morati* (daughter of my mother, my teacher), and
 - Your mother's name.
- An *aliya* for your brother, say:
 - Your brother's name,
 - *Ben avi* (son of my father) or *ben avi mori* (son of my father, my teacher), and
 - Your father's name.

HONORING PARENTS: ADOPTIVE

Adoptive Parents: Acknowledging the Good

Adoptive parents must be treated well by the adopted child, acknowledging the good they did for the child (*hakarat ha'tov*). But they are not considered *halachic* parents and the child may not be required to give them the honor that is required by the Torah for natural parents.

HONORING PARENTS: NON-JEWISH

Respect for Non-Jewish Parent

Treat a non-Jewish parent who does not interfere with the Jewish observance of his or her Jewish child with more respect than any other person, even though the specific laws of honoring a Jewish parent do not apply.

HONORING PARENTS: NON-OBSERVANT JEWISH

Shabbat/Jewish Festivals with a Non-Observant Jewish Parent

You should spend Shabbat or Jewish festivals with your non-religious Jewish parent (even in a non-religious environment) if he or she wants you to, as long as you can still observe all of the Shabbat or Jewish festival laws AND if your parent needs your help.

NOTE You do not need to stay with your parent if your parent does not need your help or if you will not be able to fulfill all of the requirements of Shabbat or the Jewish festival.

HONORING PARENTS: ABUSIVE JEWISH

Honor an Abusive Jewish Parent but Not Suffer

A child is not required to suffer from any type of abuse (not physical, emotional, psychological...) from a parent, but the child should honor his or her Jewish parents as much as possible without suffering.

NOTE Consult a rabbi to define individual cases of abuse by parents because the issues are complex.

HONORING TORAH SCHOLARS

WHO IS A TORAH SCHOLAR

Who Is a Torah Scholar

Who is a Torah scholar? It depends on location and era. Someone with minimal Jewish knowledge may be considered a scholar if no one else knows as much.

MAIN TORAH TEACHER (RAV MUVHAK)

Who Is Main Torah Teacher (Rav Muvhak)

It is theoretically possible--but highly unlikely--to have one main teacher (rav muvhak) who taught you most of your Torah knowledge. However, a rav muvhak might exist for a person who was not brought up religiously observant and did not have a traditional Jewish education.

Correcting a Rav Muvhak

Although a rav muvhak is deserving of the same honor you would give your parents, you may correct him if he wants you to correct him, just as you may correct a parent who wants you to do so.

TORAH SCHOLAR HONORING OTHER TORAH SCHOLARS

Torah Scholar Honoring Other Torah Scholars

A Torah scholar should stand up for another Torah scholar who is greater in knowledge; a greater Torah scholar should acknowledge the lesser scholar by standing up a little bit.

HOSTING GUESTS (HACHNASAT ORCHIM)

To Whom To Give Food and Lodging

We are commanded to give food and accommodation (*hachnasat orchim*) to people who do not have food to eat or a place to sleep. This applies to any day, not just to *Shabbat* and *Jewish festivals*.

Inviting Friends for Meals

Inviting friends to your house for meals, even on *Shabbat* and *Jewish festivals*, is not *hachnasat orchim*-- unless the friends do not have food or a place to sleep. But inviting friends for meals may qualify as other *mitzvot*.

Accompanying a Guest

You should walk a guest to the door or even along his/her way when he/she leaves your home. This is an act of kindness (*chesed*).

HURTING PEOPLE

Hurting People

You are forbidden from hurting another person physically, emotionally, or psychologically.

KINDNESS (CHESED)

What Are Acts of Kindness

We are commanded to do acts of kindness (*chesed*), which means helping someone by doing an action that that person cannot do (or has difficulty doing) for him/herself.

EXAMPLE

- Visiting sick people;
- Opening a window for a crippled or weak person;
- Giving charity;
- Teaching non-religious Jews about Judaism;
- Finding marriage partners for single people.

MEMBERS OF THE OTHER GENDER

CONTACT (NEGIA)

What Constitutes Negia

Unrelated people of one gender may not generally have intimate physical contact with members of the opposite gender (*negia*). The prohibited types of contact are any that express affection or promote interpersonal relationships or intimacy. *Negia* does not apply to:

For Males--mother, grandmothers, daughters, granddaughters, and other descendants and antecedents.

For Females--father, grandfathers, sons, grandsons, and other descendants and antecedents.

Non-Intimate Contact between Men and Women

Non-intimate contact is permissible between men and women--even if the two people are related or have a close personal relationship (except a husband and wife when she is a *nida*).

EXAMPLES

- Doctor and patient.
- Massage therapist and patient.

- Lifeguard and swimmer.
- A Jewish man may catch a Jewish girl or woman on the flying trapeze.

REASON This is not intimate contact.

INTER-MARRIAGE

Family Member Who Inter-marries

Treat as single a sibling or parent or any other Jew who marries a non-Jew, as he or she is not considered to be married.

EXAMPLE If they visit, don't let them share a bedroom.

MISREPRESENTING YOURSELF (GNEIVAT DA'AT)

When Misrepresenting Yourself (Gneivat Da'at) Applies

It is forbidden to give a falsely positive impression to other people (gneivat da'at), whether to Jews or non-Jews. Pretentiousness is a type of gneivat da'at.

Gneivat da'at may be through actions or speech and requires intent. It applies only when someone else will be affected.

REBUKING (TOCHACHA)

When To Rebuke (Tochacha)

You must tell another Jew--but only if he or she will appreciate your comment—if he or she:

- Is violating a Jewish law, or
- Has done a hurtful action.

REVENGE (NEKAMA)

You May Not Take Revenge

You may not take revenge on someone.

EXAMPLE You ask for a favor--to borrow an item or for help--and you get refused. Later, if that person asks to borrow something of yours or for help, you may not refuse, saying "No, because you did not lend to me (or help me) when I asked."

NOTE Revenge applies to loaning money but also deals with other cases.

TZNI'UT

INTRODUCTION TO TZNI'UT

Introduction to Tzni'ut

Tzni'ut, or modesty, is the concept of not standing out--commonly applied to attire, behavior, or speech--and includes privacy and separation of genders. Jews should not exhibit their bodies--but they should also not speak unnecessarily loudly, be boastful, or do anything that attracts attention to themselves. Tzni'ut applies between people and other people and also between people and God.

For tzni'ut in attire, see ATTIRE.

VISITING THE SICK (BIKUR CHOLIM)

Why Visit the Sick

The main commandment of visiting sick people is chesed (kindness):

- To see if they need anything, and
- To pray for their recovery.

WASTING PEOPLE'S TIME (TIRCHA TZIBUR)

Wasting People's Time (Tircha d'tzibura)

You may not waste people's time or upset them (tircha d'tzibura).

EXAMPLE A prayer leader should not:

- Roll a Torah scroll during the minyan in order to get to the correct place for reading (it should have been done previously) unless necessary;
- Roll up his tefilin after taking them off for musaf on Rosh Chodesh, before hallel on chol ha'moed of Sukkot, or after hallel on chol ha'moed Passover. (Instead, he should take them off and leave them on the bima until the prayer service is finished, or roll them up during Torah reading).

WIDOWS, ORPHANS, POOR

Oppressing Widows, Orphans, Poor

There is a special Torah prohibition against antagonizing widows, orphans, and poor people.

- **Widow** You may not antagonize a widow even if she is rich and even once she remarries.
- **Orphan** An orphan only gets special treatment until he/she can fend for himself/herself.

NOTE An orphan is usually someone:

- Without parental support,
- Who cannot fend for himself either financially or otherwise, and
- Is usually under 18 years old.

WITNESSES

WITNESSES: WHO MAY TESTIFY IN JEWISH COURT

Witnesses: Non-Observant Jew in Jewish Court

A Jew known not to observe the laws of Shabbat is not accepted as a witness under Jewish law. However, if it is known that the person would not lie, he or she may be trusted in some cases.

Witnesses: Women in Jewish Courts

It is customary today for Jewish courts to accept the testimony of Jewish women.

Witnesses: Non-Jews in Jewish Courts

It is customary today for Jewish courts to accept non-Jews of both genders as witnesses in some circumstances.

Witnesses: Relatives in Jewish Courts

These relatives of participants in a Jewish court case or wedding may not be witnesses:

- Parents and their spouses
- Children and their spouses

- Siblings and their spouses
- First cousins and their spouses.

However, it is customary today for Jewish courts to accept relatives as witnesses in some cases.

YICHUD

When Yichud Applies

The general rule for yichud is that a man and a woman who is not his wife or a woman and man who is not her husband may not be secluded together. If another adult can enter the room at any time without knocking, there is no problem with yichud, even if the adult is not present initially. Yichud does not apply whenever:

- A woman has a lockable door that only she controls, which is locked (in this case, men are permitted elsewhere in the building).
- Direct descendants or ancestors are in a room together (in this case, all other men/women combinations are permitted--even if the other people are not related).
- Three (or more) women and one man (or more) are in a room, except when they will be sleeping. At those times, four (or more) women and one man (or more) are permitted in a room or enclosed area.
- Two (or more) men and one (or more) woman/women are in a room.
- Other people have keys to the room and may enter at any time.
- One (married) woman is with one or more men and the woman's husband is in the same area (RMH looks at the local business district as the "area," so wherever businesses would be advertising or marketing would be a local area).
- For other cases, consult a rabbi.

Father and Daughter Sleeping in Same Room

It is OK for a father and a daughter to sleep in same room.

PEACE

PEACEFUL WAYS (DARCHEI SHALOM)

Peaceful Ways (Darchei Shalom)

Darchei shalom is behaving in a manner that engenders harmony and good relations between Jew-to-Jew and Jew-to-non-Jew. Darchei shalom allows some customs, but not halachot, to be overridden.

PEACE IN THE HOME (SHALOM BAYIT)

Introduction to Shalom Bayit

Shalom bayit is a family at peace, as one unit. When leniencies in law are used to avoid intrafamily conflicts, customs and d'rabanan halachot can sometimes be overridden. But d'oraita halachot may not be violated. Consult a rabbi.

SITUATION

You want to go to minyan but your wife is overwhelmed with trying to feed several children and she asks you to help.

WHAT TO DO

You must miss minyan and help her since your wife's needs take precedence over your wish to pray with a minyan.

NOTE With shalom bayit problems between spouses, a rabbi should be consulted for details.

NOTE Once someone is married, his or her in-laws are part of his or her family and are included in shalom bayit rules.

Shalom Bayit: Non-Observant Parents and In-Laws

Ba'alei teshuva often have problems with issues of kashrut in their parents' homes. Pots, dishes, and utensils might not be kosher or toveled. Consult a rabbi. Questions of bishul akum (cooking that was done by a non-Jew) might apply to non-shomer Shabbat parents, but the custom is to be lenient.

If the parent's kitchen is known to be non-kosher, food must be prepared with care (see How To Use a Non-Kosher Kitchen). If the parents do not lie to their children, they may be trusted as to the source of food and its kosher status.

Since we may not eat from dishes or utensils that have not been toveled (immersed in a mikva), you may want to consider toveling your parents' dishes or utensils, or using disposable goods. In such cases, it is OK to use china that has not been toveled.

KOSHER/KASHRUT

INTRODUCTION TO KOSHER/KASHRUT

Introduction to Kosher/Kashrut

The human soul can achieve its goals when the body's physical desires and abilities are channeled to do good. Since our bodies are meant to serve holy purposes, what goes into them (as food) likewise must be fitting. The Torah lists “fitting,” or kosher, foods and food preparation rules that enhance our spiritual nature. Kosher rules help us use the physical items in the world to achieve holiness.

NOTE Many of the halachot listed here differ from the more-stringent approach of the Star-K, even though RMH is the halachic authority for the Star-K. The halachot listed in PRACTICAL HALACHA are the basic halachot and RMH approves of their use for individuals.

WHAT IS KOSHER?

What Is Kosher?

By Sara-Malka (Diane) Laderman

Kosher (Hebrew for “fitting” or “suitable”) means foods that comply with certain laws. Kosher rules could be summed up like this:

- The food must start out kosher.
- The food must stay kosher during processing.

Starting Out Kosher The Food's Natural State

RULE #1

Plants

All Plants, Raw, Are Inherently Kosher

All raw, unprocessed plants are kosher. However, restrictions on produce grown in Eretz Yisrael may apply (teruma, ma'aser, shmita), and orla may apply to produce grown anywhere in the world.

- For laws about eating perennial fruits, see appropriate listings under [Agriculture](#).
- For laws regarding bugs in plant produce, see below.

RULE #2

Mammals

All Mammals that Chew Their Cud and Have Split Hooves Are Inherently Kosher

Kosher mammals are all cud-chewing, split-hooved animals (Leviticus/Vayikra 11:1-8 and Deuteronomy/Devarim 14:3-8). Included are both domestic ("beheimot"--goat, sheep, and cow families) and wild ("chayot"--deer, giraffe, and wild goat and sheep families) mammals. There are two (sometimes) practical differences between the two groups:

- You may eat the cheilev (a type of fat) from a wild kosher mammal, and
- After slaughtering, you must cover the blood from a wild kosher mammal but not a domesticated kosher mammal.

Below is a sampling of kosher mammals:

Goat Family Goat Ibex	Cow Family Cow (beef) Buffalo/Bison Ox	Deer Family Deer (venison) Antelope Elk Reindeer Moose	Giraffe Family Giraffe	Sheep Family Sheep (ram, ewe, lamb, "mutton")
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Hooves

Q: How can you tell if an animal has split hooves?

A:

1) **Split Hooves Must Be Hooves**

Hooves must be made of hoof material--a hard substance similar to your fingernails—not fleshy feet.

2) **Split Hooves Must Be Split**

Hooves must be split all the way through from front to back.

Cud-Chewing

Q: How can you tell if an animal chews its cud?

A: Watch for the sliding ball.

When a cud-chewing animal starts to eat, you will see it bolting down its food into its first stomach, like a hungry 9th grade boy (much like humans racing to throw groceries into their shopping carts), in case a lion or bear is coming to eat him or her.

Next, it will find a safe place to more leisurely bring up its cud and chew its stash. During cud-chewing time, especially for goats (sheep are usually too woolly to make out shapes), you will distinctly see:

- Racketball shape popping up the goat's throat,
- Goat's cheeks ballooning out and its lower jaw chewing in a horizontal figure-eight pattern, and, a little later,
- Racketball shape sliding down the throat again.

You will soon see the shape of a new racketball pop up the throat.

By contrast, a non-kosher animal will chew slowly and well the first time—it will not have another chance to chew its food later, like the kosher animals do.

NOTE Kosher animals' four stomachs do a great job of completely digesting whatever they eat. That's why smart gardeners will only fertilize their gardens with dung from cud-chewing animals, because the dung from non-kosher horses and donkeys contain many undestroyed weed seeds that will sprout and take over their gardens.

Imposters

Animals in the camel family (camel, llama, alpaca, vicunya, etc.) appear to have split hooves when seen from the front. These are actually just two long toenails in front of a padded, fleshy, incompletely split foot, which you can easily distinguish as a whole foot when looking from the back.

One non-kosher animal has great-looking split hooves but doesn't chew its cud—animals from the pig family.

Insight from Masechet Chullin

All kosher mammals inherently have horns; all non-kosher animals are hornless. Bottom line: If you find a horned animal, it's definitely kosher.

But horns are not a halachic requirement from the Torah like split hooves and cud chewing are, which is a good thing, since some breeds of goats, sheep, and cows are naturally “polled” (born hornless) or their horn buds were removed when they were young to prevent damage later.

NOTE Unlike for birds, we don't need any tradition (masoret) to identify kosher mammals. We rely entirely on the two signs: cud-chewing and split hooves.

RULE #3

Fowl

All Fowl That Have “Masoret” Are Inherently Kosher

Not everyone's agreed as to what the Torah means by a “netz” or a “yanshuf.” So when Leviticus/VaYikra 11:13-19 lists the 20 non-kosher flying species—allowing us to eat anything NOT on the list—we ignore the list and just eat what we know our ancestors traditionally ate as kosher. This tradition is known as masoret.

In the US, we eat all breeds of chickens and—in most circles--turkey, all breeds of goose except those whose beak is black (such as the Canadian goose) or whose beak does not go straight back to its forehead (like the Chinese goose), and Peking duck (we don't eat mallard or Muscovy ducks or their close relatives).

In Israel, additional birds eaten as kosher include mallard and Muscovy ducks, guinea fowl, Cootenix quail, pigeons, and turtle doves.

NOTE Some Jewish families originating in Germany, Iran, and other places maintain their masoret on eating pheasant, and you may be able to receive masoret on various species from researchers such as “The Aris”--Dr. Ari Greenspan and Rabbi Dr. Ari Zivotofsky, both Jewish ritual slaughterers (shochtim) who have spent the last 20 years interviewing and videotaping elderly European and Sefardi immigrants to Israel as to what birds they ate as kosher in their home countries. You can google their work or read some of Dr. Zivotofsky's articles on www.kashrut.com.

Zivchei Cohen, a book written and published by a Jewish ritual slaughterer (shochet) in Italy, shows colored illustrations of 29 species known to be kosher, including peacock, pheasant, Cootenix quail, mallard duck, and numerous songbirds. Maor L'Masechet Chullin U'Vechorot (vol. 2, Feldheim, pp. 29-33) reproduces these colorful illustrations and names each bird in five languages, noting that the 29 were listed to acquaint students of Jewish ritual slaughter (shechita) only with rarer birds' identities and that the well-known kosher species were not included in the 29!

Chazal noted that kosher birds share certain characteristics:

- They sit on a branch with three toes in front and one in back. Non-kosher birds usually sit two and two, as they need equal strength on both sides of their feet for killing and carrying off food, except for:

- Owls, whose feet are flexible and can move their toes to the side, forward, or back, and
 - Vultures, who need balance walking instead of gripping, since they walk on the ground to eat food that is already dead.
- They lay eggs that are not entirely round or oval but are, well, egg-shaped, with *kad v'chad*—a rounded end and a pointed end. Not all egg-shaped eggs are *kosher*, but all totally round eggs, if from fowl, are not *kosher* (fish eggs from *kosher* fish, which are perfectly round, are of course *kosher*). There are some eggs, including from doves, that seem perfectly oval but are actually *kosher*.

RULE #4

Fish

All Fish That Have Fins and Scales Are Inherently *Kosher*

This excludes most eels (some conger eels that have *kosher* scales are *kosher*!) and all shellfish, catfish, sharks, swordfish, sea urchins, jellyfish, sea slugs, and many other sea creatures.

In addition to commonly eaten *kosher* fish such as salmon and tuna, some unexpected fish are also *kosher*, including barracuda, goldfish, and many other pet and tropical fish.

RULE #5

Grasshoppers

All other creatures, except the four *kosher* locusts, are not *kosher*.

NOTE The four *kosher* locusts are grasshoppers with knees higher than their backs. The four include the *chagav*, identified by Yemenite Jews by a “chet for *chagav*” marking on its abdomen.

RULE #6

Kosher from *Kosher*

Whatever Food Substances Come Out of a *Kosher* Animal Are Inherently *Kosher*...

except for some fats (*cheilev*), blood, and the sciatic nerve (*gid ha'nashe*).

Milk from a cow (a *kosher* animal) is *kosher*. *Milk* from a pig (a non-*kosher* animal) is not. An egg from a *kosher* bird is *kosher*; an egg from a non-*kosher* bird is not *kosher*.

EXCEPTION

Q: Since bees are not *kosher*, how can we eat honey?

A: Honey is not produced from bee parts, but rather from flower parts.

RULE #7

Animal Blood

May Not Be Eaten in Any Form.

NOTE Fish blood is not forbidden.

Preparing *Kosher* Harvest and Kitchen

Plants

What To Check

- Remove bugs (see [Why Bugs May Not Be Eaten](#))
- Select fruits and vegetables that have no harvest-related problems such as *orla* (and in *Eretz Yisrael*, *kilayim*, *shmita*, etc.); separate out *teruma* and *ma'aser* from any Israeli-grown produce that requires it (see [Teruma/Ma'aser: Ownership: What Is Hefkeir Produce](#))

- Make sure that any liquid grape product to be handled by a non-Jew for a Jew has been cooked or pasteurized before being handled. Cooking turns the wine into an inferior product disqualified for use in idolatrous practices.

Animals

Mammals

Slaughter/Shechita

Kosher mammals must be slaughtered in the quickest and most humane manner possible, according to halacha. A highly trained ritual slaughterer (shochet) must perform the slaughtering (“shechita”). He checks the knife before the slaughtering to ensure there are no burrs to catch on the animal's throat. He says the blessing “al ha'shechita” and then cuts the windpipe and the esophagus as well as the neck arteries. After slaughtering, he checks the knife again for burrs (if he finds one, the animal is not kosher) and checks the animal's lungs to make sure the animal wasn't about to die of lung perforation in the near future.

Certain types of adhesions may be found on the animal's lungs. If they can be removed (by peeling) without perforating the lungs, the meat is kosher. If there are only small and easily removed lesions, the meat is glatt (“smooth”). If there are no lesions at all, the meat is classified as “Beit Yosef.”

Kosher lamb and goat are always glatt/chalakh kosher.

NOTE There is no need to eat glatt meat. Meat is kosher if it has been properly slaughtered, de-veined and de-fatted (traibored), and soaked and salted in accordance with Jewish law.

Actually, there are 18 organic or physical defects that may make meat non-kosher but, as a practical matter, we only check for lesions in the lungs and also in the second stomach.

If the animal proves to have been healthy, it is sometimes hung upside down to allow the arterial blood to drain out. (It is possible to hang the animals before being slaughtered but this is not the usual method).

Skining and Traiboring

The animal is skinned.

Next, the animal is traibored. Traiboring removes certain nerves, sinews, blood vessels, and fats that we don't eat, including the sciatic nerve damaged when our forefather Jacob wrestled with the angel at the Jabbok stream.

In the US, only the forequarters are traibored and eaten, and the hind portion is sold to the non-Jewish consumer. In Israel, the hind portion is traibored too and eaten as kosher.

May you traibor meat once it's cooked? And if not, how did Jews traibor more than 1 million Passover lamb offerings that had to be slaughtered and prepared between midday and evening (and it takes 2-3 hours to traibor one lamb!). The Jewish commentator The Raavad says the Passover lamb was traibored before roasting; Rambam disagrees, since the lamb had to be roasted whole. Rambam opines that the sinew, unlike fat, does not impart its flavor to the meat and that people would just traibor the Passover offering meat on their plates.

Removing Blood

The next steps involve removing blood (“kashering”) and can be done at the butcher's or at your home. The meat is cut, rinsed, soaked for at least 30 minutes, put on a slanted board to allow the blood to run off, and covered with kosher (a coarse) salt for one hour. After being rinsed three more times, the meat is now kashered.

NOTE Not all blood is not kosher! There is a difference in Jewish law between “moving blood” (which is not kosher) and other types. So, if you see some blood or other red liquid inside meat that has been already made kosher, it is not considered to be blood. For blood that has pooled outside of the meat,

Preparing the Liver

The liver is cut halfway through several times and covered with kosher salt top and bottom. You can oven broil the liver on a rack reserved for that purpose. The blood must be able to drain away from the liver

You can instead broil the liver over a fire outdoors. Grilling outside will give the liver a delicious smoky flavor that even children like--but do NOT allow the neighborhood cats to steal your livers off the grill!

Fowl

Covering Blood

Kosher fowl is slaughtered and, when it stops flapping, is usually hung upside down to allow the arterial blood to run out and onto the earth. Cover all the blood with dirt (a mitzva from the Torah--mitzva d'oraita) and say the blessing "al kisuy dam b'afar."

Defeathering

Rinse with water and remove the feathers. Defeathering can take a while for chickens and up to two hours for one small duck, especially if you are saving the down!

NOTE Although the non-kosher world will dip the bird in hot water to open the pores and make the feathers easier to pull out, we cannot yet heat (this is like cooking) the bird because it is not yet kasher.

Removing Internal Organs

Rinse the bird. Usually, a circle of flesh surrounding the anus is cut out. Start pulling out the digestive system. Recognizable items such as the liver, heart, and giblets will come out and eventually you will be able to stick in your hand and pull out the lungs. This is not as cold and unpleasant as it sounds because the bird will be warm for quite a while.

Salting

Once the bird is defeathered and the internal organs have been removed, rinse and salt with kosher salt inside and out and put it on a slanting board for an hour. Rinse three more times and cook!

Preparing the Giblets

Cut off the hard coating at one end of the giblets and rinse out the fine sand within. Remove the yellow internal lining. Salt and kasher with the rest of the bird.

Preparing the Liver

To kasher the liver, see Preparing the Liver, above, for meat liver.

NOTE Currently, all kosher poultry in the USA is mehadrin (enhanced level of kosher), but not all kosher poultry slaughtered in Israel is mehadrin (due to organic defects).

Fish

Buying Fish

Kosher fish bought from a store in which non-kosher fish are also sold should have any cut surfaces scraped and should be rinsed before using. Ideally, the knife that cuts the fish should be washed with soap and water beforehand.

Grasshoppers

Chagav Grasshoppers

Not much preparation needed here. Many Yemenites just twist off their heads and eat. B'tei'avon!

Substances from Animals

Milk

Dairy must be kept separate from meat, with a separate set of pots, pans, servers, scrubbers, and dishpans each for dairy and meat. See [Kashrut: Dairy/Meat Combinations](#).

Eggs

Eggs must be checked for blood spots. Throw out a fertilized egg with a blood spot. You may remove the blood in the white of the egg and eat the rest of an unfertilized egg, but the custom is to not eat the egg at all.

Unwanted Additives

Manufacturing Aids

In the US, food manufacturers are allowed to add “manufacturing aids”—even more than 1/60th of the volume of the other ingredients—without listing them. Some foods therefore need special supervision to ensure non-kosher substances have not been added.

EXAMPLES

- Kosher oils may be deodorized by heating them in vats that previously contained non-kosher oil, which renders the formerly kosher oil non-kosher. Or they may be put into tankers previously used for non-kosher liquids.
- Food colorings may come from the cochineal insect, which is non-kosher, and flavorings may be derived from the musk of non-kosher animals.
- Cheeses may have non-kosher rennet or pig milk added. Also, the rabbis of thousands of years ago made an injunction that even where the ingredients are kosher, cheese still requires kosher supervision.
- Maple syrup in the vat may be stirred with bacon (which is non-kosher) to reduce the froth produced by boiling.
- Candy may include non-kosher oil that is put into the molds so the candy does not stick.
- Kosher meat might not be kosher for Passover.

Transference of Taste (Ta'am)

Sometimes dairy will spatter onto a meat utensil, or someone will set a hot pot of kosher food into a non-kosher sink. Or someone will cut a lemon or onion with a dairy knife and then put the lemon into a pot used for meat. What happens next depends on whether the offending substance was:

1. Charif (spicy/sour/strong) enough to transfer the taste to the new item.
2. Hotter than yad soledet bo (too hot to hold your hand in it for a few seconds—about 120° F, or 49° C).
3. More than 1/60th of the total volume.

See following halachot for what to do next.

Kitchen Set Up

A hungry Martian landing in a modern kosher kitchen must assume earthlings eat in binary: Ideally, two sinks. Two dish towels. Two sponges. Two dishpans. Two cutting boards. Even, if the owner is fortunate, two dishwashers.

And what about those strange markings on the pots, pans, and servers? Perhaps he'll find a bright splotch of red paint or an “F” (for fleishig--Yiddish for “meat”) lettered in nail polish on utensils in the left cabinets.

Blue paint or nail polish, or an “M” (for milchig--Yiddish for milk) on utensils in the right cabinets. The plates, bowls, and silverware in left cabinets do not in any way match those in the right cabinets. Somewhere in a central cabinet, pots, pans, and servers are painted with a white dot, marked with a “P” for pareve, or left unmarked.

Opening the pantry, little symbols jump out from canned and packaged goods. Star-K, O-U, O-K, KOF K.... Only the dried beans and grains seem symbol-less. And the freezer? Well stocked but no frozen bacon, pepperoni pizza, and shellfish TV dinners....

How do these people eat?

The Great Divide

Separating Dairy and Meat

Welcome to the world of dairy and meat. Most kashrut problems in the kitchen involve the transfer of milk or meat flavor to the other gender by means of heat or, less commonly, by hot/spiciness.

It's easy to be jealous of vegetarians, or people who only eat plants and dairy products or who only eat plants and meat products! They never confuse their pots and serving utensils or deal with spatters of hot dairy foods onto meat utensils or vice versa. Large institutions and kosher cafeterias, similarly, may not have these mix-ups, since they can usually devote a whole room to a dairy or a meat kitchen.

Here's how the rest of us live:

Countertops

If you can, designate some countertops for dairy and some for meat. This will help you stay organized spatially. If you have only one sink, you may need to use the counter to the left for one dishrack (dairy or meat) and the counter to the right for your other dishrack.

Some countertop materials, such as granite, can be kashered by pouring boiling water over them. This will make the counters kosher and pareve (neutral--not dairy or meat). Once you have kashered your counter(s), you will be able to set down hot utensils, pots, and pans directly onto the counter (dairy utensils on your designated dairy counter; meat utensils on your designated meat counter).

If your countertop is not kosher or kasherable, you will need to cover the countertop before setting down hot (above 120° F) utensils, pots, and pans. Trivets work fine but so does a simple piece of corrugated cardboard in a pinch.

Dishes and Flatware

If feasible, select different patterns of dishes and flatware for dairy and meat so you can tell them apart. It is helpful to store the dairy and meat dishes in separate locations, preferably close to the counter of its gender. Porous dishes (stoneware, china, ...) cannot be kashered once used for hot non-kosher food and cannot be changed from one gender to the other. Metal dishes generally can be kashered. Glass only assumes a gender if it is placed directly on a fire or other heat source (to at least boiling temperature) or into a hot oven, so even if you pour boiling water or hot food into a glass bowl, such as hot pasta, and add cheese or other dairy food, the bowl remains pareve (or whichever gender it was previously).

Sinks and Dishracks

If you don't have two sinks--one for dairy and one for meat--and must use the same sink for both, try to choose different colors for your dairy, meat, and pareve dishpans, dishracks, and sponges/scrubbers (or sponge holders). If not, distinguish your dairy dishpans, dishracks, and sponges/scrubbers (or sponge holders) from your meat ones by placing them on opposite sides of the sink. Neutral, or pareve, dishes/cookware require a third sponge and dishpan. In a pinch, you can wash dishes, pots, and utensils by holding them in the air or placing them on a counter (whether either kashered or not) next to the sink as long as the dishware, pots, etc., do not reach 120° F.

Drawers

You can designate one drawer for dairy flatware and a second drawer for meat (and a third drawer for pareve). Color-coding or purchasing “dairy” and “meat” stickers to place on the outsides of cabinets and drawers can be especially helpful if anyone else will be cooking/washing dishes in your house and doesn't know your kitchen well.

Cooking Utensils/Food Processors

Distinguish your cooking utensils (your choice of colors) for dairy, meat, or pareve by using paint or nail polish, using different patterns, or even different shapes (one person uses round baking dishes for dairy and rectangular ones for meat!). If you lack drawer space, hang utensils from the wall or overhead rack or put them on your counter in jars color-coded for dairy, meat, or pareve. In a pinch, colored electrical tape can be used temporarily to mark dairy or meat servers or serving pieces (until it falls off during washing or turns black in the oven...).

You will only need one blender, blending stick, bread machine, mixer, food processor, etc., if you always keep them pareve. Otherwise, you may need duplicates of these items. Color-code them as well.

Stove Burners

To kasher a non-kosher stove burner, clean off any hard deposits on the grate, cover the burner with a sheet of metal (to hold the heat on the grate), and heat it full-blast for 45 minutes. (See halachot below for kashering burners by putting them in the oven.)

NOTE You do not need to kasher a burner between uses for dairy or meat because the burner's heat keeps it kashered.

Stovetop

A stainless steel stovetop can be kashered, but a ceramic one (due to porousness) might not be kasherable—consult a rabbi. When cooking, place an appropriate spoon rest or bowl nearby (for dairy or meat, depending on what you are cooking) to hold your hot stirring spoon or spatula. This way, you won't need to set down your hot stirring utensil onto a non-kosher countertop or stovetop, or place a hot dairy stirrer where you previously set down a hot meat spatula.

Oven

You can kasher a non-kosher oven by cleaning off any accumulation of old food (whether burned on or not, it must be removed) and turning up the oven full blast for 40 minutes. You may use the same oven for dairy and meat foods if you always keep either the dairy or meat covered. Consider the oven to be one gender and always cover liquid foods of the opposite gender (dry foods do not require a cover).

Cutting Board

If you only have one cutting board for fruits and vegetables and one knife, you may want to keep them pareve. The main kosher problems with knives and cutting boards happen when cutting a fruit or vegetable with a strong-spicy taste that can transfer the milk or meat status of one utensil or food to another. Such items are garlic, lemon, onion, and sour apples, and sour grapefruits.

EXAMPLES

- Garlic was chopped with meat knife on a dairy cutting board (rendering the garlic, the knife, and cutting board non-kosher), or
- Onions cut with a dairy knife were tossed into a boiling meat pot (rendering the pot and contents non-kosher unless the onions were less than 1/60th the volume of the pot's food).

TABLE'S SET

Glasses, washed, can be used for a dairy or meat meal. You can use the same salt and pepper shakers and clean glasses for dairy and meat; however, it is recommended to use separate salt and pepper shakers since you might have food of one gender on your hands when you use the shakers of the opposite gender. If you typically use a table for serving either dairy or meat, and want to serve the opposite without switching tablecloths, lift the tablecloth and use the original table surface or cover the tablecloth with placemats. If one person wants to eat dairy and another wants to eat meat at the same time on the same table, place a reminder to remind them not to mix the foods (different placemats or tablecloths, physical barrier between the people's

dishes, etc.).

COOKING FOR RELIGIOUS JEWISH FRIENDS

Let's say you don't keep kosher and want to have your kosher-observant friend over. What to serve?

As long as your utensils are clean, you chose kosher foods (see Going Shopping, below) or fresh fruits and vegetables, nothing gets 120° F or above, there is no involvement of anything spicy (charif), and you don't mix dairy and meat (don't offer a kosher bologna sandwich with kosher Swiss cheese!), everything should be OK. Some people will prefer if you serve them using disposable plates, bowls, flatware, and cups; if you are Jewish, you should only serve on disposables. Some will prefer to be in the kitchen during food preparation. Don't be offended; it's hard to keep track of everything to remember even in a kitchen set up for being kosher !

You might want to keep the wrappers or containers from any processed food so that the kosher guest can see what you actually are serving and check for the ingredients or for a kosher supervision symbol.

GOING SHOPPING

Major towns usually have at least one kosher supermarket, but you can find plenty of kosher food in regular supermarkets too. (Even in Salt Lake City, home of the Mormons, a major supermarket chain sells Empire Kosher Chickens!) Here are some tips:

- You may consider all fresh and uncut fruits and vegetables to be kosher. Sharp-flavored fruits and vegetables such as garlic, when cut, must be cut with a kosher utensil.
- Look for a kosher symbol (“hechsher”) on prepared foods (except those foods that do not need a hechsher—see [When Hechsher Needed](#) and [When Hechsher NOT Needed](#)).

For more information on kosher symbols and on what goes into certifying a prepared food as kosher, see this link: <http://kosherquest.org/symbols.php>

WHY EAT ONLY KOSHER?

The basic reason that Jews only eat kosher food is because God commanded us to do so. There are many explanations of how eating kosher benefits us. One approach is that kosher food enhances the spiritual well being of the Jewish people. That holiness is blocked when we eat non-kosher.

While kosher food raises us up spiritually, we raise it up too. When we say the correct blessing before or after we eat, we acknowledge that God is the food's true source. When we use food's resulting health and strength to perform God's commandments, we reunite our food and ourselves with our higher purposes, “rectifying the world.” That brings spiritual and physical blessing down to us and to the world.

You don't want a rapacious spirit? Don't eat predators. You don't want to think like a bottom-feeder? Don't eat scavengers—whether catfish or vultures or pigs—or reptiles, amphibians, or bugs (except kosher grasshoppers!). You don't want to be callous? Don't eat the life-blood of a bird or mammal—or even the bloodspot of an egg. You don't want to be cruel? Make sure the animals you eat were slaughtered quickly and humanely. Don't want to separate yourself from worshipping the Only One? Don't drink wine or grape juice that could have been used for idol worship.

And non-Jews? Shouldn't they keep kosher too?

Non-Jews must keep only one kosher law--aver min ha'chai. This means non-Jews, like Jews, may not cut off and eat the limb of a live animal.

We can come up with numerous explanations for why keeping kosher is healthier, more pleasant, more logical, or more spiritual than eating non-kosher. But the bottom line is, we do it because God says to, we are here to serve Him, and we trust that God wants what is best for us!

KASHRUT: CONCEPTS

KASHRUT: TERMS

Kosher

Kosher means fitting (food that is fitting to eat).

Nifsal MeiAchilat Kelev

Nifsal mei'achilat kelev means not fit for a dog to eat. Since dogs will eat many things that are disgusting, food is considered edible by whether you would serve it to a dog. Toothpaste and lipstick (all year round, not just on *Passover*) are examples of *nifsal*.

Trafe and Neveila

"Trafe" is generically used to mean any food that is not kosher, but it actually means an animal that was "torn" (for instance, by a predator).

Neveila is an animal that was not slaughtered in accordance with Jewish law.

KASHRUT: SUPERVISION/HECHSHER

KASHRUT: FOOD SERVED BY SHOMER SHABBAT JEW

Kashrut: Food Served by Shomer Shabbat Jew

You may trust that the food a *shomer Shabbat* Jew serves is kosher without your needing to check it out. However, if a shomer Shabbat host serves non-kosher food or food without reliable supervision on foods that need supervision, you may not eat it.

NOTE If the host will listen to you if you tell the host that the item is not kosher, you should tell him/her. If the host will not listen, you should not tell him/her.

KASHRUT: FOOD SOLD BY STORES OR CATERERS

Kashrut: Supervision Mark

Supervision is needed during the manufacturing of certain foods to certify they are kosher. These products are usually marked with a supervision mark ("hechsher") of the certifying body.

Kashrut: Reliability of Supervision

Ask a reliable source when you need to determine whether a particular kosher-supervision body is reliable. You do not need to do any further research.

When Hechsher NOT Needed

Processed Food without Hechsher: Is It Kosher?

If a processed food does not have supervision/hashgacha, here are some issues to consider:

- Ingredients;
- Utensils/processing equipment;
- Bishul akum/"prestigious" foods that require Jewish involvement in the cooking;
- Heating system (recirculated steam?);
- Heter for milk without being supervised - which conditions and countries can be relied on;
- Non-food ingredients (lubricants, preservatives, emulsifiers...);
- Reliability of the producer;
- Is the non-kosher ingredient *batel*/nullified?
 - ownership (Is the food's producer or owner Jewish?)

- intended consumer (Is the food being produced specifically for Jews, or is it for the public and Jews are some of the customers)?
- Was the non-kosher substance added intentionally?
- Does the non-kosher substance have flavor?
- Was the non-kosher substance added for flavor?

A hechsher/kosher supervision is not needed on:

- Beer made in the US (and sometimes in other countries).
- Nuts (dry roasted) without additives.
- Olives--assumed to be kosher unless mixed with ingredients that may be non-kosher, such as:
 - Vinegar (sometimes made from grapes).
 - Non-kosher chemical preservatives (in commercially sold olives).

NOTE In open markets in which olives are sold in bulk, you may eat olives after checking the ingredients.

- Olive oil (extra virgin).
- Pure fruit juice NOT made from concentrate (such as orange or pineapple juice) does not normally require a hechsher (except for grape juice, which always requires a hechsher!).

NOTE Juices from concentrate might have kashrut problems due to the vats in which they are cooked or pasteurized. If you can verify how the juice was processed and that there are no kashrut problems, you may use the juice without a hechsher. There may also be problems with juice made from fruit or vegetables which were grown in Eretz Yisrael, due to orla, shmitta, teruma and maaser.

- Scotch whiskey--even where it might have been aged in sherry casks.

REASON Any sherry would be nullified as less than 1/6th.

NOTE Other types of whiskey may not be kosher because:

- Glycerine may have been added;
- The whiskey may have been owned by a Jew during *Passover* in a previous year; or
- Milk, or alcohol derived from milk, might have been added.

- Sugar (confectioner's) needs kosher supervision only for *Passover*. Regular sugar never needs kosher supervision (currently).
- Unprocessed foods such as
 - Raw fruits and vegetables (but might need to be checked for insects), and
 - Water, but some unfiltered tap water might have tiny creatures in it which make the water non-kosher.

NOTE Several websites list additional foods that do not need supervision to be trusted as kosher.

When Hechsher Needed

A hechsher/kosher supervision is needed on:

- Seltzer with natural flavor.

- Grape seed extract and grape seed oil.

KASHRUT: TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER

INTRODUCTION TO TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER

Introduction to Taste (Ta'am) Transfer

Gender/*Kashrut* Status Transfer

Foods and kitchenware (pots, pans, dishes, utensils, and containers) can absorb taste from each other and so adopt a new gender or *kosher* status. They can change from:

- *Kosher* to non-*kosher*,
- *Kosher pareve* (neutral) to *kosher dairy* or *kosher* meat, or
- *Kosher Passover* to *kosher* (or non-*kosher*) non-*Passover*.

NOTE You can sometimes change a utensil/container to *kosher-pareve* (see *Kashering*, below), but you cannot change a

- Gendered food to neutral-*pareve*, or
- Non-*kosher* food to *kosher*.

Taste Absorption

Taste gets absorbed in three ways: Heat, pressure, and soaking.

Heat

To absorb taste, and therefore gender or *kashrut* status, through heat, a food or utensil must be heated to 120° F or more while:

- Steamed with a *halachically* “liquid” food, or
- In wet physical contact with the food or utensil.

EXAMPLES

- Two hot pans, which are clean on their outsides, only transfer taste from one to the other if they are wet on the outside and are touching each other.
- A hot utensil placed onto a counter only transfers gender to the countertop if there is liquid or food at the point of contact.

NOTE All liquids plays a major role in facilitating taste transfer.

NOTE Taste, gender, or non-*kosher* status do not travel upstream into the utensil that food is being poured from. Even if you pour hot liquid (*pareve* or of one gender) from a pot onto a non-*kosher* or opposite gender food, the genders are not transferred back through the stream of liquid to the pot, even if any or all of the elements are more than 120 degrees.

SITUATION You pour hot liquid from some *pareve* vegetables into a non-*kosher* sink that had hot in it within 24 hours. There are dishes or utensils in the sink.

STATUS The dishes do not change gender unless the hot liquid fills up from the sink onto them. If so, the dishes or utensils become non-*kosher*. But no gender change occurs through the stream of liquid back to the pot of vegetables.

NOTE If the non-kosher sink had not had anything hot (120 degrees or above) in it for at least 24 hours, no change of gender or kosher status happens at all.

NOTE On Passover, gender and chametz status DO get transferred through a stream of hot liquid.

Pressure

To absorb taste, and therefore gender or kashrut status, through pressure or short-term soaking, one of the items must be spicy/charif.

Soaking

To absorb taste, and therefore gender or kashrut status, through long-term soaking, the food must soak for specific amounts of time.

NOTE If the food or utensil is not hot (120° F or more), is not spicy/charif, and is not soaking for a long time, there is no gender or kashrut-status transfer.

EXAMPLES

You may use a non-kosher utensil for any cold food of the opposite gender, so you may:

- Eat cold (kosher) cereal out of a meat or non-kosher bowl, or
- Use a meat or non-kosher spoon to eat kosher ice cream.

NOTE Even though these are permissible, they may not be done regularly but only on an ad hoc basis.

Food and Kitchenware: Which Influences What

Hot or Spicy/Charif Foods

With hot (more than 120° F) or spicy/charif foods:

Foods and utensils/containers transfer taste to each other.

Cold or Non-Spicy Foods that Soak

With cold (less than 120° F) or non-spicy/charif foods that soak:

- Foods do not transfer taste to utensils/containers;
- Utensils/containers do NOT transfer taste to foods.

NOTE No substances (not salt, or any food...) absorb gender from the open air.

The 24-Hour Rule: Eino ben Yomo

Torah Law: Reverts to Kosher-Pareve

By Torah law, a utensil/container always reverts to kosher-pareve after 24 hours (since the taste of any absorbed food becomes ruined with time).

Rabbinic Law: Must Be Kashed

However, by rabbinic law, the utensil/container must be kashed before using.

NOTE Even by Torah law, a hot or spicy/charif food can revive the milk-meat or non-kosher status of another utensil/container (see below) even after 24 hours.

Accidentally or Intentionally

Food Hot and Accidentally Placed; Utensil Not Hot for 24 Hours

Kosher food hotter than 120° F (49° C) remains kosher if accidentally placed into a non-kosher, clean utensil that has not been heated to 120° F or more for at least 24 hours.

REASON After 24 hours, b'di'avad, the utensil has reverted to being kosher-pareve.

NOTE If the utensil had been “used” (heated to 120° F or more) within the preceding 24 hours, the hot food that accidentally entered the utensil would be non-kosher. Ask a rabbi for possible exceptions.

Food Hot and Intentionally Placed

If the hot food had been put into the utensil intentionally, the food would not be kosher.

REASON Chazal made a rule (takana) that if you intentionally place food of one gender into a utensil of the opposite gender and heat it to 120° F or more, the food is not kosher.

TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER: HEAT

TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER: HEAT: WHAT IS HOT (YAD SOLEDET BO)

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Heat: What Is Hot (Yad Soledet Bo)

“Hot” is 120° F (49° C). This is the temperature at which an average person cannot hold his/her hand in a food for more than a few seconds (yad soledet bo).

TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER: SPICY/CHARIF

TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER: SPICY/CHARIF: WHAT IS SPICY/CHARIF

Which Produce Is Spicy/Charif

Spicy/charif fruits and vegetables include:

- (Sour) Apples
- Chives
- Garlic
- (Tart) Grapefruits
- Horseradish
- Lemons
- Limes
- Mustard (fresh or prepared)
- Onions
- (Sour) Pineapples
- Radishes
- Scallions.

Judge the tartness of food by a sour apple: if the food you are judging is less tart, it is not spicy/charif.

NOTE Dried chives, onions, and garlic might be spicy/charif, depending on the individual product.

TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER: SPICY/CHARIF: FACTORS THAT AFFECT SPICY/CHARIF

TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER: SPICY/CHARIF: MIXTURES

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Mixtures: Diluted with Oil

Spicy/charif will not pick up gender if the spicy/charif taste is diluted by oil and it no longer tastes spicy/charif. Mixtures with a strong taste, containing pepper, lemon juice, garlic, etc., will pick up the gender of their container if in the container long enough to become cooked.

EXAMPLE Garlic oil will pick up gender of its container if in the container long enough to become cooked.

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Mixtures: Batel BaShishim

Spicy/charif food may become nullifiable (batel ba'shishim), but consult a rabbi about the exceptions and details.

TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER: SPICY/CHARIF: HEAT

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: When Cooked

Some spicy/charif foods, such as onions, lose their spicy/charif nature when cooked.

TASTE (TA'AM) TRANSFER: SPICY/CHARIF: PRESSURE

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Pressure: What Acquires Taste

Pressure can transfer taste from spicy/charif food to utensil/container or vice versa.

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Pressure: Types of Pressure

Here are some types of pressure that transfer taste from spicy/charif food to utensil/container or vice versa.

When a spicy/charif food is:

- Cut with a knife,
- Crushed,
- Squashed by a spoon or fork,
- Squeezed in a garlic press, or
- Juiced in a juicer (including in a plastic orange juicer with plastic done that fits under the half-orange and spins slowly back and forth electrically).

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Pressure: Food Absorbing Taste of Utensils

When a spicy/charif food takes on the gender of the cutting/squeezing utensil:

- You may not cook or eat that food with food of the opposite gender.
- However, you MAY eat the opposite-gender food immediately after eating the gendered spicy food without waiting.

SITUATION An onion is cut with a meat knife, on a meat cutting board:

- The onion acquires meat status.
- You MAY NOT later cut this onion with a dairy knife or on a dairy cutting board. (If you do, the onion, the dairy knife, and the dairy cutting board will all become non-kosher.)

EXCEPTION If the knife and cutting board had not been used (even for cold items) for at least 24 hours, consult a rabbi.

EXCEPTION If you can sand off the surface to below the level of any knife cuts, the board might be kosher. Consult a rabbi.

- You MAY NOT cook this onion in a dairy utensil.
- You MAY NOT eat this onion with dairy food.
- You MAY eat dairy immediately after eating this onion (as long as there is no actual meat mixed into the onion).

- You MAY cook this onion with fish (even though you may not cook meat and fish together) but the fish may not be eaten with dairy food.

SITUATION You cut an onion with a meat knife and fry it in a neutral/pareve pan.

STATUS The pan becomes meat, but consult a rabbi for possible leniencies.

SITUATION You cut an onion with a meat knife and fry it in a dairy pan.

STATUS The pan becomes non-kosher. If you cook a neutral/pareve food in that pan after 24 hours have passed since the onion was cooked in it, and you ate the pareve food with milk, it is OK b'di'avad but you may not do that l'chatchila.

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Non-Kosher Utensils

A non-kosher fork, knife, or spoon may not be used to eat or cut spicy/charif food, such as tart pineapple. (If the food is not spicy or hot, you may use a clean, non-kosher utensil on an ad hoc basis.)

EXAMPLE A non-kosher implement (fork, knife) that is stuck into a spicy/charif or salty food, such as a spicy pickle, will make that pickle non-kosher immediately.

Suggestion Cut onion, garlic, and other spicy/charif foods on a pareve board and with a pareve knife.

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Pressure: Utensils Absorbing Taste of Food

If you use a neutral/pareve utensil with pressure on a gendered spicy/charif food, you may not use this utensil with food of the opposite gender unless they are all clean and less than 120° F (49° C) and even then, only on an ad hoc basis, not as a regular practice.

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Pressure: Blade Sharpness

When cutting a spicy/charif food, pressure (not the physical sharpness of the knife's edge) transfers taste.

NOTE There is more likely to be higher pressure when cutting with a dull knife rather than with a sharp one!

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Pressure: Forgotten Gender

SITUATION You forgot the gender of a cut onion in the refrigerator.

WHAT TO DO

- You may eat the onion with pareve food.
- You may NOT use the onion with dairy or with meat.

Taste (Ta'am) Transfer: Spicy/Charif: Sitting in Container

Cold, spicy/charif, solid food (with no liquid) does not transfer gender UNLESS it was under pressure, so simply sitting in an opposite-gender or non-kosher container does not have any effect.

NOTE Cold, spicy/charif, liquid food sitting in an opposite-gender or non-kosher container is kosher only if it sat less time than needed to become cooked.

EXAMPLE You ate cold (less than 120° F, or 49° C) spicy/charif food of one gender on a cold plate of the opposite gender:

Liquid Food

If the cold spicy/charif food is liquid but it is in contact with a utensil of the opposite gender for less time than it takes to boil, it would be kosher but, again, you should only do this ad hoc.

Also see Spicy/Charif Soaking: Long Enough To Be Cooked: Food and Utensil.

TASTE TRANSFER: SOAKING

NON-SPICY/NON-CHARIF SOAKING: 24 HOURS OR MORE

Non-Spicy/Non-Charif Soaking: Transfers Taste to Utensil/Container

A non-spicy/non-charif liquid or food with any liquid (enough to pour, but that may be even one drop) that sits for 24 hours or more will transfer gender or non-kosher status to its container.

SITUATION Dairy or meat liquid-containing food is in pareve container.

STATUS Container will become dairy or meat (regardless of intention).

EXAMPLES

- Milk sitting in a pareve mug for 24 hours or more would make the pareve mug dairy.
- Chicken soup sitting in a pareve stoneware bowl for 24 hours or more would make the bowl meat.

NOTE This does not apply to any type of cold glass container and the food and the container remain kosher.

Non-Spicy/Non-Charif Non-Kosher Soaking: Makes Kosher Food Non-Kosher

Any non-spicy/non-charif, non-kosher food that soaks (in water or any other liquid) with kosher food for 24 hours or more will render the kosher food non-kosher.

SPICY/CHARIF SOAKING: LONG ENOUGH TO BE COOKED

Spicy/Charif Soaking: Long Enough To Be Cooked: Food and Utensil

Food soaked in brine, vinegar, or any spicy liquid for long enough to be cooked if heated on a burner or in an oven will absorb or transfer gender or non-kosher status from/to any utensil used with it.

SITUATION Neutral/pareve food in brine, such as spicy pickles or spicy olives, sits in a container for long enough to become cooked.

STATUS

- If the container is dairy, the food will become dairy.
- If the container is meat, the food will become meat.

NOTE You may not eat this formerly pareve food with food of the opposite gender.

SITUATION A pickle with spicy/charif pickle juice is placed into a dairy utensil/container (even if unused) for long enough to become cooked.

STATUS The pickle will become dairy and may not be eaten with meat.

NOTE This example does not apply to any type of glass container.

NOTE Food soaked in brine by a non-Jew does not become subject to bishul akum.

NOTE Even if the utensil had not been used for more than 24 hours, a spicy/charif food will “revive” the gendered or non-kosher taste in the utensil. The utensil will then make the food gendered or non-kosher. Consult a rabbi for possible exceptions.

FOOD NULLIFICATION

FOOD NULLIFICATION: FOODS

INTRODUCTION TO FOOD NULLIFICATION: FOODS

Introduction to Food Nullification: Foods

Categories of *Batel*/Nullification

Categories of nullification of non-kosher ingredients:

- Never *batel*.
- *Batel b'shishim* when the non-kosher substance is less than 1/60th of the total volume of the food.
- *Batel barov* when the non-kosher substance is less than 1/2 of the total volume of the food.

When Can a Non-Kosher Substance Be Nullified in a Mixture?

Whether a non-kosher substance can be nullified in a mixture depends on 3 factors:

- Whether the owner is Jewish;
- Whether the intended eaters are Jewish; and
- Whether the non-kosher substance was added intentionally as non-kosher.

If the answers to all three cases is yes, the food is never *batel*.

Food “Nullified in 60 Parts”:

Accidentally Adding Non-Kosher to Kosher Food

Batel ba'shishim, or “nullified in 60 (parts)” is food that remains kosher despite the accidental addition of 1/60th or less in volume of non-kosher or restricted food, since at this proportion the non-kosher food's taste becomes negligible.

Taste: If the non-kosher substance:

- Has no taste, it is batel barov.
- Has a taste but the eater cannot taste it, it is *batel b'shishim* (1/60th).

In all cases, if a substance is added for flavor and can be tasted in the final food, it will never be *batel*, regardless of whether it was added intentionally (since you can taste it, by definition it was not nullified) and regardless of whether the food was owned by a Jew or not. There are some exceptions. Consult a knowledgeable rabbi.

Some foods do impart their flavor even if less than 1/60th of the total volume of the food and these do not ever become nullified based on the 1/60th rule. Otherwise, the non-kosher food must be:

- Less than 1/60 of the volume of the whole.
- Mixed in and not lying on the surface.
- Not intentionally added by a Jew.
- Not listed in “Foods that Never Become Nullified” (below).

Min b'Mino

Substances are only *batel* when they are similar (“*min b'mino*”). The substances must be the same type, have the same taste, and have the same appearance (the eater cannot identify them as being different).

NOTE In such situations, it would be batel barov from Torah (d'oraita) but *batel b'shishim* (1/60th) by rabbinical order (d'rabanan).

EXAMPLE A piece of non-kosher meat is mixed in with kosher meat of more than 60 times the volume of the non-kosher piece. The non-kosher meat is *batel b'shishim*.

NOTE As a practical matter, this can only apply to ground meat.

COUNTER EXAMPLE Non-kosher chocolate syrup or a non-kosher flavored extract mixed into milk or other liquid or onto a solid would NOT be *min b'mino* even though both are liquids, since their appearances, flavors, and substance are different.

Too Thin To Make Non-Kosher

The thinnest layer of non-kosher fish oil, vegetable oil, soap, or any other very thin substance on food that does *not* make the food non-kosher is whatever amount cannot be detected by the five human senses.

Foods that Never Become Nullified

Here are some foods that NEVER become nullified by being less than 1/60th of the main food:

- **Yayin Nesech**

Wine that has been offered to a pagan god or used for idolatrous purposes (yayin nesech) is forbidden in any amount!

- **Mixtures of Milk and Meat**

Mixtures of milk and meat are not ever *batel* if they were cooked together.

EXCEPTION *Batel* in 1/60th if:

- You cannot identify either substance AND
- The mixture is liquid in liquid or solid mixed with solid.

Examples: Milk from a pig mixed with milk from a cow; ground kosher meat mixed in with ground non-kosher meat.

- **Chametz**

Any chametz in any amount that became mixed with kosher-for-Passover food DURING Passover is not nullified in 60 parts (batel ba'shishim).

NOTE Chametz may be nullified if:

- Less than 1/60th of the volume of kosher-for-Passover food, AND
- Mixed with the kosher-for-Passover food BEFORE the holiday began, AND
- Liquid (solid chametz that got mixed up with kosher-for-Passover food is never nullified).

- **Jew Intentionally Adding Non-Kosher Item**

If the non-kosher substance was added by anyone (Jew or non-Jew) unintentionally (he did not realize it was not kosher), the food is kosher/batel b'shishim (1/60th).

If a Jew intentionally adds a non-kosher ingredient to a food, that ingredient never becomes nullified, even if the ingredient is less than 1/60th of the total volume of food and even if the ingredient has no flavor. Note that there are exceptions when non-Jews do the action, especially when a non-Jew adds a non-kosher ingredient or adds stam yainam wine to other liquids.

- **Unflavored or Flavored Non-Kosher Ingredient**

Non-Jew Adds Unflavored Non-Kosher Ingredient

SITUATION A non-Jew adds a non-kosher ingredient that has no flavor.

STATUS The non-kosher ingredient is nullified if less than 1/2 of the total (it does not need to be less than 1/60th--batel ba'shishim).

Non-Jew Adds Flavored Non-Kosher Ingredient

SITUATION A non-Jew adds a flavored non-kosher ingredient even if to impart flavor.

STATUS The non-kosher ingredient is nullified in 60 parts (batel ba'shishim).

NOTE If a Jew had told the non-Jew to add the ingredient, the mixture is non-kosher, just as if a Jew had added it.

- **Stam Yeinam Added to Water**

SITUATION A non-Jew adds—to water--stam yeinam (uncooked/non-mevushal) wine that has been handled while open by anyone other than a shomer-Shabbat Jew.

STATUS As long as the wine is less than 1/7th of the final volume, the mixture is kosher.

NOTE For mixtures with liquids other than water, consult a rabbi.

- **Essential Additives**

Any additive that is essential to making a food (such as rennet for making cheese, or yeast for baking bread) is NEVER nullifiable.

- **Food Bought by the Piece**

An item that is always bought by the piece (davar she'beminyan) such that even one piece has importance—such as a mango—is never nullifiable.

SITUATION One mango grown in Eretz Yisrael during a shmita year got mixed in with many mangoes that were grown outside of Eretz Yisrael.

STATUS Batel ba'shishim does not apply and you must apply the laws of shmita to all of them.

NOTE If kosher and non-kosher food items have become mixed up, it is sometimes permissible to eat from the batch of food if most of the items are kosher (batel ba'rov), but a rabbi must be consulted.

- **Important Food**

SITUATION A food with which you could honor a guest (chaticha ha'reuya l'hitchabed), such as 1/4 of a non-kosher chicken or a serving of non-kosher chopped liver, was mixed up with kosher servings—even if more than 60 kosher servings.

STATUS None may be eaten.

- **Permissible in Future (Davar SheYesh Lo Matirin)**

An item that would become permissible in the future (davar she'yesh lo matirin) cannot become nullified by being mixed in with currently permissible foods.

EXAMPLES

- An egg laid on Shabbat will not be nullified by being mixed with eggs laid before Shabbat.
- Matza made of chadash flour will not be nullified by being mixed with matza made from yashan flour.

- **Whole Insects**

An entire insect (briya--whole creature) never becomes nullified even if mixed with other kosher food.

NOTE An insect that is not whole MAY be nullified.

EXAMPLES

- Frozen or raw chopped or ground vegetables or spices may be considered kosher even without supervision.

REASON We assume that any bugs in the food would have gotten partly chopped or disintegrated and therefore nullified.

- If a recipe calls for chopping or grinding herbs or vegetables, you may do so without first checking them for bugs.

NOTE However, if you know there are bugs, you may not chop the food for the purpose of making the bugs nullified: You must still check for insects before cooking or eating the food and if you see any bugs, you must remove them.

NOTE You may not eat bugs even if they have been dead for more than 30 days (some people erroneously permit this).

FOOD NULLIFICATION: UTENSILS (KASHERING)

INTRODUCTION TO FOOD NULLIFICATION: UTENSILS (KASHERING)

Introduction to Food Nullification: Utensils (Kashering)

Food Nullification in Utensils: Torah-Law and Rabbinic Decree

By Torah law (d'oraita), any clean utensil, countertop, etc., automatically reverts to neutral/pareve and kosher after not being heated to more than 120° F (49° C) for 24 hours.

But by rabbinic decree, utensils do not automatically become neutral/pareve even after 24 hours and must be kashered by heat (libun—direct heat; hag'ala—boiling in a pot; or eruy rotchim—pouring boiling water over item) or, if some types of glass, by soaking in water (meluy v'eruy).

Changing Gender of Utensil

You may kasher a pot or cooking/eating utensil from:

- Non-kosher to kosher, or
- Year-round use (chametz) to kosher for Passover.

You may not intentionally kasher a utensil in order to change it from dairy to meat or meat to dairy; you must first kasher it from accidentally (or intentionally) non-kosher to kosher/pareve, or from non-Passover to Passover/pareve. You may then use it for either dairy or meat.

Once you have used it for that gender, the item retains that gender (unless you re-kasher it for Passover or you make it non-kosher first, then kasher it to neutral/pareve).

But if you accidentally heat meat with a dairy utensil or vice versa, you may kasher it back to its original gender by any one of the kashering methods, depending on how it became non-kosher.

Items/Materials that Can Be Kashered

The following materials can be kashered:

- Glass, including Corelle, if not used directly on the stove or oven. Glass does not change gender or other kosher status unless heated on a flame or in the oven. Unless it is heated in this way, glass does not ever need to be kashered (except for Passover) (see Meluy v'Erui, below). Glass, including Corelle, if not used directly on the stove or oven. Glass does not change gender or other kosher status unless heated on a flame or in the oven. Unless it is heated in this way, glass does not ever need to be kashered (except for Passover) (see Meluy v'Erui, below). Glass, including Corelle, if not used directly on the stove or oven. Glass does not change gender or other kosher status unless heated on a flame or in the oven. Unless it is heated in this way, glass does not ever need to be kashered (except for Passover) (see Meluy v'Erui, below).

NOTE Glass used directly on fire or in the oven (*kli rishon*) cannot be kashered except by heating in a kiln.

- Granite (not granite composite)
- Marble
- Wood, if smooth (see notes on Eruy Rotchim, below)
- Metal, including stainless steel, cast iron, and aluminum.

NOTE While metal can be kashered if thoroughly cleaned, welded handles and other difficult-to-clean parts may render a metal utensil not *kasherable*. You might be able to use libun kal on the problematic area and still use hag'ala for the remainder of the utensil.

Items/Materials that Cannot Be Kashered

- China
- Corian
- Corningware
- Crockpot
- Formica
- Glass that has been used directly (*kli rishon*) on a stove or in an oven; however it can be kashered in a kiln
- Granite (composite)
- Knives with Plastic Handles (knives with wooden handles may be kashered if there are no cracks in the wood and if the rivets do not have spaces that catch food and prevent you from cleaning it completely)
- Mixer-there might be exceptions. Consult a rabbi.
- Plastic
- Porcelain (Enamel)
- Pyrex (if used directly on stove or in oven--*kli rishon*)
- Rubber (synthetic)
- Silestone
- Silverstone
- Stoneware
- Teflon
- Toaster/Toaster Oven
- Waffle Iron.

Pot Lid Handle

Kashering

The handle on a pot lid does not need to be kashered for normal use during the year.

REASON It does not normally get hot.

Cleaning

However, the pot lid handle must be removed and the lid cleaned where the handle attaches, if possible.

NOTE If the gap between the handle and lid cannot be completely cleaned, you may not use that lid for *Passover* and you normally may not kasher it if it becomes non-kosher. If the lid handle cannot be removed, consult a rabbi.

Pot or Pan Handle

A plastic handle that gets hot, especially if it is over a flame on a burner, may not be kashered. If the handle becomes non-kosher, it must be replaced. If a plastic handle connects directly to the metal of the utensil, consult a rabbi about what to do.

Food Nullification: Heat-Kashering

Three Methods of Heat-Kashering

Heat-Kashering is of three types: Libun, Hag'ala, and Eruy Rotchim.

1. Libun (Direct Heat)

How It Works Burns up any residual food taste

What It Works On

Complete Burning (Libun gamur --heating metal red-hot). Stoves, ovens, grills, grates, baking pans, roasting pans, etc., that were ever used with direct heat MUST be kashered by heating to red-hot (libun gamur). Libun gamur works on anything except pottery (this is a rabbinic injunction since you might not do a good job).

Light Burning (Libun kal--heating metal hot enough to burn paper on the side opposite the one being heated). You may use this method whenever there is a question of whether an item needs libun. For example, food may have overflowed onto gas-stove grates. Due to safek, we use libun kal-- gas-stove grates do not need libun gamur.

Process

Libun Gamur The entire metal substance of a utensil, oven, or other cooking surface becomes red hot, but the item does not need to be red hot all at the same time: it may be heated sequentially as long as the entire surface gets red hot at some time. Libun gamur can be done by blowtorch or by placing the item in a kiln.

Libun Kal

- Direct a flame, such as a blowtorch, onto the inside of a pot. Pot is hot enough when a piece of paper that touches the outside of the utensil burns (it does not need to burst into flame, just to smolder), or
- Put the pot into the oven at 500 ° F for 40 minutes. (First, remove any non-metal handles; they will need to be kashered separately or not used.)

Waiting Time You do not need to wait at all before kashering by libun--and certainly not the 24 hours needed before kashering by hag'ala.

2. Hag'ala (Boiling)

How It Works

Any non-kosher or meat or milk taste is removed from the walls of the utensil during boiling (hag'ala). You may kasher a pot or utensil by either:

- **Boil Method** Boiling water within the pot to be kashered, and making the boiling water overflow, or
- **Dip Method** Dipping a smaller pot or utensil to be kashered into a larger pot of boiling water.

What It Works On

Pots and utensils that are used with liquids (meaning, liquid all the time) can be kashered by being immersed in boiling water (hag'ala). The utensil being kashered by hag'ala must be made of a material that can release flavor, such as metal or wood. Materials that cannot be kashered (except in a glazing furnace!) are pottery--and, by extension--china, enamel, and similar materials.

NOTE The Boil Method only helps if the utensil became non-kosher due to food inside the utensil. If the non-kosher food was on the outside of the utensil, you may only kasher it by the Dip Method or by libun.kal.

NOTE The boiling water must reach at least the same temperature during kashering as when the utensil became non-kosher.

NOTE Once the *Passover* holiday has begun, chametz cannot be nullified with hot water/hag'ala (only libun can kasher something during *Passover*). You may only kasher during chol hamoed, not during the first and last (festival) days.

NOTE Whenever hag'ala is effective, you may instead use libun.kal, since libun.kal is a stronger form of kashering. Sometimes you may find it more convenient to use libun.kal to kasher an item that needs only hag'ala.

SITUATION A metal pot of the opposite gender went through a dishwasher cleaning.

WHAT TO DO Even though the pot only needs hag'ala, you may instead kasher it by libun.kal by putting it in an oven at 500° F (for this application).

Process

The Boil Method can be used as:

- Batel BaShishim ("nullifying in 60 times" the volume), or
- Batel BaRov ("nullifying in a majority"--that is, boiling the item in water that is more than twice the volume but less than 60 times the volume of the non-kosher element).

NOTE If a pot is hot (over 120° F, or 49° C) when only part of the pot becomes non-kosher, the entire pot is non-kosher and its volume is figured into the volume of water needed for boiling.

NOTE For whether the lid becomes non-kosher, consult a rabbi.

In Batel BaShishim, by the actual halacha, you do not need to wait at all before kashering. But the custom is to wait 24 hours--except in extreme circumstances--because it is too hard to figure out 1/60th. In Batel BaRov, you must wait 24 hours.

The Boil Method: Batel BaShishim

Using batel ba'shishim for the Boil Method is not customary. You may use it for emergencies ONLY; ask a rabbi in this case.

EXAMPLE To kasher a spoon with the batel ba'shishim type of hag'ala, immerse the spoon in boiling water of a volume at least the volume of 60 spoons. No waiting is needed before kashering with this method.

The Boil Method: Batel BaRov

To kasher a pot or utensil by hag'ala using batel ba'rov:

- Clean the pot or utensil well.
- Wait 24 hours after the pot or utensil was last heated to more than 120° F, or 49° C (such as when it was cleaned).

REASON Waiting 24 hours allows the taste to become "ruined" and then to be nullified (batel) in a majority (ba'rov) of boiling water.

NOTE During the 24-hour waiting period, you could still “use” the utensil for watering plants, etc., as long as the water remains under 120° F.

- Fill the pot to the brim with water.
- Bring the water in the pot to a boil.
- Cause the water to overflow the entire rim of the pot by:
 - Plunging something hot into the pot (any item that will not cause the water to stop boiling is OK), or
 - Tilting the pot to slosh water over all of the pot's rim.
- Cool off the pot by dipping it in cold water or putting it under cold running water.

NOTE If you did not put the utensil under cold water, it is still kosher b'di'avad.

The Dip Method

To kasher a smaller pot or any other *kasherable* cooking or eating utensil by hag'ala, you may dip the pot or utensil into a large, kashered pot containing boiling water.

- If the pot in which you are kashering the items had been heated to 120° F (49° C), with food of that gender in the pot, or more within the previous 24 hours, the items you are kashering will assume the gender of the pot.
- If the pot in which you are kashering the items had NOT been heated to 120° F or more for at least 24 hours, any items that are kashered in it will become kosher and pareve.

NOTE When kashering a utensil by hagala, you may dip it into boiling water one part at a time; that is, you do not need to immerse the entire utensil under the water all at the same time. This is different from doing tevila since for tevila, the entire utensil must be immersed completely.

Calculating 24-Hour Waiting Time

Once a pot has become non-kosher due to any reason, if it gets heated to 120° F (49° C) or more with any food or liquid in it, you must wait another 24 hours from the latest heating before you can kasher it, since everything inside the utensil becomes non-kosher again.

Calculating Volume

If only part of a pot becomes non-kosher, as long as the pot was hot (over 120° F, or 49° C), the entire pot becomes non-kosher and its volume gets figured into the volume of water needed for boiling.

3. Eruy Rotchim (Hot-Water Pour)

Process Pouring hot water over, for example, a sink to kasher it.

Waiting Time You must wait 24 hours before kashering by eruy rotchim.

NOTE Only items that became non-kosher by being poured onto, may be kashered via eruy rotchim.

NOTE Smooth-surfaced wood may be kashered through eruy rotchim (pouring boiling water) but ONLY if it became non-kosher through eruy. If it became non-kosher by being cooked or heated in an oven, it may not be kashered via eruy rotchim.

NOTE A wooden cutting board may be kashered if the board is smooth. If it has cracks and crevices, it can be sanded until smooth and then kashered.

Food Nullification: *Meluy V'Eruy*

Meluy V'Eruy To Kasher Glass

Halachically, “glass” includes Arcoroc, Corelle, crystal, Duralex, and Pyrex.

NOTE In pre-war Europe, where glass was expensive and hard to obtain, it was customary to kasher drinking glasses, especially for *Passover*, by soaking the glasses for three 24-hour periods (*meluy v'eruy*), as follows:

Step 1: Submerge glasses in cold water for 24 hours.

Step 2: Empty water, refill, and submerge glasses again.

Step 3: Repeat Step 2.

NOTE If any of these materials were heated directly on a flame or other heat source, they cannot be kashered by *meluy v'eruy*!

NON-JEWISH COOKS (BISHUL AKUM)

Bishul Akum: Prestigious Cooked Foods

Do not eat *bishul akum* (foods cooked by non-Jews under these conditions):

- Prestigious, which a king or president of a country might serve at a state meal. (Foods that would not be served at a wedding are certainly not subject to *bishul akum*.)
- Foods cooked in a regular stove/oven.
- Foods that are only eaten cooked, such as:
 - Asparagus;
 - Eggs;
 - Some types of fish (not those eaten raw); and
 - Meat.

Foods that are sometimes or usually eaten raw are not subject to *bishul akum*, but they must be edible raw, without any further preparation.

EXAMPLES

- All fruits.
- Many vegetables.

NOTE

For a food to be considered edible raw, more than 10% of the population near where you are must eat that food raw. Even if that food is eaten raw by most of the people in another country, you may only consider the people in your own locale.

EXAMPLE

Even though Japanese eat a lot of fish raw, only Jews living in Japan may consider raw fish free of *bishul akum* restrictions.

NOTE

Ceviche, cold smoked salmon (lox), and foods that have been marinated or soaked in brine, vinegar, or other liquids are not considered to have been cooked and are permitted to be eaten even if wholly prepared by non-Jews, but not if the foods are cooked.

For a Jew to eat prestigious, “only-eaten-cooked” foods cooked by non-Jews, a Jew must do some part of the cooking—such as lighting a flame or participating in the cooking.

NOTE *Bishul akum* laws do not apply to foods cooked in a microwave oven or induction coil cooker.

KASHRUT: ANIMALS

KASHRUT: ANIMALS: CONCEPTS: MASORET

Beheimot Do Not Need Masoret

Beheimot (4-legged kosher animals) do not need masoret (tradition passed from previous generations that something was kosher) to be identified as kosher; they just need to have split hooves and to chew their cud.

Fowl Must Have Masoret

Fowl must have masoret to be identified as kosher.

KASHRUT: DAIRY

KASHRUT: COMMON MILK

Kashrut: Dairy: Common Milk (Chalav Stam)

For milk to be kosher, it must come from a kosher animal. You may use common milk (milk sold in conventional food stores without any kosher supervision) in the US.

REASON The US government enforces laws that permit only cow's milk to be sold as common milk.

NOTE If a country does not have such laws or does not strictly enforce them, you may not rely on that leniency and may only use milk supervised by Jews (chalav Yisrael).

NOTE Some people drink only chalav Yisrael milk even in the US.

Kashrut: Dairy: Chalav Yisrael

Chalav Yisrael is milk or milk products for which the milking was supervised by a religious Jew. Chalav Yisrael applies to milk, cream, and milk solids/dried milk. The only milk derivatives that are not subject to restrictions of chalav Yisrael are whey and cheese. But they must still be kosher.

NOTE Cooking kosher, non-chalav Yisrael dairy foods does not render the utensil non-kosher, even for someone who only eats chalav Yisrael.

KASHRUT: CHEESE

Kashrut: Cheese: Jew at Time of Rennet

Cheese/Gvinas Akum

Gvinas akum is cheese which has been made by non-Jews and by rabbinical prohibition is only kosher if a Jew was present during the cheese making OR if a Jew put the rennet into the milk.

NOTE If a Jew owns the milk before processing, a non-Jew can add kosher rennet as long as it can be confirmed that the rennet is kosher, even if no Jew is present during the cheese making.

Origin of the Problem: Chazal were concerned that the rennet used to make cheese might be from a non-kosher animal or even from a kosher animal that had not been slaughtered properly. Shulchan aruch says that even cheese curdled by kosher plant enzymes (such as fig branch sap or substances from certain thistle plants) are subject to the takana.

NOTE *Gvinas Akum* is not related to chalav yisrael; they are separate halachot.

NOTE Even rennet-less cheeses need hashgacha (religious supervision), but some non-hard cheeses may be an exception. Ask a rabbi.

Kashrut: Cheese: Microbial Enzymes

Cheese that is made using even microbial enzymes requires kosher supervision.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat

See Kashrut: Dairy/Meat Combinations.

KASHRUT: EGGS

Kashrut: Eggs: Blood Spots: Unfertilized/Fertilized

Blood spots even from unfertilized eggs may not be eaten; the custom is not to eat that entire egg. Blood spots in fertilized eggs render the entire egg non-kosher.

Kashrut: Eggs: Few or Even Numbers

You may eat even numbers of food items.

NOTE Some people don't cook one or two eggs by themselves, but there is no problem with doing so.

Kashrut: Eggs: Hard-Boiling in Non-Kosher Pot

Do not eat hard-boiled eggs cooked in a non-kosher pot.

KASHRUT: FISH

KASHRUT: FISH: BUYING IN NON-KOSHER STORE

To Buy Fresh Kosher Fish in Non-Kosher Store

To buy fresh kosher fish in a non-kosher store:

- If the fish is whole and has scales, it is kosher and you may buy it as it is.
- If the fish has already been cut, skinned, and/or filleted and there are no non-kosher fish in the store, you may buy it as kosher.
- If you want to have the fish cut, skinned, and/or filleted and there are non-kosher fish in the store, have the counter-person wash off the cutting board and knife with soap and water before preparing the fish and you may buy the fish as kosher.
- If the fish has already been cut (and there are non-kosher fish in the store such that there might have been non-kosher fish oil on the knife or cutting board), just scrape off a tiny layer from the cut surface of the fish.

NOTE You may eat a skinned fish that you can positively identify from the flesh as kosher.

EXAMPLE ALL salmon are kosher and may be eaten if they can be identified.

NOTE You may not rely on the statement of a non-Jewish-owned store that the fish is kosher or is of a variety that you know to be kosher.

KASHRUT: FISH: VARIETIES

Conger Eel with Scales

Conger eel with scales is a kosher fish! It must have a backbone.

KASHRUT: FISH: SMOKED

Kashrut: Smoked Fish

Smoked fish needs supervision due to possibly non-kosher items:

- Brine in which the fish are soaked,

- Hooks from which the fish are hung.

KASHRUT: FISH/DAIRY

Kashrut: Fish: Dairy and Fish Together

You may cook and/or eat dairy-containing and fish-containing foods together. Sefardim do not eat dairy and fish together.

KASHRUT: FISH/MEAT

Kashrut: Fish: Fish and Meat Together

Do not cook or eat meat-containing and fish-containing foods together:

- After eating fish, you must eat and drink some other food before eating meat-containing food.
- After eating meat-containing food, you must eat and drink some other food before eating fish.

NOTE If meat and fish were mixed or cooked together, there is no need to kasher the utensils.

Kashrut and Worcestershire Sauce

You may use and eat Worcestershire sauce on meat if the fish component is batel ba'shishim (nullified by being less than 1/60th of the total volume).

KASHRUT: MEAT

KASHRUT: MEAT: BLOOD

INTRODUCTION TO BLOOD IN MEAT

Introduction to Blood in Meat

Status of Blood in Meat

Blood is generally forbidden to be eaten. However:

- Blood that has not moved from where it was in the animal before the animal was killed may be eaten--but only if eaten raw.
- Blood in veins and arteries may not be eaten. If meat is cooked with this blood still inside the meat, the meat is non-kosher. (During kosher butchering, the main veins and arteries are removed.)
- Capillary blood is permitted once the animal is dead.
- After meat has been salted, even if pink liquid comes out, the meat is still kosher.

Kashering Meat by Broiling after Three Days

Normally, meat must be soaked and salted within three days of being slaughtered.

REASON The blood may have solidified by then and will not be completely removed by salting. If you were to cook such meat, the blood would move and the meat would become non-kosher.

But, even after three days, you may broil or grill and then EAT the meat, as broiling forces out any blood that will come out. But you may not then COOK it afterward.

There is no time limit for broiling the meat and making it kosher if done this way, but consult a rabbi for such cases.

KASHRUT: MEAT: NON-GLATT

Non-Glatt Meat for Sefardi Guest

Non-glatt meat at an Ashkenazi house doesn't necessarily render the food non-kosher for a Sefardi guest.

Non-Glatt Meat Utensils

Cooking kosher, non-glatt meat in a utensil does not render that utensil non-kosher, even for someone who only eats glatt meat.

KASHRUT: MEAT: HINDQUARTER

Hindquarter Meat

You may eat hindquarter if the sciatic nerve and forbidden fat are properly removed from a kosher animal that has been properly slaughtered.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT COMBINATIONS

INTRODUCTION TO KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT

No Eating, Cooking, or Benefiting from Dairy with Meat

You may not cook or eat dairy and meat foods together, even when they are individually kosher. You may not even derive any benefit from their being cooked together.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: TIME SEPARATIONS

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: WAITING BETWEEN EATING

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Waiting between Eating: Dairy after Meat

You may not eat dairy-containing foods directly after eating meat-containing foods, for two reasons:

- So as not to have meat stuck in your teeth when you eat milk-containing foods.
- So as not to eat dairy foods while you still can detect the taste of the meat-containing foods in your system.

NOTE There are various customs on how long to wait after eating meat-containing foods to eat dairy-containing foods, including:

- 60 minutes for Jews whose families originated in Holland.
- 3 hours for Jews whose families originated in Germany.
- 6 hours for most other Jews, with variations including 5 hours-1 minute, 5 hours-31 minutes, and 6 hours.

NOTE You do not need to restart the waiting period if you burp up meat long after you eat it.

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Waiting between Eating: Meat after Dairy

To eat meat-containing food after eating dairy food:

- Wait half an hour, or
- You must:
 - Drink (or rinse your mouth with) some neutral/pareve beverage, and
 - Eat some neutral/pareve solid food.

REASON There may still be some dairy remaining in your mouth.

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Waiting between Eating: Neutral/Pareve D or DE after Meat

If you can definitively ascertain that a food is or is not dairy from the ingredient list, you may rely on it. However, many food additives or ingredients that are dairy do not contain the word "milk" or "dairy" (for example, dairy-based flavorings or dairy derivatives such as whey or casein/sodium caseinate).

SITUATION Neutral/pareve food marked “D” or “DE” (“dairy equipment”) has no dairy ingredients (or the dairy ingredients constitute less than 1/60 of the food's volume.)

NOTE This does not get measured by weight.

WHAT TO DO You may eat the food:

- Immediately after eating meat foods, but
- Not together with the meat food.

SITUATION Genuine dairy constitutes more than 1/60th of the volume of the processed food.

WHAT TO DO You may not eat the food with, or immediately after, the meat food.

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Waiting between Eating: Bread with Dairy, Then Meat

SITUATION You said ha'motzi over bread for a dairy meal.

STATUS You may not reuse the same bread for a meat-containing meal.

WHAT TO DO You may either:

- Get some new bread, or
- Not eat bread at all with the meat.

NOTE There is no need to say birkat ha'mazon after the milk-containing food and then say ha'motzi (or other fore-blessings) before eating the meat-containing foods.

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Waiting between Eating: Putting Dairy/Meat in Mouth

SITUATION You put into your mouth any amount of meat--even if you didn't swallow it or if you spit it out.

STATUS You may not consume dairy foods soon afterward.

WHAT TO DO You must wait as usual (6 hours, or whatever your custom is between eating meat and dairy).

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Waiting between Eating: Parmesan Cheese

SITUATION You eat Parmesan cheese.

STATUS Before eating meat, you must wait six hours (or whatever is your custom to wait between eating meat and dairy).

NOTE Parmesan cheese is the only commonly available cheese that is considered hard enough to require waiting six hours after eating it before you eat meat-containing foods.

NOTE Parmesan cheese requires this waiting period even when the cheese is finely ground or is melted on pizza, mushrooms, or other foods.

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Waiting between Eating: Children

Children of any age, even babies, should wait one hour between eating dairy and meat-containing foods, unless there are health reasons not to wait.

From gil chinuch, children should wait 6 hours (or however long it is your custom to wait) between eating meat and dairy.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: PHYSICAL SEPARATIONS

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Physical Separations: Dairy and Meat on Table

SITUATION Two eat at the same table, one person is eating dairy and the other, meat.

WHAT TO DO Separate the dairy and meat-containing foods using separate placemats or any type of physical barrier.

NOTE You do not need to use a separator if the people at the table are strangers to each other; the separation is needed only if they know each other from before.

REASON Separation serves as a reminder not to eat the opposite-gender food.

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Physical Separations: Washing Hands between Dairy and Meat

SITUATION You drank milk or ate solid dairy foods (such as cheese) and now want to touch and eat meat-containing foods.

WHAT TO DO

- Milk
You do not need to wash your hands after drinking milk unless you actually touched the milk liquid.
- Solid Dairy
You must wash your hands after eating solid dairy foods.

REASON Your hands likely had some contact with the solid dairy.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: LENIENCIES FOR ERRORS

Asking a Halachic Authority about Dairy/Meat Errors

The *halachic* category of dairy and meat errors, while extremely complicated, has many conditions for which leniency may be applied. Here are the main points a *halachic* authority (posek) will need to know:

- Was the food or utensil hotter than 120° F (49° C)?
- Had the utensil been used for hot food (over 120° F) within 24 hours?
- How much food was involved?
- What was the relative volume or quantity of the food and utensils? (1/60th of relevant volumes?)
- How much food is normally cooked in the utensils?
- Of what materials are the utensils made?
- Was the food spicy (hot peppers, garlic, onions, lemon...)?
- Was the food needed for Shabbat meals?
- How much does the food cost?

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: OVENS

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: BAKING NEUTRAL/PAREVE FOODS IN DAIRY/MEAT PAN

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Neutral/Pareve Foods in Clean Dairy or Meat Pan

SITUATION You cooked pareve food in a clean meat (or dairy) utensil.

WHAT TO DO

- You may eat dairy-containing (or meat-containing) food immediately afterward.
- You may not eat the food on a plate or utensil of the opposite gender.
- You may certainly not eat it WITH opposite-gender food.

NOTE There is no difference whether the utensil had been used at 120° F (49° C) or more within 24 hours or not.

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Neutral/Pareve Foods in Dirty Dairy or Meat Pan

SITUATION You want to bake neutral/pareve food in a meat pan that has some meat liquid in the bottom.

WHAT TO DO You must use a double layer of separation such as foil, or else the pareve food will become meat (even if there is one layer of foil between the pareve food and the meat liquid).

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: BAKING AT SAME TIME

INTRODUCTION TO KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: BAKING AT SAME TIME

Introduction to Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Baking at Same Time

Five factors affect cooking separate pans of dairy and meat in an oven at the same time (these are all b'di'avad cases):

- **Covered**

Is either pan (or both) covered?

- **Outside Clean and Dry**

Are both pans clean and dry on the outside?

- **Food Non-Liquid (“Solid”)**

Are the contents of one or both of them non-liquid (solid before OR after cooking OR both)? That is, one or both are non-liquid (“solid”) at:

- The beginning of the cooking,
- The end of the cooking, OR
- Both beginning and end of cooking.

- **Pans Touching**

Are the pans touching?

- **Spicy/Charif**

Are the contents spicy/charif?

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Baking at Same Time: Definition of Terms

- “Solid,” or “non-liquid,” means food is solid before OR after cooking--or both.
- “Covered” means pan has at least a single cover; does not need to be sealed or double wrapped.

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Baking at Same Time: Solid, COVERED

L'hatchila: Do not bake separate pans—whether uncovered or not—of dairy food and meat food in the oven at the same time.

REASON The food might spill over.

B'di'avad, you may cook pans of dairy food and meat food at the same time in one oven if both are:

- Not touching,
- Covered, AND
- Non-liquid; i.e., either:
 - Solid, or
 - Liquid only at the beginning or end of the cooking (but not both beginning and end).

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Baking at Same Time: Solid, UNCOVERED

L'hatchila, you should not bake uncovered dairy and meat foods in the same oven at the same time, even if both pans:

- Are non-liquid, AND
- Do not touch each other.

B'di'avad, both uncovered pans remain kosher—even if they touch each other, if both pans:

- Are non-liquid,
- Are clean and dry (on the outside), AND
- Do not contain spicy/charif food.

Example

SITUATION

- Food in both pans is solid.
- One pan is covered, one pan is uncovered.
- Both pans are clean and dry on outside.
- No spicy/charif.

STATUS They are both kosher b'dia'vad.

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Baking at Same Time: Liquid, UNCOVERED

SITUATION

Two uncovered pans of food—one dairy, one meat—are baked at the same time in an oven.

The contents of both pans are liquid (liquid before AND after cooking; even if not spicy).

STATUS

They are both non-kosher, even if one pan is covered (but consult a rabbi for possible leniencies).

SITUATION

Two pans—one dairy, one meat—bake at same time in same oven:

- One is covered and contains liquid (even if not spicy);
- One is not covered and contains solid food.

STATUS

They are both kosher.

SITUATION

Two pans—one dairy, one meat—bake at same time in same oven:

- One is covered and contains solid food.
- One is not covered and contains liquid (even if not spicy).

STATUS

They are both non-kosher.

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Baking at Same Time: Both UNCOVERED and SPICY/Charif

SITUATION

The food in two uncovered pans (one of dairy food, one of meat) baked in an oven at the same time is spicy/charif.

STATUS

The food and utensils all become non-kosher, even if the:

- Pans are clean and dry,
- Pans are not touching, AND
- Food is non-liquid.

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Baking at Same Time: Both UNCOVERED; One Is Spicy/Charif

SITUATION

Two uncovered pans (one of dairy food, one of meat) are baked in the same oven at same time. The food in only one of them is spicy/charif. Even if the:

- Pans are clean and dry,

- Pans are not touching, and
- Food is non-liquid.

STATUS The spicy/charif one is b'di'avad kosher;

The non-spicy utensil and its contents are not kosher.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: BAKING CONSECUTIVELY

Baking COVERED/UNCOVERED Dairy and Meat Consecutively

SITUATION You cooked food of both genders:

- In a clean oven,
- In separate utensils,
- UNCOVERED but consecutively (even within 24 hours).

NOTE The first food must be removed before the second one is put into the oven.

STATUS

- If one or both are solid (non-liquid) at either the beginning OR end of the cooking OR both beginning and end:

They are both kosher; both food and pan.

- If they were both liquid:

The second one is probably not kosher (both food and pan), but consult a rabbi.

NOTE

- If both are covered, they are both kosher.
- If the first one to be cooked was covered, they are both kosher.
- If the first one was uncovered, they may both have become non-kosher--consult a rabbi.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: OVEN SPILLS

Baking Opposite Gender in Oven with Spills

SITUATION One gender of food spills in an oven. You later heat utensils and food of the opposite gender in that oven to 120° F (49° C) or more.

STATUS The utensils and food may become non-kosher, due to the residue's vapor.

WHAT TO DO Consult a rabbi.

NOTE This applies whether the oven is kosher or non-kosher, the residue is dry or liquid, or the utensils or food later placed in the oven are covered or not covered.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: WITH NEUTRAL/PAREVE

DAIRY/MEAT WITH NEUTRAL/PAREVE POT OR PAN

Eating Dairy or Meat Cooked in Neutral/Pareve Pot or Pan

If you ate meat, you may then eat neutral/pareve food cooked in a clean dairy pan, even if the dairy pan was used at 120° F (49° C) or more within 24 hours.

BAKING NEUTRAL/PAREVE AND DAIRY (OR MEAT) AT SAME TIME

Baking Non-Liquid Neutral/Pareve and Non-Liquid Dairy (or Meat) at Same Time

SITUATION You bake non-liquid dairy food and non-liquid neutral/pareve food in one oven at the same time.

STATUS

- You may not eat the pareve food with meat food (and certainly not dairy food with the meat!), but
- The utensil (pan) of the pareve food does not become dairy.

NOTE The same applies if you cook non-liquid meat with non-liquid pareve food.

NOTE If one or both of the foods were liquid, the utensil might be non-kosher. Consult a rabbi.

Baking Challa at Same Time as Chicken without Sauce

SITUATION You baked challa with chicken, both uncovered, in the same oven (the chicken had no sauce).

STATUS

- You may not eat that challa with dairy food, but
- You do not need to wait another 3-6 hours after eating the challa before eating dairy.

Baking Challa at Same Time as Chicken with Sauce

SITUATION You baked challa with chicken, both uncovered, in the same oven (the chicken DID have sauce).

STATUS The challa becomes non-kosher even if the sauce was dry by the end of cooking.

REASON A rabbinic enactment requires that challa be pareve, lest someone eat it with the opposite gender food. Consult a rabbi for exceptions.

NOTE The rabbinic enactment applies to all bread, unless it looks different from normal bread or is small enough to eat at one meal.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: SOAKED TOGETHER

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Soaked Together

For different genders of food being soaked together, see [Taste Transfer: Soaking](#).

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: STOVETOP SPATTERS

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: WHAT IS A SPATTER

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: What Is a Spatter

A spatter is single drops of a substance.

NOTE In this website, a small spatter is a single drop and a large spatter is several or more drops.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: SPATTER TEMPERATURE

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Spatter Temperature

You may assume that a spatter of single drops is less than 120° F (49° C) when it contacts a cold utensil or other food.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: POT SPATTERS ONTO UTENSIL OR EMPTY POT

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Pot Spatters: Outside of Utensil, Below Normal Food Line

SITUATION A hot or cold meat utensil is empty or contains meat food. It receives a spatter of dairy below the normal food line and the spatter is less 1/60th of the volume of the pot.

STATUS

- The food in the utensil (if any) is kosher in all cases.
- Pot is kosher after 24 hours without kashering.

WHAT TO DO

You must wash the pot off with cold water and soap.

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Tiny Pot Spatters: Outside of Utensil, Above Normal Food Line

SITUATION

- The outside of a hot, empty pot of one gender gets a spatter of opposite-gender food ABOVE the normal food line.
- The spatter is less than 1/3600 of the normally used volume of the pot (instead of the normal criterion of 1/60th of the volume--this being 1/60th of 1/60th).

STATUS The pot is kosher after 24 hours without kashering.

WHAT TO DO You must wash the pot off with cold water and soap.

NOTE This applies even if the pot had been used at 120° F (49° C) or more within 24 hours.

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Larger Pot Spatters above Normal Food Line

SITUATION

- A hot, empty pot of one gender gets a spatter of opposite-gender food ABOVE the normal food line.
- The spatter is more than 1/3600 of the normally used volume of the pot.

STATUS The pot is non-kosher.

WHAT TO DO You must kasher the pot by washing in cold water and soap, waiting 24 hours, and then boiling the pot.

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Pot Spatters and Pareve

SITUATION

- Food of one gender spatters onto the outside of a pareve utensil.
- Either the food and/or the utensil are hot.

NOTE If the pot is not hot, a small spatter will not be hot. If the spatter is large (more than one drop), the spatter may be hot. Ask a rabbi what to do.

STATUS The utensil assumes the spatter's gender UNLESS the spatter was less than 1/60th of the volume of the metal in the pareve utensil (not 1/60th of the volume the container usually holds). Consult a rabbi.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: SPATTERS INTO A POT OF FOOD

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Hot Dairy Food Spatters INTO Meat Pot, or Vice Versa

SITUATION

- Hot dairy food spatters INTO a pot of meat food, or vice versa.
- Spatter is less than 1/60th of the volume of the food into which it spattered.

STATUS The spattered food is nullified (batel ba'shishim).

WHAT TO DO As there is nothing to wash off, the food may be eaten, but you should remove the spattered food, if possible. The pot is kosher.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: STOVETOP SPILLS

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: SPILLS AND OPPOSITE GENDER UTENSIL

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Hot Spills and Opposite Gender Utensil: Unused

SITUATION

- Hot food of one gender spills (falls into or onto) an empty utensil of the opposite gender.
- The utensil was unused at 120° F (49° C) or more for at least 24 hours.

STATUS

- The utensil is usually non-kosher.
- The food is kosher.

NOTE If the spill is spicy/charif or if the utensil had been used hot within the 24 hours before the spill, consult a rabbi.

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Spills: Food onto Opposite Gender Utensil: Flow Chart

WERE BOTH FOOD AND UTENSIL LESS THAN 120° F?

YES

WHAT TO DO Wash off with cold water and soap.

STATUS Everything is kosher and may be used immediately.

NO

WAS THE UTENSIL CLEAN AND UNUSED at 120° F or more FOR MORE THAN 24 HOURS?

NOTE **Clean** means no residual food, including pareve; this IS essential since the food or utensil or both were hot! If used at 120° F or more for pareve within 24 hours, ask a rabbi.

YES

STATUS

- Food is kosher
- Utensil requires kashering.

WHAT TO DO

- Wash utensil with cold water and soap.
- Wait 24 hours after the spill occurred before kashering it.

NOTE If you wash off the utensil with hot (above 120° F) water, you must wait 24 hours after cleaning the utensil before kashering it.

NO

IS THE SPILLED FOOD LESS THAN 1/60th of the volume of the commonly used capacity of the utensil (if the utensil is empty) OR less than 1/60th of the actual volume of food contained within the utensil?

YES

STATUS

- Food is kosher.
- Utensil is kosher after 24 hours.

WHAT TO DO Wash utensil with cold water and soap and wait 24 hours before using the utensil.

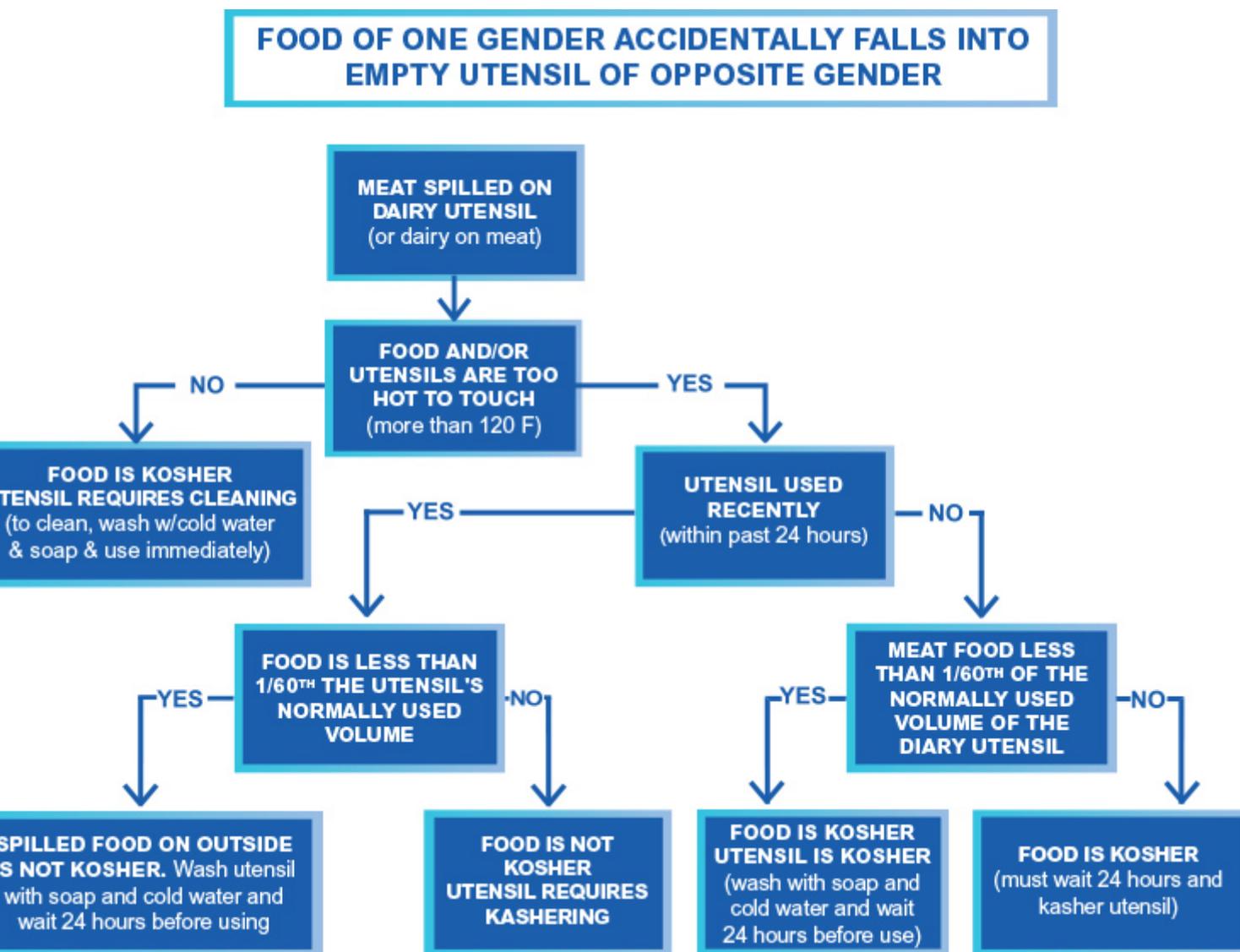
NOTE If utensil had food in it and the spilled food was less than 1/60th of the volume of the food in the utensil, you may use the utensil immediately after cleaning it and you do not need to wait 24 hours.

NO (Spilled food was 120° F or more, OR the utensil not clean, OR the utensil was used within 24 hours, and spilled food is more than 1/60th of the utensil's volume)

STATUS

- Food is non-kosher.
- Utensil is non-kosher.

WHAT TO DO Utensil must be kashered. See Hag'ala/Boiling or Libun/Direct Heat for instructions on how to kasher each material.



Utensil Chart

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: FOOD OF ONE GENDER FALLS INTO OPPOSITE FOOD

Dairy/Milk Food Falls into/onto Meat or Meat Falls into/onto Dairy/Milk Food

WERE BOTH FOODS LESS THAN 120° F?

YES

ARE BOTH FOODS SOLID?

YES

STATUS If you can separate them (there are no cracks in the meat), both foods are kosher. Consult a rabbi.

WHAT TO DO

- If one or both of the foods were already cooked, separate them and wash with soap and water (if possible).
- If it is not possible to separate them, just cut off the thinnest slice possible from each surface of each food which had been in contact with the opposite gender food and you may use the food.

NO

SOLID FOOD FALLS INTO LIQUID FOOD OR LIQUID FOOD FALLS ONTO SOLID FOOD

STATUS If both foods are cold and you can separate them (there are no cracks in the meat), they MAY be kosher. Consult a rabbi.

- Both foods are non-kosher if they cannot be separated.
- If you can separate them enough that one becomes less than 1/60th the volume of the other:
 - The larger food is kosher.
 - The lesser one is non-kosher.

WHAT TO DO

- Once the two foods are separated, wash or otherwise remove the smaller food from the larger one.
- If not possible, cut off the thinnest slice possible and you may eat the remaining food.

NOTE If there are cracks in raw or cooked meat, and if you can clean off enough of the dairy spill so that the remainder is less than 1/60th, it may be kosher--ask a rabbi.

LIQUID FOOD FALLS INTO LIQUID FOOD

STATUS Both liquid foods are non-kosher.

EXCEPTION If one liquid food is less than 1/60th the volume of the other one, the mixture is kosher.

NOTE If non-kosher wine is involved, see below.

SOLID FOODS, ONE OR BOTH ARE HOT

STATUS If one (or both) of the foods is hotter than 120° F, both foods are non-kosher.

EXCEPTION If one food is less than 1/60th of the volume of the other:

- The larger-volume food may be kosher (consult a rabbi).
- The smaller-volume food remains not kosher.

POSSIBLE EXCEPTION If the food on the bottom is cold and thick, consult a rabbi.

If either food is spicy, see above.

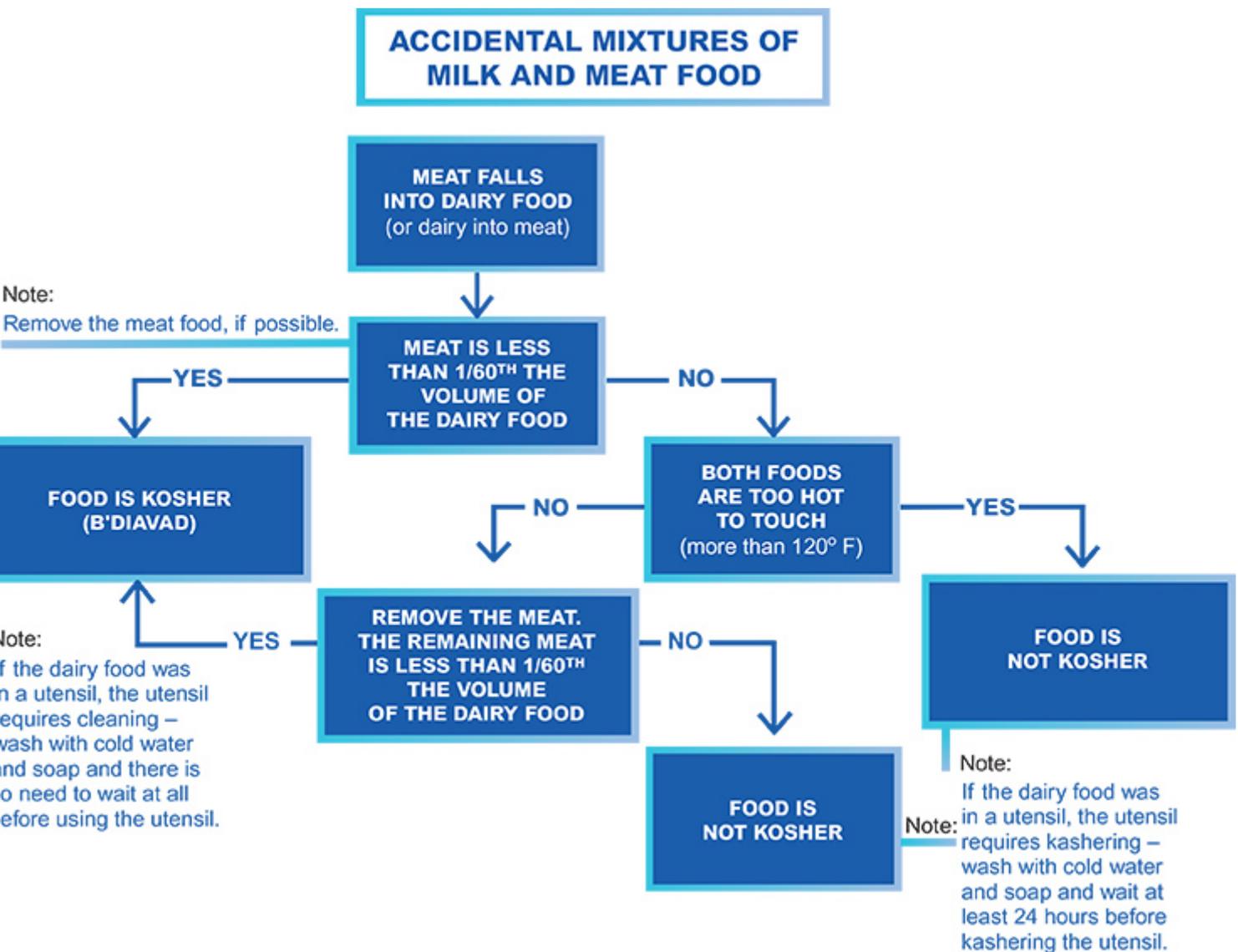
If any combination (solid and liquid; solid and solid which are in any liquid; or liquid and liquid) of dairy and meat were soaked together for 24 hours or more, even if cold, they are all not kosher.

EXCEPTION In any of these three cases, in which one is less than 1/60th the volume of the other:

- The larger food is kosher.
- The lesser one is non-kosher.

NOTE You must remove the smaller food from the larger one and wash off the larger one, if possible. If you don't know how long the foods soaked together but it may have been less than 24 hours, you may use the

foods.



This chart does NOT apply to non-kosher wine.

Accidental Mixtures of Dairy and Meat Foods

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: UTENSILS

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: UTENSILS: DRY/WET

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Utensils: Heat with Dry/Wet

Hot, clean, dry utensils of opposite genders, even if touching each other, both remain *kosher*.

Hot, clean, wet utensils of opposite genders touching each other are both not *kosher*.

SITUATION One of the utensils had not been used in less than 24 hours before the contact.

STATUS That unused utensil becomes not *kosher*. However, even if the other utensil had been used in less than 24 hours before the contact, it remains *kosher*.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: OTHER USEFUL CASES

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: CONDIMENTS

Cold Condiments Used for Dairy and Meat

B'di'avad, you may scoop out mayonnaise or mustard and spread it on meat and then scoop out more and then later use same condiment on dairy foods (and the same for dairy and later on meat) as long as any residual food is less than 1/60th of the total volume of food. But the preferred practice is to have two separate containers, one for dairy and one for meat foods.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: COUNTERTOPS

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: SEPARATE COUNTERTOPS

Separate Dairy and Meat Countertops

Ideally, allot separate counter space for meat and dairy so they do not share the same space.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: TASTE TRANSFER IN COUNTERTOPS

Hot, Wet Taste Transfer in Countertops

A hot (120° F--49° C--or more), wet utensil transfers its gender to a countertop upon which it is placed, but only at the area of contact.

Status of Countertop

1. Gender status of the countertop:

- D'rabanan, the countertop area of contact remains that gender until kashered (as long as the countertop material is kasherable).
- D'oraita, the countertop reverts to kosher-neutral/pareve after 24 hours.

NOTE If the utensil and counter were not wet (nor dirty with food) at the area of contact, there is b'di'avad no transfer of gender.

2. If you put a hot, wet utensil of the opposite gender on that same spot, that counter space may become non-kosher.

STATUS OF UTENSILS

If the counter had not had a hot, wet utensil/container of food of the opposite gender placed on the same spot within 24 hours of each other, the utensils may be used and the utensils are still kosher.

STATUS OF FOOD

This does not apply to food that is *directly* placed on the counter, in which case the food might become non-kosher.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: CUTTING BOARDS

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Cutting Boards

SITUATION You cut a spicy/charif item of one gender on a cutting board (whether wood or plastic), and then cut the opposite-gender spicy/charif food on that same cutting board.

STATUS Generally, the board and the knife and whichever food was cut second becomes non-kosher. Consult a rabbi for exceptions.

WHAT TO DO If you can sand off the surface to below the level of any knife cuts, the board might be kosher. Consult a rabbi.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: DISHWASHERS

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Dishwashers: Intentional Mixing of Utensils

You may not intentionally put a pareve utensil in a dishwasher that contains dairy or meat dishes. If you do, the formerly pareve utensil will take the gender of the other dishes, unless it is of glass, Pyrex, or other

materials that do not take on gender when in hot water.

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Dishwashers: Accidental Mix-up

SITUATION After washing a load of utensils of one gender in your dishwasher, you find an item of the opposite gender in your dishwasher.

STATUS

- The single item is non-kosher.
- The remaining items will most likely be kosher (as long as the single item is less than 1/60th of the total volume of items and water in the dishwasher).

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Dishwashers: Neutral/Pareve Item

You may not wash a neutral/ pareve dish in a meat or milk dishwasher--even if there are no dirty dishes with milk or meat on them and even if there are no other dishes in the dishwasher. If you did, the neutral/pareve dish may have become the gender of the dishwasher, but consult a rabbi for leniencies.

SITUATION You have a meat or milk dishwasher and you washed a neutral/pareve utensil in it.

WHAT TO DO If the dishwasher has dirty dishes containing milk or meat food, the neutral/pareve utensil will become that gender. However, if the dishwasher does not have any dirty dishes with food of either gender on them and the dishwasher has not been used for at least 24 hours, the pareve dish will remain pareve.

NOTE This is a b'di'avad (after the fact) case. You may not intentionally (l'chatchila) wash the pareve utensil in a gendered dishwasher.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: DRAWERS

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Drawers

SITUATION You find an eating or cooking utensil of one gender in a drawer of the opposite gender.

STATUS You may use the item without kashering it.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: MICROWAVE OVENS

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Microwave Ovens

As with conventional ovens, these factors determine kosher/non-kosher status for a microwave oven:

- Was it clean?
- Did the interior surfaces get hot (120° F--49° C--or more)?
- Was it used in the previous 24 hours?

NOTE Microwave ovens do not have the problems of bishul akum that conventional ovens have.

How To Check If a Microwave Oven Will Get Hot during Cooking

To determine if the walls of a microwave oven will get hot during cooking:

- Boil water for as long as food would typically be cooked in that microwave oven, and
- Touch the inside walls, floor, door, and ceiling
 - If the walls are too hot to touch, the walls may acquire the gender of any food cooked in the oven. (If the walls are already the opposite gender when cooking a food, the oven may become non-kosher.)
 - If the walls are not too hot to touch, then no change of status occurs.

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Microwave Oven Dishes

You may microwave a dairy food in a meat (or meat food in a dairy) glass (or Pyrex or Corelle) utensil. Even if the food gets hotter than 120 degrees, the food and utensil are still both kosher. (This is not true if placed in

a conventional oven!)

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: POT LIDS

Kashrut: Dairy/Meat: Pot Lids

Pot lids are treated as if they are utensils.

SITUATION

- You put a lid of one gender on a pot of the opposite gender.
- The pot is more than 120° F (49° C).

STATUS

The lid becomes non-kosher and the pot and food inside usually will be non-kosher, but ask a rabbi about possible leniencies.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: REFRIGERATORS

Refrigerators and Hot Pots of Dairy/Meat

Hot pots on a refrigerator shelf with pots of the opposite gender that touch each other are only a problem if wet. There is no problem if they are:

- Both cold, or
- Even if they are spicy.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: SINKS

Sink Racks and Dairy/Meat

Two racks or other utensils, one dairy and the other meat--that are used in a single sink (whether together or sequentially) may become non-kosher if they ever reach more than 120° F (49° C) while in the sink. Consult a rabbi.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: SPONGES

Sponges and Dairy/Meat

SITUATION You inadvertently use a brush or sponge (hotter than 120° F--49° C) of one gender on a utensil of the opposite gender.

STATUS The sponge or brush becomes non-kosher, but ask a rabbi about the status of the utensil.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: STEAM

Steam and Utensils of Dairy/Meat

SITUATION Steam of one gender touched a utensil of opposite gender.

WHAT TO DO Ask a rabbi.

KASHRUT: DAIRY/MEAT: STOVETOP

Stovetop Surfaces: Kosher Status

A stovetop surface is likely to be non-kosher due to previous spills of both genders.

REASON The stovetop will have been heated to more than 120° F (49° C) from:

- A large spill, and
- Likely, from the oven below.

Stovetop Surfaces: Clean, Cold Utensil

SITUATION A dry, clean, cold utensil is put on a dry, clean, hot stovetop.

The utensil is kosher b'di'avad.

Stovetop Surfaces: Hot Utensil with Food

Situation

A hot (120° F--49° C--or more) lid or utensil (such as a spoon, fork, or ladle) containing food is put on a stovetop surface. Consider:

- Temperature of stovetop;
- Volume of food on lid or fork/spoon;
- Timing--Was the stovetop used at 120° F or more within 24 hours? (If not and if it is clean, everything is kosher b'di'avad.)

Status of Utensil

- **Utensil: Dry.**

Stove: Clean.

Utensil is kosher.

- **Utensil: Dry or wet.**

Stove: Dirty.

Utensil is non-kosher.

- **Utensil: Wet.**

Stove (clean or dirty); had hot opposite-gender food on it within previous 24 hours.

Utensil is not kosher.

- **Utensil: Dry or wet.**

Stove: Clean; no hot opposite-gender food on it within the previous 24 hours:

Utensil is kosher.

KASHRUT: MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

KASHRUT: ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Pure Alcohol

Pure alcohol is kosher if not derived from any grapes or any other non-kosher source.

Fermented Fruit Juices

Kosher supervision is recommended for fermented non-grape fruit juices (apple cider or fermented pomegranate, cherry, etc.) even if they do not have any additives and contain only pure juice.

Beer

All beer in the USA is kosher and does not need supervision. Many beers in other countries are also kosher even without supervision, but the status should be checked with local kashrut authorities.

SITUATION Some beers have lactose added.

STATUS If the lactose is less than 1/60th of the total volume, the beer is not considered to be dairy.

Wine

The principal difference between kosher wine (or grape juice) and non-kosher wine (or grape juice) is that the kosher wine must be produced and handled only by religious Jews. However, once the wine or grape juice has been cooked (“meyushal”), it may be handled by anyone, including people who are not Jewish, and

it will still remain kosher. Pasteurization may be sufficient to be considered “cooking” for this purpose.

NOTE Many good-quality wines are NOT mevushal and when those bottles are opened must not be handled by anyone who is not a shomer Shabbat Jew.

Whiskies

Almost all whiskies are kosher, but check the source to be certain.

Liquers

Many liquers are kosher even without supervision, but many are not kosher and a reliable source should be checked before drinking any liquers.

NOTE Some liquers are kosher when produced or bottled in one country but are not kosher when produced in other countries.

Drinks from the Five Grains Owned by a Jew during Passover

All beverages that contain alcohol made from any of the five grains (wheat, barley, oats, rye, and spelt), and which were owned by a Jew during the Passover holiday, are not kosher.

KASHRUT: BREAD

Bread

Bread made in not-kosher bakeries can be assumed to be kosher ONLY if:

1. It has no ingredients other than flour, water, yeast, and salt. French baguettes and some other breads are OK, as are many breads baked in other countries of the same type.
2. It is baked on a hearth and not in a pan.

NOTE On a hearth, any non-kosher ingredients from other baked foods get burned up.

KASHRUT: LANOLIN

Lanolin Not Kosher

Lanolin is not kosher.

KASHRUT: MANUFACTURING AIDS

Why Simple Reading of Ingredients Not Enough

Even though foods manufactured and sold in the USA are required to list their ingredients, a simple reading of ingredients may not be sufficient to determine the kosher status of some foods because:

- They are not required to list “manufacturing aids” such as oil, and
- The manufacturing equipment may be non-kosher.

KASHRUT: MITTS (OVEN)

Separate Oven Mitts for Dairy and Meat

Use separate oven mitts for each gender.

REASON Oven mitts assume the gender of any hot food that spills on them. This could make them non-kosher and cause future utensils to become non-kosher.

KASHRUT: MODIFIED SUBSTANCES

Modified Non-Kosher

A non-kosher substance becomes kosher once it is modified and no longer has the original taste.

EXAMPLE Animal bones are burned for charcoal to filter cane sugar from molasses in order to make white sugar. The bones are not only not non-kosher, they are pareve.

NOTE Rabbinic supervision is required to ensure that the bones have been completely burned.

KASHRUT: NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

Kashrut and Non-Kosher Nutritional Supplements

If kosher supplements are not available or are not as good as the non-kosher ones, you may use non-kosher nutritional supplements, including non-kosher gelatin capsules:

- If you are sick (disease, headaches, weakness....), or
- To improve your health if you have deficient nutrition

NOTE You may not take non-kosher supplements to prevent disease.

KASHRUT: OIL

Oils and Kashrut Supervision

You may not use vegetable oil that has been processed in non-kosher equipment.

REASON The main problem can arise from deodorization of the oil, which is done in hot vessels.

Virgin Olive Oil

Virgin and extra virgin olive oils (which have not been deodorized and still smell like olives) are usually kosher without needing supervision.

NOTE A hechsher is recommended anyway due to occasional adulteration.

Non-Olive Oil Oils

Other vegetable, nut, seed, and grain oils normally require kosher supervision to be considered kosher.

NOTE Oils that are cold-pressed, not deodorized, and still smell like their source-fruit or seed require kosher supervision because they may be filtered through the same filter as non-kosher oil.

KASHRUT: PET FOOD

Pet Food

Regular pet food is not asur b'hana'a except if it contains milk and meat that were cooked together. Pet food containing chametz is forbidden to be owned or used on Passover.

KASHRUT: SOAP

Kashrut: Non-Certified Soap

Soap must be considered non-kosher unless it is certified kosher. Soap without kosher supervision should not l'chatchila be used on food utensils--even if you use cold water and even on glass--because a soap residue adheres to the surfaces, even after careful rinsing.

Soaps/Detergents

Bar soap is generally made from animal fat. Since all soaps do have taste and might be edible by a dog, they might not be nifsal for a dog and therefore cannot be used on eating utensils.

NOTE However, a dish remains kosher b'di'avad if washed with cold water and non-kosher soap made from non-kosher fat.

Kashrut: Non-Certified Dishwashing Liquids/Powders

Dishwashing detergents may be assumed to be kosher unless known to be non-kosher.

KASHRUT: SUBSTANCES NOT SWALLOWED

Non-Kosher Mouthwash

You may use non-kosher mouthwash, even if you may swallow some residual mouthwash, as long as you do not intend to swallow the mouthwash.

NOTE On *Passover*, you may not use chametz mouthwash.

KASHRUT: TRIVETS

Trivets for Dairy and Meat

Use separate trivets for each gender.

REASON A trivet assumes the gender of any hot food that spills on it. This may make it non-kosher and cause future utensils to become non-kosher.

KASHRUT: PLANTS

KASHRUT: PLANTS: BUGS

INTRODUCTION TO KASHRUT: PLANTS: BUGS

Why Bugs May Not Be Eaten

Bugs are not kosher and may not be eaten for two main reasons:

- First, the *Torah* forbids the “sheretz ha'shoreitz al ha'aretz” (“creeping thing that creeps on the ground”).
- Second, if people consider bugs disgusting to eat, the bugs are forbidden.

NOTE Eating a bug causes more infractions of halacha than eating pork!

General Rules: Kashrut and Bugs

Three basic principles govern bugs/insects in food:

a. **Partial-Bug Nullification**

A whole bug or insect cannot be nullified, even when it makes up less than 1/60th of the volume of the food in which it is found.

NOTE Any bug that is missing even a tiny part of its body may be nullified if less than 1/60th of the volume of the food in which it is found, but only if:

- You cannot remove the bug, and
- You cannot see it.

NOTE If you can remove the bug, you must remove it.

b. **The Three-Bug Rule**

Any time you find three bugs in food, you must assume there are more bugs to be found and you must therefore check every piece of that food before eating any of it.

c. **The Still-Kosher Food-and-Pot Rule**

Even if the bugs were cooked in the food, as long as you later remove all the bugs, the food and the utensil in which they were cooked remain kosher.

EXCEPTION If bugs make up 50% or more of the total volume, the food is not kosher.

WHAT TO DO In this case, you should consult a rabbi about whether the utensil is kosher.

KASHRUT: PLANTS: BUGS: FOR WHAT TO CHECK

KASHRUT: PLANTS: BUGS: FOR WHAT TO CHECK: VISIBILITY

Invisible Organisms

You are not forbidden from eating any life form that cannot be seen with the naked eye, such as micro-organisms.

Checking Bugs by Normal Eyesight

When checking edible plants for bugs, only bugs that are visible to a person with normal eyesight may not be eaten.

NOTE If you have poor vision, you must have someone else do the checking or use a magnifier.

KASHRUT: PLANTS: THE THREE-BUG RULES

KASHRUT: PLANTS: THREE-BUG RULES: COOKED FOOD

Introduction to Finding Three or More Bugs in Cooked Food

If you find three or more bugs cooked in otherwise kosher food, you must throw out the food, because you must assume that there are more bugs in the food and that the food is therefore not kosher.

Finding One or Two Bugs in Cooked Food

SITUATION You find one or two bugs in cooked food.

WHAT TO DO Just remove the bugs and eat the food.

Finding Bugs in Cooking Water

SITUATION You are cooking food and you find even three or more bugs floating in the cooking water.

WHAT TO DO You may simply pour out the bugs and continue cooking with the water and ingredients that were there, but **ONLY** if you are certain that there are no more bugs anywhere in the food in that utensil.

KASHRUT: PLANTS: THREE-BUG RULES: RAW FOOD

Three or More Bugs in Raw Food

SITUATION You find three or more bugs in raw food.

WHAT TO DO Go through all the food. If you can remove all bugs that are mixed in the food, you may eat the food.

KASHRUT: PLANTS: BUGS: WHICH FOODS TO CHECK

Checking Fresh Vegetables Depending on Locale

Vegetables, herbs, and other edible plants that may have bugs must be checked only if those plants commonly have bugs in the locale in which they are grown.

NOTE Bug infestations vary from locale to locale where the vegetables were grown; even if bugs are a problem in one place, they may not be in others.

NOTE You must check all of that particular fruit or vegetable for bugs if there would commonly be a bug in 10% or more of samples.

Checking Triple-Washed Greens for Bugs

For vegetables that commonly have bugs in them, you must check even triple-washed lettuces and other greens, even if they have been cut and packaged, unless they have a hechsher stating that they have been checked.

Which Foods Commonly Have Bug Infestations

The most common foods with bug infestations are raw vegetables, but bugs may also infest grains, some fruits, spices, and nuts.

All Herbs Need Checking

Many fresh herbs might contain bugs and therefore must be checked before use.

Difficult-To-Check Vegetables

Eating closed vegetables from which bugs won't be washed out, such as artichokes and Brussels sprouts, is not recommended.

NOTE For a way to use artichokes, see [Checking Raw Artichokes for Bugs](#).

Checking Frozen Vegetables for Bugs

You may eat any and all frozen vegetables and you do not need to soak them first or check them for bugs since the manufacturer washes the vegetables to remove bugs before cooking. If, however, you do find bugs, don't eat the vegetables. Kosher supervision is recommended.

No Need To Check Most Frozen Fruits for Bugs

You may eat all frozen berries, except strawberries, without checking for bugs.

KASHRUT: PLANTS: BUGS: HOW TO CHECK

KASHRUT: PLANTS: BUGS: HOW TO CHECK VEGETABLES

CHECKING FOR BUGS IF BUGS NOT COMMON

If Bugs NOT Common on That Plant Grown in That Area

If less than one bug is usually found in 10 servings, you may simply wash the vegetables and then use them. If you happen to find a bug, you must remove it and you do not need to check the others.

NOTE If you find three bugs, you must check all of the food.

CHECKING FOR BUGS IF BUGS ARE COMMON

If Bugs Are Common on That Plant Grown in That Area

The presence of insects on fruits, vegetables, grains, etc., depends on season, location, crop type, year, and current conditions in the growing area. If more than one bug is usually found in 10 servings, you must wash or soak (preferably in salt water or soapy water) all of the food and carefully check a quantity equal to three servings. You may check the food or the water in which the food was soaked, if such soaking will remove the bugs.

NOTE Soapy water may be required to remove all bugs.

If You Do Not Find Any Bugs

If you do not find any bugs by this procedure, you may use all of the other (uninspected) food.

If You Do Find Bugs

If you find even one bug, you must either check each piece of vegetable OR soak (preferably in salt water or soapy water) or rinse the entire batch. Then check three more servings and continue until no bugs have been found after one cycle of washing and inspecting.

NOTE You may keep washing vegetables multiple times, without limit, until there are no more bugs.

CHECKING FOR BUGS USING CHAZAKA

Checking for Bugs Using Chazaka

Soak vegetables (preferably in salt water or soapy water) and check three servings from same batch of vegetables. If you find no bugs, you may employ a chazaka to allow use of the remaining vegetables without

checking them.

KASHRUT: PLANTS: BUGS: HOW TO CHECK GRAINS

Checking Grains for Bugs

To check grain for insects, spread the grains on a flat surface.

KASHRUT: PLANTS: BUGS: CHECKING INDIVIDUAL PRODUCE

ARTICHOKES

Checking Raw Artichokes for Bugs

Artichokes frequently have bugs that cannot be washed out. To use artichokes, you must generally remove all the leaves before cooking. You may then:

- Just cook and eat the artichoke hearts, which infrequently have bugs, OR
- Check all the leaves, remove any bugs, and then cook and eat the leaves.

NOTE If you are preparing many artichokes, you could:

- Remove the leaves of three artichokes,
- Check all the leaves, and, if there are no bugs,
- Cook and eat the remaining whole artichokes in that batch without removing the leaves.

Finding Bug in Cooked Artichoke

If you cook an artichoke and then find a bug in it, the entire artichoke is not kosher and may not be eaten, even if you cut away the part with the bug in it.

REASON We assume that there are more bugs inside.

ASPARAGUS

Asparagus

Asparagus, whether fresh or frozen, is OK to eat:

- **Fresh Asparagus:** You must wash fresh asparagus and check for bugs.
- **Frozen Asparagus:** You do not need to wash frozen asparagus.

BROCCOLI

Broccoli

Fresh broccoli must be soaked (preferably in a solution of chlorine in water) and the water checked until no bugs are found.

NOTE You may wash indefinitely until the bugs are gone.

FIGS

Figs

Figs must be checked.

REASON Fig worms sometimes grow in the fruit while the fruit is still on the tree.

NOTE Worms may only be eaten if they grew in the fruit after it was picked and never came out (and

even then, only if they are not considered disgusting).

MUSHROOMS

Mushroom

You must check mushroom gills for bugs and you must remove them if present.

NOTE This is normally not a problem in US-grown mushrooms but is a problem in mushrooms grown in China and other countries.

PARSLEY

Parsley

Parsley's bugs can be removed by hitting the parsley on a table, but you must still check the parsley after hitting.

RASPBERRIES

Raspberries

Raspberries and other hollow berries: Blow into them to remove bugs.

ROMAINE

Romaine

Romaine can have green or black bugs, which must be removed.

SEA VEGETABLES

Sea Vegetables

Sea vegetables are OK whether raw/fresh, dried, or toasted, but you must check for small crustaceans and other sea life.

SPICES

Spices

Spices (pure) are OK everywhere but beware of bugs. If the spices are ground, you may use them.

REASON Any bugs would be ground up and not visible.

NOTE Spices from China, even if ground, need a hechsher.

NOTE Spices from Eretz Yisrael may have teruma or ma'aser issues.

SPINACH

Spinach

Fresh spinach may have bugs and must be checked.

Frozen spinach does not need to be checked, especially if chopped.

NOTE Although chopped spinach may not be chopped finely enough to grind up very small bugs such as aphids, you may still eat the spinach.

STRAWBERRIES

Strawberries

To eat strawberries:

- Cut off the green at the top, and

- Soak the remaining strawberry in mildly soapy water.

NOTE This applies to fresh or frozen strawberries since bugs can burrow into the surface. (Defrost frozen strawberries before trying to remove bugs.)

VINEGAR

Vinegar

Vinegar has “eels” in it during production, but the eels are typically filtered out and you may use the vinegar.

KASHRUT: GRAPE JUICE AND WINE

KASHRUT: WINE SUPERVISION

When No Wine Mashgiach Needed

No mashgiach is needed if:

- The owner of wine production and all of the workers are shomer Shabbat, and
- No non-Jews or non-shomer Shabbat Jews come in contact with the wine or grape juice.

KASHRUT: UNCOOKED GRAPE JUICE/WINE

Kashrut: Open, Uncooked Wine: Drinking or Benefiting From

You may not DRINK or DERIVE ANY BENEFIT FROM open (unsealed), non-mevushal (uncooked, previously kosher) wine or grape juice that has been handled by:

- A non-Jew, or
- Any Jew who intentionally does not observe the laws of Shabbat.

NOTE Even though some people are not stringent about this, they should be since the prohibition is from the Talmud.

NOTE “Deriving benefit” includes that you may not sell it, feed it to an animal, etc.

NOTE There may be exceptions for cases involving large losses. A large loss is subjective to the individual's actual wealth and also to that person's perception of what is a large loss. Consult a rabbi.

Kashrut: Open, Uncooked Wine: From When May a Non-Observant Person Not Handle?

A non-Jew or non-shomer Shabbat Jew may not handle wine (or grape juice) once the juice has been separated from the lees (the remaining solid parts of the grapes).

NOTE Once ANY juice has been removed from the vat, all of the remaining grape juice or wine becomes subject to becoming non-kosher if contacted by anyone other than a shomer-Shabbat Jew.

KASHRUT: KILAYIM

Kashrut: Kilayim

See Forbidden Mixtures (Kilayim): Plants.

KASHRUT: ORLA

Kashrut: Orla

See Orla.

KASHRUT: PAT AKUM

When You May Eat Pat Akum

You may eat bread that was not baked by Jews (*pat akum*) as long as you know that it is *kosher* or it was supervised as being *kosher* by a reliable source.

KASHRUT: YASHAN

Kashrut: Yashan

See *Yashan*.

KASHERING

INTRODUCTION TO KASHERING

Introduction to Kashering

See Introduction to Food Nullification: Utensils (*Kashering*).

KASHERING: BURNERS

KASHERING: BURNERS: GAS

Kashering a Gas Stove

To *kasher* a gas stove:

- Remove the burner grates,
- Clean off any deposits,
- Place the grates on a clean surface inside the oven, and
- Heat the grates to the oven's maximum temperature for 40 minutes.

KASHERING: BURNERS: ELECTRIC

Kashering a Clean Electric Stove

To *kasher* a clean electric stove, turn the burners on to the highest setting until the burner glows red (this is easier to see at night) or until a piece of paper will burn on it (the paper does not need to burst into flame).

KASHERING: DISHWASHERS

Kashering a Dishwasher from Non-Kosher to Kosher

Dishwashers may generally not be *kashered* except when made of stainless steel (and have no non-kasherable materials inside, such as plastic, silicone, or rubber).

NOTE If the racks are not stainless steel or if they are coated with plastic or other substances, they may not be *kashered*.

Kashering a Dishwasher from Dairy to Meat, or Vice Versa

You may not *kasher* a dishwasher (even if it is stainless steel) from *dairy* to meat, or vice versa, in order to use the dishwasher for *dairy* and for meat utensils, even sequentially.

KASHERING: GRILLS

Kashering a Grill

Make a grill red hot to *kasher* it.

KASHERING: OVENS

Kashering an Electric or Gas Self-Cleaning Oven

To kasher a self-cleaning electric or gas oven, you do not need to clean it first. Just run the self-clean cycle.

Kashering an Electric or Gas Regular Oven

To kasher an oven that is not self-cleaning, you must:

- Remove any deposits on the walls, racks, and window.

NOTE If there are stains or deposits, you must clean them off or burn them off. If the stains or deposits do not come off after two cycles of using strong oven cleaner such as Easy Off, the oven is considered sufficiently clean.

- Turn the oven on to its maximum temperature for 40 minutes.

NOTE Self-cleaning ovens attain a higher maximum temperature than do non-self-cleaning ovens.

Kashering Oven Racks

You may kasher oven racks by putting them in a self-cleaning oven and running the self-clean cycle. Or, clean with oven cleaner and then put into a normal oven on its highest temperature for 40 minutes.

KASHERING: TABLEWARE

Kashering: Tableware

See [Introduction to Food Nullification: Utensils \(Kashering\)](#).

KASHERING: UTENSILS

Kashering: Utensils

See [Introduction to Food Nullification: Utensils \(Kashering\)](#).

HOW TO PREPARE FOOD IN A NON-KOSHER KITCHEN

How to Prepare Food in a Non-Kosher Kitchen

BAKING IN NON-KOSHER OVEN

An oven that has not been used for at least 24 hours is considered, d'oraita, to be neutral/pareve, but only if it is clean. D'rabanan, it is still not kosher, but this may be useful for when you can be lenient; e.g., if there is a safek.

NOTE Even when baking in a non-kosher oven, you must cook the food in a kosher utensil.

INTRODUCTION TO BAKING IN NON-KOSHER OVEN

Baking in a Non-Kosher Oven

How To Tell if Oven Is Clean

To determine whether a non-kosher oven with black or brown spots is clean, scratch them:

- If the substance crumbles, the spots are OK and you may bake non-liquid food in that oven without covering the food.
- If the spots do not crumble or they remain immovable or come off in flakes rather than crumbles, consider the oven not clean.

Uncovered Food; Clean (Non-Kosher) Oven

You may cook food uncovered in a non-kosher oven if:

- The oven rack and walls are clean, and
- The food is not “liquid.”

NOTE Non-liquid is defined as not being liquid before cooking OR not being liquid after cooking, but the food does not need to be non-liquid at both times. Examples of “non-liquid” foods:

- Apple cobbler
- Lasagna
- Meat (that will create gravy at the end)
- Pudding
- Raw fish.

SITUATION You plan to bake uncovered food in a clean, non-kosher oven in which the racks are not clean.

WHAT TO DO Place two layers of foil under the baking utensil.

Double Wrapping

When To Double Wrap

Double-wrap food before baking in a non-kosher radiant-heat oven if:

- The rack and/or oven are not clean;
- The food that you are baking is liquid at any time during the cooking process; OR
- Some of the food you are baking spills onto the rack or oven surfaces.

How To Double Wrap

When wrapping food for cooking in a non-kosher oven, the wrapping material does not need to seal completely, but the:

- Food must be completely covered with two layers of foil or plastic;
- Layers must keep water vapor out from between the layers; and
- Surfaces of the utensil must all be covered.

SPILLED KOSHER FOOD IN NON-KOSHER OVEN

Kosher Food Spilling in Non-Kosher Oven

If kosher food spills inside a non-kosher oven in which you are cooking uncovered kosher food (whether liquid or non-liquid), consult a rabbi about whether the uncovered kosher food may still be eaten.

NOTE In this case, it makes no difference whether the oven is clean or dirty because the spilled food is wet and takes on the non-kosher status of the oven. When the spilled food vaporizes, it carries the non-kosher essence to the kosher food or utensil.

NOTE If the non-kosher oven had not been used for more than 24 hours, the food is probably still kosher b'di'avad.

NOTE This applies to food spilled either from the same utensil in which you were cooking the kosher food or from a different utensil.

FROZEN FOOD IN NON-KOSHER OVEN

Double Wrap Frozen Food in Non-Kosher Oven

Frozen food is considered to be wet food regarding cooking it in a non-kosher oven or regarding its being neutral for dairy and meat issues: If the oven is not kosher, the frozen food must be double wrapped, even if

the oven is clean.

AIRLINE MEALS IN NON-KOSHER OVEN

Heating Airline Meals in Non-Kosher Oven

Airline meals are usually non-liquid, so even if they are single-wrapped, it is OK to heat them in a non-kosher oven as long as no non-kosher food contacts the kosher food container.

COOKING IN NON-KOSHER MICROWAVE OVEN

Microwave Oven: Kosher Status

Introduction to Microwave Oven: Kosher Status

If a microwave oven's walls/floor/door do not become hot (more than 120° F, or 49° C), the microwave oven does not become non-kosher, dairy, meat, or non-Passover/chametz.

NOTE A microwave oven that does not normally get hot, may get hotter than 120° F if you cook:

- A liquid or moist food for a long time (even if less than 10 minutes),
- Several liquid or moist items sequentially, or
- Popcorn and similar foods.

If a microwave oven's walls/floor/door get hot, the oven can become dairy, meat, or non-kosher (if they become one gender and then the opposite gender is cooked or if non-kosher food has been cooked in it). If any surface--including walls, door, floor, etc.--that gets hot are plastic or coated metal, it cannot be returned to kosher or pareve. However, if the surfaces are all made of metal, they may be kasherable. Consult a rabbi.

NOTE If the microwave oven does get hot, it cannot be kashered at all--not for Passover and not from non-kosher to kosher. To check if your microwave oven gets hot, see [How To Check If a Microwave Oven Will Get Hot during Cooking](#)

Microwave Oven: Kosher Status: Walls and Door

Since microwave oven walls and doors do not normally get hot (more than 120° F, or 49° C), there is usually no need to kasher them from milk to meat (or back to milk); from ordinary use to Passover use; or from non-kosher to kosher. Just clean all surfaces.

Microwave Oven: Kosher Status: Floor

Microwave oven floors can get hot, especially where there is no rotating glass tray and the utensil is placed directly on the oven floor. All microwave ovens should be assumed to get hot unless you have tested them personally.

Microwave Floor

Cover the floor (ideally with styrofoam or another substance that blocks heat and moisture) in a non-kosher microwave oven.

Glass Tray

The glass tray does not become non-kosher and does not become dairy or meat or chametz (unless it was removed and used in a conventional oven) as long as it is clean.

Plastic Tray Support

The plastic support under the glass tray must be cleaned and must be blocked from contact with actual cooking utensils and from food if the tray:

- Has any food of the gender opposite that of the food being cooked,
- Has non-kosher food on it, or

- Is dirty and you cannot tell with what.

How To Check If a Microwave Oven Will Get Hot during Cooking

To determine if the walls of a microwave oven will get hot during cooking:

- Boil water for as long as food would typically be cooked in that microwave oven, and
- Touch the inside walls, floor, door, and ceiling
 - If the walls are too hot to touch, the walls may acquire the gender of any food cooked in the oven. (If the walls are already the opposite gender when cooking a food, the oven may become non-kosher.)
 - If the walls are not too hot to touch, then no change of status occurs.

Non-Kosher Microwave Oven: Hot Oven, Liquid or Solid Food

If the walls of a non-kosher microwave oven get hotter than 120° F, you must double wrap any liquid or solid food you cook in that oven.

NOTE If you did not double wrap liquid or solid food cooked in a non-kosher microwave oven, consult a rabbi about whether you may eat the food.

Non-Kosher Microwave Oven: Non-Hot Oven

If the walls of a non-kosher microwave oven stay less than 120° F, you do not need to wrap or cover liquid or non-liquid food, as long as:

1. The microwave oven is clean and dry, and
2. If the tray is non-glass or non-Pyrex, you put a layer of separation (plastic, styrofoam, etc...) that blocks heat and any moisture underneath the cooking utensil.

COOKING ON NON-KOSHER STOVE

Setting Down Hot Lid on Non-Kosher Stove Top

SITUATION You set down a hot pot lid on a non-kosher stove top.

STATUS

- Lid is dry and stove is clean: lid remains kosher.
- Lid is dry or wet and stove is dirty: lid is non-kosher.
- Lid is wet and stove had hot non-kosher mixtures on it within the previous 24 hours--even if the stove is clean: lid is not kosher.
- Lid is dry or wet and stove is clean and did not have hot non-kosher mixtures on it within the previous 24 hours: lid is kosher.

COOKING WITH NON-KOSHER UTENSILS

Using a Non-Kosher Kitchen Utensil

Introduction to Using a Non-Kosher Cooking Utensil

You may not use a non-kosher cooking utensil (pot, pan, baking dish, etc.) for cooking even if the utensil is clean and has not been used for more than 24 hours (unless you kasher it first).

Fruit Cut with Non-Kosher Knife

You should wash most fresh fruit cut with a non-kosher knife in order to remove whatever non-kosher food

might have been on the knife from before.

NOTE Fruit with a sharp taste—such as lemons or tart apples—may not be used if cut with a non-kosher knife, regardless of whether the knife had been used within 24 hours.

WASHING IN NON-KOSHER SINK

Using a Non-Kosher Sink

A dish is still kosher b'd'avad if heated to 120° F (49° C) or more in a clean, non-kosher sink that had remained below 120° F for the previous 24 hours.

TOVELING (SEE TAHARA/TUM'A)

NIDA/TAHARAT HAMISHPACHA

Four Most Common Nida Questions

1. What Makes a Woman a Nida

Introduction to What Makes a Woman a Nida

Vaginal Blood Flow

Only vaginal blood flow makes a woman nida.

Nida D'Oraita

According to Torah law (d'oraita), a woman becomes a nida when she experiences a flow of uterine blood, preceded or accompanied by a hargasha. Because uterine blood flow is difficult to distinguish from the more general vaginal blood flow, we assume that a vaginal blood flow is from the uterus--unless a medical person (it could be a midwife) determines that the blood flow is not uterine.

Nida D'Rabanan

By rabbinic law (d'rabanan), a woman can become a nida even with only a qualifying stain (see below).

Hargasha

A hargasha is anything that signals that the woman's period is imminent. There are three classical hargashot, as well as possible hargashot that pertain only to an individual woman.

NOTE Many women today do not have hargashot.

Classical Hargashot

There are three classical hargashot:

1) Body Tremor

2) Petichat HaMakor

Some women, at petichat ha'makor (“opening of the uterus”), have a sensation of release similar to when one's bladder opens to urinate.

3) Zivat Davar Lach

Sensation of wet discharge that comes only with her period; this is not the wet discharge that every woman normally feels multiple times daily.

NOTE She does not necessarily need to feel it coming from her cervix in order for it to make her a nida.

Individual Hargashot

What Is an Individual Hargasha

The individual *hargasha* can be any physiological occurrence (pimples on her face, a bout of yawning, a bloated feeling in the belly, etc.) that correlates with a woman's getting her period within 24 hours. To become established as a *hargasha*, it must have happened three times in a row.

NOTE Cramps for most women may be a *hargasha*, since they may mean that the woman is about to have her period.

When a woman has a *hargasha*, we assume that her period has started, and she should immediately stop what she is doing and check internally with a *bedika* cloth. If she does a *bedika* as soon as possible and the cloth shows a forbidden color, or shows no discharge at all, she immediately becomes *nida* for at least 12 days, after which she goes to the *mikva*.

NOTE If she had a *hargasha* and finds no blood and no discharge, she becomes a *nida*, since we assume there was blood and she just didn't find it. If the *bedika* cloth shows brown, magenta, salmon, brick, amber, orange, etc., the *rabbi* will want to see the cloth to determine her status.

NOTE Most medium browns are OK.

What To Do If Not Sure

If she is not sure she has had a *hargasha*, she asks a *rabbi* and together they will sort out the answer.

Nida D'Rabanan

Stain (without *Hargasha*)

Stain Colors

A *rabbi* should be consulted in all matters of questionable colors of stains. Some may seem to you to be forbidden but turn out to be permissible, and vice versa.

Stain Location

A stain of a color that could make a woman a *nida* can be on material or on the woman's body. None of the following lenient conditions apply if the woman is *nida d'oraita*:

Stains on Material

A stain on material must conceivably have been in contact with the lower regions of her body (nightgown, sheet, towel, etc.). A stain on material makes the woman a *nida* only if ALL FOUR following conditions apply:

1. **Stain Is on White Material.**
2. **Stain Is on Material that Can Become Impure (*mikabel tum'a*)**—natural materials such as cotton or silk.

NOTE A combination of polyester and cotton counts as cotton.

3. **Stain Is at least Size of *Gris*/US penny.**

NOTE A bunch of disconnected stains will not be a problem as long as no one of them is at least a *gris* on its own.

4. **Stain Is Not Positively Attributable to Another Cause** (such as hemorrhoids).

NOTE If the woman finds a stain (even during or after the seven clean days), even if it is more than the size of a *gris*, she is OK if the material is not white OR is not *mikabel tum'a*. However, if the stain is larger than half of a US dollar bill, she should consult a *rabbi*.

If she had a *hargasha* before she found the stain, none of these leniencies apply.

Stains on Woman's Body

If a woman finds a stain on the lower regions of her body, it will make her a nida if it is:

1. Not positively attributable to another cause, AND
2. At least the size of a *gris*. For small, unconnected spots, she must evaluate whether, together, they equal the size of a *gris* (on material, the spots DO NOT get combined). If yes, she should consult a rabbi.

II. HARCHAKOT: How Do the Couple Conduct Themselves while the Wife is a Nida?

According to Torah law, when a woman is a nida, she and her husband are prohibited not only from having intercourse, but also (“lo tikrav”—Vayikra 18:19) from having any physical contact of a passionate or romantic nature (negiya shel chibuk v'nishuk)--those patterns of physical contact that often lead to intercourse. Since the penalty for violation is kareit, husband and wife should live separately during the nida period, but because we don't, we use “distancers” (harchakot) as reminders of distance while living together in the same home. The harchakot sensitize us to the smallest gestures of love. The couple who know that in a finite amount of time their union will not only be permitted, but even be davar sh'bekedusha--a thing of sanctity--will have the willpower to wait it out.

These harchakot are applied during the nida period:

General Harchakot

S'chok v'Kalut Rosh In general, avoid fun activities which could lead to lightheadedness)

Negiya Afilu b'Etzba Ketana Avoid any physical contact, even if not romantic.

The Bedroom

Mita Achat ("Single Bed") Do not share one bed. You must have two separate beds, but there is no standard for how far apart the separate mattresses and linens should be, except that they must be more than 1 tefach (3.5 inches) apart from each other. If there is one headboard, one bed should be moved away from the headboard.

L'Hatzia Mitato b'Fanav The wife may not, in front of her husband, prepare his bed for sleeping (as opposed to the chore of making the beds in the morning).

Sitting on the Bed The husband may not sit or lie on wife's bed unless she is out of town; the wife may not lie on her husband's bed in his presence.

Wining and Dining

K'ara Achat ("Single Plate") Husband and wife may not share a plate as they eat. A husband may not eat of his wife's leftovers unless someone else ate from it in between, it was transferred to another plate, or she has left the table for the duration of the meal.

Shulchan E Chad ("Single Table") You may not eat at the same table unless you put an item between yourselves that is not normally on the table. Reminders (heker) can be napkin rings, a flower, a food item known not to be part of the meal, etc. Special placemats are also acceptable reminders.

NOTE If other people are sharing the meal with you, you do not need a reminder.

Hagashat Ochel Li'Fanav ("Serving Food in Front of Him") The wife may not directly serve her husband food except in an altered way.

EXAMPLE

The wife may put the plate to the side of her husband instead of in front of him.

Mezigat HaKos Bi'Fanav The husband may not pour his wife a cup of any drink in front of her. The wife may not pour her husband a cup of any drink in front of him.

Lishlo'ach La Kos Bracha The husband may not even send or pass a cup of wine to his wife, even by someone else and even if she is in a different room. After the husband makes kiddush, havdala, or sheva brachot, he puts the wine down in front of himself and then his wife may take the cup and drink. If there are other people present, the husband may pour wine into several cups and one of them may be passed to his wife (since no specific cup was designated for his wife).

Individual Harchakot

Histaklut b'Mkomot HaMechusim The man may not gaze appreciatively at those parts of the woman's body that are normally covered.

Hoshata M'Yad L'Yad ("Passing from Hand to Hand") The couple may not pass things by hand to each other.

Zerika MiYad L'Yad The husband or wife may not throw something for the other to catch.

Safsal Mitnaded The couple may not sit on any surface that is not firmly attached to the ground and in which the movement of one person causes the other person to move.

Tiyul baSfina O Agala: The couple may not take a pleasure (destination-less) trip on a boat or wagon. However, if they have a destination, it is OK.

Perfume The husband may not intentionally smell his wife's perfume (even if she is not wearing it!).

Yitzikat V'Hava'at Mayim V'Richitzat Panav, Yadav, V'Raglav Except for mitzvot, the wife may not draw or bring water to wash his hand, face, or feet or draw his bath for him.

Illness The wife may do what the husband needs if he is sick. If the wife is sick, the husband may only help her in cases of substantial need.

III. Tahara after Nida:

The Five Steps of Purification

1. Minimum Duration of Nida

A woman will be a nida even if she saw blood on only one day. But she must wait until the fifth day before she may begin counting her seven clean days (in unusual circumstances, she MAY be permitted to reduce the 5 initial day count--consult a rabbi).

NOTE In counting nida (bleeding) days (as opposed to clean days), part of a day counts as a full day.

EXAMPLE If the bleeding starts at 2p on Wednesday, the woman counts from 2p until sundown as Day 1. Thursday is Day 2, etc. Sunday before sundown, she may do the first bedika.

2. Hefsek Tahara

On the fifth day (or whenever--after the fifth day--the bleeding and staining seems to be ending), she does a hefsek tahara to check very carefully internally to make sure all the bleeding and staining is over. The hefsek tahara has three parts:

1. Wash or cleanse lower regions of the body.
2. Do an internal check/bedika: Insert a white cloth into vagina and circle it around to make sure to get every nook and cranny.
3. Moch dachuk: Insert a bedika cloth within two *halachic* hours of sunset and leave it in until after dark.

REASON The seven clean days must be complete days. Since we don't know exactly what time the first day begins, the cloth is inserted before sunset of the first "clean" day.

NOTE If doing this causes any problem for her, she should consult a rabbi.

3. Count of Seven Clean Days with Three Components

1. Bedika

The woman must have seven complete consecutive *halachic* days free of any impure discharge (generally means bleeding). She should make an internal examination each day when she gets up, and another before sunset. If this regimen will cause her problems, she should consult a rabbi.

2. White Underpants

During the seven clean days, the woman must wear white underpants. But if she wears tight-fitting underpants, as in contemporary clothing, only the part under the vaginal area must be white.

NOTE If the woman has any bleeding during or after the seven clean days, she should consult a rabbi.

3. No Hesech Da'at

A woman does not need to think about the seven clean days all of the time, but she must keep in mind, during the entire nida purification process, that she is not in an active nida state.

SITUATION A woman found a stain and asked a rabbi about it. She assumed she was definitely nida.

WHAT TO DO Once she assumes that she has become a nida during that seven-day period, she must begin her count again—even once she has found out that she was not, in fact, a nida.

NOTE If she asked the rabbi while not yet assuming that she was definitely a nida, she may continue her original count after the rabbi determines that she was not a nida.

4. Chafifa

Chafifa General Rules

The woman must do total body cleansing, particularly the hairy areas, to make sure there is no intervening substance (*chatzitza*). Anything that is not part of the body, and which can be fairly easily removed, should be removed before immersing in a mikva.

REASON In order for a woman to become *tehora*, she needs to be totally immersed in the mikva all at one time, with no *chatzitza* between her and the mikva waters.

There are three definitions of *chatzitza*:

a. D'Oraita

According to Torah law, something is only a *chatzitza* if it is "*ruva v'makpida*"—something that covers the body **AND** bothers the woman. Very few *chatzitza* are in this category; here are some:

- Full body cast.
- Being covered with sand.
- Being sweaty from head to toe.

b. D'Rabanan

Chazal said a *chatzitza* is something that covers the body **OR** bothers the woman.

EXAMPLES

- Moisturizer that covers most of her body.

- Adhesive that is left on her skin after a band-aid has been removed.
- Imperfect manicure, if she would not go to an interview like that.

c. *Nashim Nahagu*

Nashim Nahagu means a practice that women took upon themselves: Everything that a woman can easily get off, she tries to get off--even if it covers only a small part of the body and it does not bother her at all. This is a custom (*minhag*) that later became a *d'rabanan halacha*.

NOTE In cases in which this type of *halacha* generates a *shalom bayit* issue or would cause someone to avoid immersing in the *mikva*, consult a *rabbi*.

Chafifa: Nails, Teeth, Contact Lenses

Cutting Nails

The woman should cut her nails at least flush with the fingertips.

NOTE If a woman would not want to immerse in the *mikva* because she doesn't want to cut her nails, ask a *rabbi*.

Cleaning Teeth/Removing Contact Lenses

The woman must clean her teeth and remove contact lenses even though the *mikva* waters do not need to contact the internal surfaces of the mouth or the eyes.

REASON While the woman is not required to open her mouth or eyes while immersing, the water must be able to make contact if she did open her mouth or eyes.

If You Forgot

If she is already home or after having relations, she found she had forgotten to take out her lenses, or she finds another *chatzitzta*, she should ask a *rabbi*.

5. Immersion in *Mikva/Tevila*

***Mikva*: Timing**

When To Go To *Mikva*

If her husband is in town, it is a *mitzva* to go to the *mikva* as soon as *halachically* permitted.

When *Mikva* in Unsafe Neighborhood

If the *mikva* is in a neighborhood that is unsafe at night, she may go during the day (she immerses on the eighth day instead of the night of the seventh night).

When *Mikva* Night Is Friday Night

Any woman whose *mikva* night is Friday night SHOULD make every effort to go to the *mikva* that night.

If *Mikva* Too Far

If *mikva* night is Friday night and the *mikva* is not within walking distance (and/or there is inclement weather), in general she may postpone going until after *Shabbat* is over. Consult a *rabbi* about driving Friday afternoon and immersing before dark for such instances as:

- ***Shalom Bayit*** (in this case, she is not permitted see her husband until after dark Friday night).
- **Dangerous Neighborhood.**
- **Infertility Issues** (if she will miss ovulation if she does not go Friday night).

Preparations before Friday Night

Ideally, the woman should complete her full-scale *mikva* preparation--including bath and shower--before *Shabbat*, light candles before *Shabbat*, walk to the *mikva*, immerse after dark, and then walk home.

If the mikva is within walking distance and the weather is inclement, the first-level b'di'avad is to finish preparing for Shabbat and mikva, including making a blessing on the Shabbat candles (verbally stipulating that she is not accepting Shabbat at this lighting), be driven to the mikva, and wait until her turn to immerse.

Mikva: How To Immerse

Kosher immersion/tevila requires simultaneous immersion of every exposed part of the body (not bet ha'starim). Here is the best way to accomplish simultaneous immersion:

- Enter the water until it is about 12 inches above the navel.
- Make sure that every part of your body is relaxed (if you squeeze anything, you create crevices and cracks that impede complete access to your skin).
- “Flesh”/basar is exposed to the water when standing while leaning a little forward.
- Exhale and push yourself under the water until you are certain that all of your body and all of your hair are submerged.
- Once your head is above the surface of the water, say the blessing and then immerse again, the same way.

Back Home

If neither spouse wants to have marital relations, that is no problem; however, if either one wants to, the spouse is required to accommodate the interested spouse.

EXCEPTION If a spouse does not feel well (not if too tired--that is no excuse!): RMH uses this guideline: If you feel so bad that you would not go out of house to pick up \$500, you are sick!

IV. Anticipating the Next Period/Veset

What To Anticipate

In anticipating the time of the month when her period is most likely to occur (onat ha'veset), a woman must determine both:

1. The day of the month, and
2. Whether it will begin during the daytime period (sunrise to sunset) or the nighttime period (from sunset to sunrise)

NOTE This period may be more or less than 12 hours!

What To Do

Once the woman has determined her onat ha'veset, she and her husband must abstain from relations during that daytime or nighttime period. If the onat ha'veset passed and the period did not come (determined by 1 or 2 bedikot during the onat ha'veset), then the husband and wife may resume a normal marital relationship until her period comes.

NOTE Although the halacha refers to abstaining from relations during that period, many people are stringent (machmir) to also abstain from intimate affectionate contact (negiya shel chibuk v'nishuk). But additional prohibitions (harchakot) beyond negiya shel chibuk v'nishuk, such as passing food, sitting on a moving object that one person moves, etc., do not apply to this anticipation period.

NOTE Many people also abstain from relations and intimate contact during the day and night preceding the expected veset.

Regular and Irregular

Every woman needs to be able to anticipate her next period, whether she is a) regular or b) irregular. “Regular” is determined by any pattern to one's menstrual cycle that occurs three times in a row.

NOTE It is very uncommon for a woman to maintain her regular period for a long time.

Anticipating a Regular Period

Here are the five most classic regular patterns:

1. *Veset HaChodesh* (Monthly Cycle)

Veset ha'chodesh is when the period appears in three consecutive months:

- a) On the exact same Jewish-calendar date, and
- b) All three times at night, or all three times during the day.

EXAMPLE

A woman gets her period on these three dates:

12 Tishrei--night

12 Cheshvan—night

12 Kislev—night

The couple will abstain 12 Tevet—night.

NOTE Many people begin to abstain from the 11th during the day.

2. *Veset Haflaga* (Intervals Cycle)

Veset haflaga is when the menstrual period appears on four consecutive occasions at three intervals of identical length apart and they are either all during the daytime or all during the nighttime.

3. *Veset HaGuf* (Body Symptoms Cycle)

In *veset ha'guf*, the menstrual period comes within one day after a very specific symptom that is experienced as heralding the period, such as lower back ache, aching breasts, etc.

4. *Veset HaMurkav* (Combination Cycle)

In *veset ha'murkav*, the woman is regular, three times in a row, for a Body Symptom (#3: *Veset HaGuf*) in conjunction with either a Monthly Cycle (#1: *Veset HaChodesh*) or an Intervals Cycle (#2: *Veset Haflaga*).

EXAMPLE

On the 10th of three Hebrew months in a row, a woman gets lower abdominal cramps; and on the 12th of each Hebrew month, for three months in a row, she gets her period.

NOTE If she gets cramps on the 11th of the month, she does not need to separate and she may ignore those symptoms for that month. She will separate once she gets her period.

5. *Veset HaMa'aseh* (Action Cycle)

In *veset ha'ma'aseh*, a particular activity has caused her period to come three months in a row.

EXAMPLE

A woman goes to a sauna and that causes her period.

Anticipating an Irregular Period

A woman with an irregular period may have to abstain from relations and affectionate intimate contact (*negiya shel chibuk v'nishuk*) during these three *onot*/time periods:

1. *Yom HaChodesh*

Same Hebrew calendar date and the same daytime or nighttime period as her prior period started (but it has not yet been three times in a row).

2. *Haflaga*

Same interval of days between her two most recent periods, projected to the next month (daytime or nighttime period).

3. *Ona Beinonit*

Thirtieth day after the most recent period when counting intervals. Count from Day 1 of Period 1 through Day 1 of Period 2.

NOTE The 30-day interval includes both start days.

NOTE The 30th day, every other month, will be the same as *Yom HaChodesh*.

PRAVERS

INTRODUCTION TO PRAYERS

Introduction to Prayers

Prayer brings us closer to God. When we ask for things from God, even though God already knows what we want and need, we get merit (*zechut*) for the prayer.

Particularly in *synagogue*, a holy place, we must be always cognizant of God's presence and take special care to show respect to God in His house. This awareness is even more important than memorizing the *halachot* of prayer: those who speak in *synagogue* are showing disrespect to God as well as disturbing others and preventing them from praying with concentration (*kavana*).

The three daily prayer services--*shacharit*, *mincha*, and *ma'ariv*--are related to the three forefathers who instituted them. They partly take the place of—and are modeled after--the *Temple* sacrifices.

If you find you have made an error in saying a blessing or prayer, you may correct your error without having to repeat any previous parts if you do so within 2.5 seconds.

NOTE Prayers (*tefilot*) are said at set times; blessings (*brachot*) are said whenever the correct situation occurs for them. Even though prayers contain blessings within them, blessings and prayers are in separate sections in this website.

PRE-PRAYER

PRE-PRAYER: MENTAL PREPARATION

Introduction to Mental Preparation for Praying

Before saying blessings, but especially before saying any of the prayer services that include the *amida*, consider that you are speaking to the Creator of the universe and focus your thoughts on whatever prayers you will be saying.

PRE-PRAYER: ATTIRE

Man's Head Covering for Prayers or Torah Study

See Attire: [Man's Head Covering for Prayers or Torah Study](#).

Attire for Amida

The minimum attire required for men and women to say the *amida* is to be dressed appropriately to meet an important and respectable person.

Praying in Bare Feet on Stone Floor

You may pray in bare feet on any type of floor, even a stone floor, except when saying the *amida*.

NOTE You may not say the *amida* in bare feet.

Praying in a Kittel on Rosh Hashana

For those who have the custom of wearing a kittel on Rosh Hashana, the kittel is only worn for shacharit and musaf.

PRE-PRAYER: CHARITY

Charity To Enhance Prayers

It is an enhancement of our prayers to give charity at shacharit and mincha (except on Shabbat and Jewish festivals).

PRE-PRAYER: WASHING HANDS

Washing Hands before Prayer Service with Amida

You should wash your hands, even if they are not dirty, before saying any prayer service that contains the amida, but you do not need to go out of your way to wash them.

Washing Hands after Touching Animal

You must wash your hands after touching an animal, before saying blessings or prayers.

PRE-PRAYER: GREETING PEOPLE

Pre-Shacharit: Greeting People

Greeting people before shacharit is OK; just don't go out your way to meet someone.

WHO SHOULD PRAY

WHO SHOULD PRAY: WOMEN

WOMEN'S REQUIREMENTS TO PRAY

Women's Requirements To Pray

For women's and girls requirements to pray, see [Women: Prayer](#).

BABY CARE OR PRAYER

Baby Care instead of Praying

A mother of young children who require her continual attention should skip saying prayers, even for an entire day, if it will take her attention away from caring for her baby.

When You May Nurse a Baby while Praying

If a baby is clean, a woman may nurse a baby while reading Psalms, saying blessings, and saying the shema, but not while saying the amida.

REASON It is difficult to concentrate while holding a baby.

WITH WHOM TO PRAY

WITH WHOM TO PRAY: PRAYER QUORUM (MINYAN)

WITH WHOM TO PRAY: SEEKING A QUORUM (MINYAN)

How Much Effort To Pray with a Minyan

Praying with a minyan is very important and you should travel up to 18 minutes away in order to get to a minyan.

NOTE If waking up early will mess up the rest of your day, you do not need to wake up to go.

EXAMPLE You may pray by yourself if joining a minyan would cause you:

- To be late to work,
- To lose your job,
- To interfere with your caring for a sick person or someone who needs attention,
- To injure your health,
- Financial loss, or
- Shalom bayit problems.

WITH WHOM TO PRAY: WHAT CONSTITUTES A QUORUM (MINYAN)

How Many Men Needed for a Minyan

A minyan is a prayer quorum of 10 Jewish men who are at least 13 years old. At least six of the men must be praying.

WITH WHOM TO PRAY: WHO MAY BE COUNTED IN A QUORUM (MINYAN)

Non-Shomer Shabbat Jew Counted in Minyan

A non-shomer Shabbat Jew may be counted as part of a minyan.

Boy less than 13 Years Old

A boy who has not reached 13 years of age may not be counted in a minyan, even if one day short of 13 years.

WITH WHOM TO PRAY: QUORUM (MINYAN) SIZE

Large Minyan or Small

In general, praying with a large group of Jews is preferable to praying with a small group.

REASON A large group is considered to be more honoring of God (*b'rov am hadrat melech*).

NOTE You may pray with a smaller minyan if you are not happy with the large minyan, such as the speed of the service, people talking during the service, or inconvenient timing when you need to get to work.

WITH WHOM TO PRAY: WHICH PRAYERS REQUIRE A QUORUM (MINYAN)

Prayers that Require a Minyan

Although it is preferable to join a minyan whenever possible, prayer services may be said without a minyan. However, certain prayers may be said (or omitted) only with a minyan present:

- Bar'chu (morning and night),
- The word “Eloheinu” in the birkat ha'mazon introduction,
- Kaddish,
- Kedusha,
- Reader's repetition of the amida,
- Sheva brachot (the seven blessings) at a wedding,
- Sheva brachot during the week following the wedding,

- 13 midot in selichot,
- Torah reading if there will be aliyot, and
- Skipping the three introductory words for the shema.

NOTE A minyan is preferable but not required for a circumcision.

WITH WHOM TO PRAY: MINYAN ETIQUETTE

WITH WHOM TO PRAY: MINYAN ETIQUETTE: PRIORITY

Priority of Synagogue Members

In leading the prayers, members of a synagogue have priority over ANY non-member, regardless of status. Next in priority:

- Yahrzeit up to second ashrei;
- Mourner within 30 days;
- Mourner after 30 days.

EXCEPTION A mourner from out of town may lead one prayer service.

WITH WHOM TO PRAY: MINYAN ETIQUETTE: NUSACH

Minyan Leader Follows Custom of Minyan

Say the entire prayer service (and not just the public portions) according to the custom of the minyan of which you are the leader, even if it differs from your custom.

WITH WHOM TO PRAY: MINYAN: AMEN

MINYAN: AMEN: WHEN TO SAY

Wait for Amen until after Completion of Blessing

Don't say amen to reply to the prayer leader's blessing until he has completely finished the blessing.

Don't Answer Amen within 2.5 Seconds

Don't answer amen if you finish a prayer or blessing within 2.5 seconds after the prayer leader (cantor) finishes the same prayer or blessing as you are saying. However, in these three cases, you may say amen, even if you finish exactly together with the leader:

- End of yishtabach;
- End of Hallel;
- Ma'ariv's shomer amo yisrael la'ad.

MINYAN: AMEN: WHEN TO INTERRUPT YOUR PRAYER

Interrupting Your Prayer To Say Amen

You may say amen to a prayer leader's blessing even if you are at a different part of the prayer service, but only at a part that you are permitted to interrupt.

Interrupting Your Blessing To Say Amen

You may not interrupt saying your own blessing in order to say amen to someone else's.

Interrupting Your Amida To Say Amen

When saying the amida yourself, do not say amen or any other replies to the prayer leader's repetition. If he says kedusha or kaddish:

- Pause in your own amida and listen without answering or saying anything.
- Once the leader has finished kedusha or kaddish, resume your private amida.

EXCEPTION If you finish the final blessing of the amida (“...Ha'mevareich et amo yisrael ba'shalom”) as the leader starts to say the kedusha, and you want to respond along with the congregation:

- Quickly say the line, “Yihiyu l'ratzon”
- Reply to the entire kedusha (kadosh, amen, and any other words that are said by the congregation) as if you had finished the amida.
- Once the leader has said the final blessing of kedusha, say “elohai netzur....”

MINYAN: AMEN: WHEN YOU CANNOT HEAR BLESSING

Saying Amen When You Cannot Hear the Blessing

Answer amen even if you cannot hear the leader saying blessings or prayers, as long as you know when he is finished each blessing.

MINYAN: AMEN: MISPRONOUNCED BLESSING

Saying Amen to Mispronunciation

Do not answer amen if the prayer leader is not saying blessings or prayers correctly, such as mispronouncing words, mumbling, slurring words, etc.

MINYAN: AMEN: WHEN 10 MEN INCLUDES PRAYER LEADER

Prayer Leader of 10 Men Should Wait

A prayer service leader for a group of only 10 men including himself should (but is not required to) wait until all 10 men have finished the private amida before he begins the reader's repetition.

- Shabbat
- Jewish Festivals
- Rosh Chodesh musaf.

REASON To have nine men replying amen to each blessing.

NOTE A minimum of six men must be finished before the reader begins the repetition. If delaying the repetition at mincha will cause the repetition to be finished after sunset, consult a rabbi.

NOTE If all nine other men will not (or may not) say amen, the leader should intend that his public amida be a “free-will offering” (nedava); otherwise, his public amida may be a bracha l'vatala. He may not intend to offer a “free-will offering” on days or services that this sacrifice was not offered in the Temple in Jerusalem:

- Shabbat
- Jewish Festivals
- Rosh Chodesh musaf.

Amida with Minyan but with less than Nine Men Answering

On Shabbat, even if there will not be at least nine men answering amen to the reader's repetition of the amida, the reader should say the repetition anyway, without intending that his repetition be counted as a nedava (which can only be offered on weekdays). If less than six men will be answering, the leader must wait before doing the repetition.

WITH WHOM TO PRAY: MINYAN: KEEPING PACE

MINYAN: KEEPING PACE: SHACHARIT MINYAN

What To Skip To Catch Up in Shacharit

If you arrive late for a shacharit minyan, or if you are lagging behind the leader, you may skip all of psukei d'zimra to catch up--except for:

- Baruch she'amar,
- Ashrei, and
- Yishtabach.

You may also not skip any parts from yishtabach to the amida.

NOTE After you have said the amida, you do not need to return to say the rest of psukei d'zimra.

NOTE This should not be done routinely. It is better to pray alone or to say the amida along with the leader during the reader's repetition of the amida in order to allow yourself time to say the psukei d'zimra.

If Arrive Late on Shabbat or Jewish Festival Morning

If you are late to minyan on Shabbat (or Jewish festival) morning, say:

- Shacharit while the minyan is saying the musaf amida (as long as it is not yet too late to say shacharit), and then say
- Musaf while the reader is repeating the amida.

MINYAN: KEEPING PACE: ANY MINYAN

FINISHING AMIDA BEFORE KEDUSHA

Finishing Amida before Leader Says Kedusha

If you arrive late for any minyan (except ma'ariv) that is about to start the amida, try to finish saying your amida before the leader gets to kedusha, if you can.

If you know you will not be able to finish your amida in time to say kedusha with the minyan:

- Wait for the leader to start the repetition of the amida.
- Say the repetition of the amida word for word with the leader, including kedusha, until the end of the third blessing (ha'el ha'kadosh).
- Once you and he have both finished saying the third blessing, you may continue at your own pace regardless of whether you will finish before or after him.

If for any reason you have not yet finished saying your amida by the time the leader begins saying the reader's repetition, do not say amen or any other replies to the prayer leader's repetition. However, when he begins to say kedusha or kaddish:

- Pause in your own amida and listen without answering or saying anything.
- Once the leader has finished kedusha (that is, he has said baruch kevod adonai mi'mkomo) or kaddish (that is, he has said da'amiran be'alma v'imru amen), resume your private amida.

EXCEPTION See [Responding to Prayer Leader before Elohai Netzur](#).

NOTE For [ma'ariv](#), if you arrive late and the [minyan](#) is about to start the [amida](#), do not say [shema](#) and the other prayers that precede the [amida](#) but start immediately so you say your [amida](#) with the [minyan](#) and then return to say the parts you skipped.

WHEN TO PAUSE OR JOIN MINYAN

When To Pause or Join Minyan: Regular Shacharit

Shema

When the [minyan](#) reaches the [shema](#) in [shacharit](#):

- If you are between [bar'chu](#) and end of [amida](#), simply:
 - Cover your eyes like everyone else, but don't say the [shema](#) line.
- If you are anywhere else:
 - Pause and, with everyone else, say the first two lines of the [shema](#) ([Shema, Yisrael...](#) and [Baruch shem...](#)), and then
 - Resume where you were.

REASON You may not interrupt your prayer between [bar'chu](#) and end of [amida](#).

Amida

SITUATION You are saying your [amida](#) in a [minyan](#) and it is close to the end of the fourth hour of the day.

WHAT TO DO Do not pause, even if the leader says [kaddish](#) or [kedusha](#), if doing so will delay you past the fourth hour.

When To Pause or Join Minyan: Shabbat/Jewish Festival Shacharit

If the leader gets to [kedusha](#) on [Shabbat](#) or [Jewish festival](#) morning and you are saying the [amida](#), you must:

- Pause until the leader has finished the blessing after [kedusha](#) ([ha'el](#)—or [ha'melech](#)—[ha'kadosh](#)), and then
- Resume your [amida](#).

During [birkat cohanim](#), you must:

- Pause in your [amida](#) until the end of [birkat cohanim](#).

EXCEPTION Do not pause, even if the leader says [kaddish](#) or [kedusha](#), if doing so will delay you past the fourth hour.

When To Pause or Join Minyan: Mincha

During [mincha](#), don't pause at all (such as for [kedusha](#) or [kaddish](#)) if, by pausing, you will not finish saying your [amida](#) before sunset.

When To Pause or Join Minyan: Ma'ariv

If the [ma'ariv minyan](#) says [shema](#), you must join them for the first two sentences (“[Shema, Yisrael...](#)” and “[Baruch shem...](#)”), unless you are saying the [amida](#).

When To Pause or Join Minyan: General Prayer Services

Here is when to pause or join the [minyan](#) during general prayer services:

- [Ashrei](#)

You do not need to interrupt your prayers to join the minyan for ashrei.

- Torah Reading

If you are saying the amida, pause only during the actual Torah reading, not during the blessings.

- Kaddish

During kaddish, you must pause in your amida until the prayer leader finishes the line of da'amiran b'alma....

- Alelu

If the minyan says alelu and you are at a part of the prayer service at which you are permitted to interrupt, you may join them.

NOTE It is a proper practice to say alelu with the congregation, even if you have already finished that prayer service.

REASON If you don't, it seems as if you are not accepting ol malchut shamayim.

WHERE TO PRAY

WHERE TO PRAY: SET PLACE

Set Place (Makom Kavv'a): Enhancement of Prayers

It is an enhancement of your prayers to set aside a regular place for praying (makom kavv'a), but it is not required.

NOTE If you have a regular seat/makom kavv'a in synagogue and you find someone sitting in your seat, it is not proper to ask that person to move if it will upset that person.

NOTE Your makom kavv'a extends to 4 amot/6'7" away from the actual seat and so you could sit in a nearby seat and still be within your makom kavv'a. However, even if there are no other seats available near your normal seat, it is still not proper to upset a person by asking him or her to move from your seat.

WHERE TO PRAY: HOW CLOSE

Prayer with Minyan in another Room

If you are outside the room in which a minyan is praying, you may still join and reply to all of the prayers as long as:

- You can see or hear the congregation, or
- There are at least 10 men (in addition to you) inside the main room.

WHERE TO PRAY: AVOIDING DISTRACTION

WHERE TO PRAY: DISTRACTING ATTIRE

Men's Prayer near Immodestly Dressed Woman

A man may not pray within visible distance of an immodestly dressed woman. She must be far enough away that he cannot tell what she is wearing. Alternatively, he can turn away from her.

Husband's Prayer near Wife

A husband may say shema and the amida (and study Torah) in his wife's presence if her hair is uncovered (as long as he is not looking at her hair), but not if she is immodestly dressed.

Women's Prayer near Immodestly Dressed People

A woman may say blessings or prayers around men who are not completely dressed as long as the men's genitals are covered. Women may say even the anida around immodestly dressed women as long as the woman praying is dressed appropriately.

WHERE TO PRAY: DISTRACTING SMELL

Prayer near Feces

Don't say prayers or blessings within 6'7" (4 amot, or 2 m) (in any direction except in front of you) of any feces—human or animal—unless:

- They have no odor, or
- They are covered by something and you cannot smell them.

NOTE If there are no feces in front of you as far as you can see, assume that none are there.

Prayer near Animal

You may say blessings, the shema, and even the anida if you are near an animal, as long as the animal does not smell.

WHERE TO PRAY: DISTRACTING PEOPLE/MECHITZA

Room Divider/Mechitza: Purpose

Men and women should be separated during prayer services with a mechitza that blocks the men's view of the women. The goal is to keep the men and women from distracting each other during prayer. This idea originated in the Temple in Jerusalem.

Where Mechitza Needed

A mechitza to separate men and women is needed only when praying in a place dedicated as a permanent location for regular Jewish prayer services with a minyan. If not, no mechitza is needed, and any separation that prevents distraction between men and women is sufficient. Even if the women are just behind the men, that is sufficient, even without a physical barrier.

WHERE TO PRAY: SYNAGOGUE ETIQUETTE

WHERE TO PRAY: SYNAGOGUE ETIQUETTE: HUGGING/KISSING

Don't Hug or Kiss People in Synagogue

Don't hug or kiss people in synagogue.

REASON We are supposed to show love only for God there.

WHERE TO PRAY: SYNAGOGUE ETIQUETTE: EATING OR SLEEPING

Eating or Sleeping in Synagogue

You may not eat or sleep in a synagogue that is only used for prayer.

Eating or Sleeping in Bet Midrash

You may nap or eat in a bet midrash, even if the same room is used for prayer.

WHERE TO PRAY: SYNAGOGUE ETIQUETTE: CHILDREN

Bringing Children to Synagogue

Do not bring children to minyan until they are able to say the prayers and to keep quiet.

WHERE TO PRAY: BLESSINGS

Where To Pray: Blessings

For where to say blessings, see [Blessings: Where To Say](#).

WHERE TO PRAY: NON-JEWISH PRAYER PLACES

Where To Pray: Non-Jewish Prayer Places

See [NON-JEWISH PRAYER PLACES](#).

HOW TO PRAY

HOW TO PRAY: READING

Use Siddur or Not

You may use a prayer book (*siddur*) or not—whichever way helps you concentrate on the prayers.

HOW TO PRAY: SPEAKING

HOW TO PRAY: VOLUME

Saying Prayers Out Loud

Say prayers (and blessings) out loud, but not overly loud, in order to help you to concentrate on what you are saying.

EXCEPTION The main exception is the *amida* prayer, which is said quietly enough that you can hear yourself but that people near you cannot hear what you are saying.

HOW TO PRAY: LANGUAGE/PRONUNCIATION/NUSACH

Praying in Own Language

Praying in [Hebrew](#) is preferable, even if you don't understand [Hebrew](#).

NOTE You MAY pray in your own language, but only if that is the language of the country in which you are praying.

NOTE If your native language is not commonly spoken in the country in which you are now present, you may not pray in that language, even if you are with a [minyan](#). If several languages are commonly spoken in your country (such as [Hebrew](#) and English in Israel, or English and Spanish in Florida and California), you may pray in any of those languages.

Ashkenazi Jew, Sefardi Pronunciation

An [Ashkenazi](#) Jew should ideally not pray using [Sefardi](#) pronunciation, but since it is OK to pray in any language, this is not a problem.

HOW TO PRAY: ACTIONS

HOW TO PRAY: ACTIONS: STEPPING

How To Pray: Actions: Stepping

See [Amida Actions: Stepping Before Kedusha](#).

HOW TO PRAY: ACTIONS: BOWING

HOW TO PRAY: ACTIONS: BOWING: WHEN REQUIRED

Bowing: Halacha or Custom?

The places in the prayer services where we bow are required by halacha and are not just customs.

HOW TO PRAY: ACTIONS: BOWING: DIRECTION

When To Bow toward Jerusalem

Normally, when saying the amida, or bowing at any other prayers such as kaddish, alenu, and bar'chu:

- If you are in a room with an ark (aron kodesh), face the ark—even if the ark is NOT in the same direction as Jerusalem.
- If you are not in a room with an ark, face Jerusalem during the amida. You do not need to face Jerusalem when bowing at any other times except during the amida.

HOW TO PRAY: ACTIONS: BOWING: TWO MAIN TYPES

Waist-Bowing and Knee-Bowing

There are two main types of bowing during the prayer services:

- Bowing just from the waist (with and without taking steps), and
- Bowing with the knees, plus two variations on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur (hands and knees on floor).

I. Waist-Bowing (Two Forms)

A. Waist-Bowing/No Steps, for:

- Modim;
- Modim in reader's repetition of amida;
- Bar'chu;
- Lecha Dodi; and
- Alenu.

To bow this way, keep your legs straight and bend forward from your waist.

B. Waist-Bowing/Take Steps, for:

Oseh shalom at the end of:

- Amida, and
- Kaddish.

To bow this way:

- Bow down from waist with your legs straight.
- Take three steps backward (left foot, right foot, left foot),
- Then:
 - Bow from your waist to the left and say, oseh shalom bi'mromav,
 - Bow from your waist to the right and say, hu ya'aseh shalom alenu, and
 - Bow from your waist to the front and say, ve'al kol yisrael v'imru amen.

II. Knee-Bowing (Three Times during Amida)

- Beginning of amida's first blessing,
- End of amida's first blessing, and
- Next-to-last amida blessing: ha'tov shimcha.

To bow this way:

- Bend knees (at *baruch*),
- Bow forward (at *ata*), and
- Straighten up (before God's name).

III. Knee-Bowing to Floor (Two Forms)

A. Knee-Bowing to Floor--Hands and Knees Only

(*Rosh Hashana musaf: alenu* in reader's repetition of *amida*)

To bow this way:

- Kneel (with your back straight up) (at "*hayu kor'im*"), and
- Bow down with hands and knees on floor (at "*u'mishtachavim u'modim*"), but
- You are not required to touch your forehead to ground.

NOTE You should still bow from your waist (but not to the floor) on *Rosh Hashana*--even if you are praying alone and even if there is no *Torah* present.

B. Knee-Bowing to Floor--Hands, Knees, Forehead

(*Yom Kippur musaf: alenu* reader's repetition of *amida* describing how the people bowed down on *Yom Kippur*.)

To bow this way:

- Kneel (with your back straight up) (at "*hayu kor'im*"),
- Bow down with hands and knees on floor (at "*u'mishtachavim u'modim*"),
- Touch forehead to floor (at *v'noflim al pneihem*).

NOTE You may not bow down (*modim* for *Yom Kippur*) on a bare stone floor (this also includes concrete, terrazzo and other stone-like materials). You must put a cloth, paper, or some other separation on the floor where you will place your forehead and your knees. A *talit* may be used for this purpose. If you have only one paper towel, put it under your forehead.

NOTE It is customary today to cover any floor, not only if it is bare stone.

SITUATION You are bowing down (*modim* for *Yom Kippur*; also for *Rosh Hashana* if you bow down this far) on a bare stone floor (concrete, terrazzo, and other stone-like materials).

WHAT TO DO You may not touch your forehead or knees (if covered by pants legs or skirt) to the floor. You may cover the floor with some separation such as cloth, paper, or even a *talit* at the place where your forehead (or knees) will touch.

REASON You might wipe off any dirt from the floor on your pant knees or skirt, which is prohibited on *Yom Kippur*. There is no need to use a paper towel or other separation for knees if they are bare (for example, due to wearing shorts or a short skirt).

NOTE There is no problem with brushing dirt off your hands, so you can touch the bare stone floor with your bare hands during the bowing.

HOW TO PRAY: ACTIONS: BOWING: WOMEN

Bowing: Women

Women are not required to bow to the floor on *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur*, but some women have that custom.

HOW TO PRAY: ACTIONS: BOWING: IN FRONT OF ANIMALS AND MIRRORS

Bowing If Animal in Front of You

You may not bow down, as during the amida, if an animal is in front of you.

Mirror or Picture of People in Front of You

Don't face a mirror or picture of people when saying amida or any other prayer at which you will bow.

REASON You should not bow down to an image.

HOW TO PRAY: ACTIONS: BOWING-LIKE ACTIVITIES

Bending Down during Amida To Pull Up Socks,...

You may bend down during the amida to slide up your socks, scratch your legs through your pants, and other permitted actions.

EXCEPTION You may not do so when you are saying the final sentence (the actual blessing) in each paragraph.

When You May Crawl on Stone Floor

You may crawl on a bare stone floor if you are trying to find something on the floor, are chasing a child, or for any purpose other than prayer.

When Kneeling Is Forbidden

Kneeling is only forbidden if it is for praying (except for prescribed prayers such as at “*hayu kor'im*” in Yom Kippur) or if it looks like praying, but there is nothing inherently wrong with kneeling for fun, gardening, or other purposes.

WHEN TO PRAY

WHEN TO PRAY: TRAVELER'S QUESTIONS

When To Pray: Traveler's Questions: Crossing from Day-Night or Night-Day

Always say the prayer service based on the day and time where you are at the moment you are ready to pray.

Flying West

SITUATION

You fly west and take off before sunrise.

WHAT TO DO

If the sun will rise while you are flying, you may say shacharit from the time of *alot ha'shachar* on the ground below where you are when you begin to pray.

SITUATION

You fly west, taking off during the daytime.

WHAT TO DO

Say mincha whenever the sun has gone at least 30 minutes past the local midday where you are at that time.

SITUATION

You fly west into the night.

WHAT TO DO

Say *ma'ariv*. once it is night on the ground below you.

NOTE On a long west-bound flight, you might not have to say any prayer services, since you might still be covered by whatever prayer service you said before you took off.

Flying East

SITUATION

You cross the international dateline passing through the night and are now back in the day you already experienced.

WHAT TO DO

You ignore the fact that you said the prayer service on that day and say it again.

SITUATION

You fly from Australia on Tuesday, departing during the daytime. You will fly into the night of Monday and continue on back into Tuesday.

WHAT TO DO

You disregard the fact that you already said *ma'ariv* for Monday and you say *ma'ariv* again. If your flight continues until sunrise, you will also say shacharit for Tuesday again.

SITUATION

You fly from Australia on Tuesday morning and cross the IDL during the daytime of Tuesday and are now back into Monday.

WHAT TO DO

You do not say any prayer service until your flight crosses into night, whether that happens in flight or after you have landed. You will need to say mincha at some time during the day.

SITUATION

You fly east but you do not cross the international dateline.

WHAT TO DO

If you cross into the night, you will say *ma'ariv* as you normally would do. If you took off at night and cross into daytime, you will say shacharit.

NOTE When flying east from night into day, there is a very brief time period when you may say shema of the morning, since you may not say shema until *alot ha'shachar* and must say shema by the end of the third hour of the local day. When flying east, instead of having about 4 hours during which to say shema, you might only have two or so hours.

NOTE Regarding saying the shir shel yom (psalm for the day of the week), follow the local day.

WHEN TO PRAY: MORNING PRAYERS/SHACHARIT

WHEN TO PRAY: MORNING PRAYERS/SHACHARIT (WEEKDAY): ORDER OF PRAYERS

INTRODUCTION TO MORNING PRAYERS/SHACHARIT (WEEKDAY): ORDER OF PRAYERS

Introduction to Morning Prayers/Shacharit (Weekday): Order of Prayers

Here is a typical order of waking/morning prayers for weekdays (many people say these blessings at the synagogue instead of at home):

- **Wake**
Wake and wash hands (*Three-Times Method*).
- **Bathroom**
Take care of any toilet needs, wash your hands (*One-Time Method*).
Say blessings *al netilat yadayim* and *asher yatzar* (until *l'fgarim meitim*).
- **Torah Blessings**

Say Torah blessings (from *la'asok bi'divrei Torah* until *talmud Torah ki'negged kulam*).

- **Talit Katan**
Put on *talit katan* (for men).
Say blessing if not married or if not putting on *talit gadol* later.

NOTE You may put on the *talit katan* before washing your hands

- **Birchot HaShachar**

Say *birchot ha'shachar* (from *natan la'sechvi...* until *ven brit*) before, or at, *synagogue*.

- **Talit/Tefilin**

Put on:

- *Talit* (for married men or other men with that custom).
- *Tefilin* (for men).
- **L'olam Yihei Adam/Korbanot**

Say:

- *L'olam yihei adam*,
- Short *shema*,
- Paragraph ending *mekadeish et shimcha ba'rabim*,
- Readings on sacrifices/*korbanot*,
- 13 rules.
- **Psukei D'Zimra**

Say:

- Psalm 30/*Mizmor Shir Chanukat habayit*.
- *Baruch she'amar* through *yishtabach* (includes *ashrei*).
- **Bar'chu/Shema/Amida**

Say *bar'chu* through end of *amida* (including *shema*, with two blessings before and one after), *tachanun* (when appropriate) and *ashrei* through to *alenu*.

- **Psalms/Alenu**

Say *alenu* and psalm for the day.

Terms To Know

- *Neitz, HaNeitz*—Sunrise

- Alot HaShachar—72 minutes before sunrise
- MiSheyakir-- 36 minutes before sunrise in New York in winter and 40 minutes in summer. Nearer to the equator, the maximum time is shorter.

NOTE Even though mi'sheyakir means when there is enough light to identify your friend, it also means when you can differentiate between blue and white threads in the tzitzit, since the mitzva of tzitzit is only during the daytime.

When Things Happen

Before Alot HaShachar (72 minutes before sunrise)

You can put on tzitzit/talit and tefilin without blessings.

Alot HaShachar

You can say:

- Birchot ha'shachar.
- Shema and amida, b'di'avad.

Mi'sheyakir (36-40 minutes before sunrise)

You can say:

- Blessings over tefilin and tzitzit/talit.
- Shema and amida as necessary.

K'Vatikin

You can say shema l'chatchila--and begin saying the amida exactly at sunrise.

By Third *Halachic* Hour of the Day

You have until the third *halachic* hour of the day to say:

- The blessing mekadeish et shimcha ba'rabim if you want to include the word Adonai.
- Morning shema.

By Fourth *Halachic* Hour of the Day

You have until the fourth *halachic* hour of the day to say any of the prayers from barchu until the end of the amida.

Halachic Mid-Day

You have until *halachic* mid-day, b'di'avad, to say the shacharit amida.

WHEN TO PRAY: SHACHARIT: WHAT TIME TO BEGIN

Introduction: Shacharit: When To Begin

B'di'avad, you can say shema and amida as early as 72 minutes before sunrise (alot ha'shachar). You can put on tefilin and tzitzit/talit even earlier, although you may not say the blessings over them until “mi'sheyakir”—which is later than you can say shema and amida! (See above.)

Shacharit: Earliest Time for Blessings over Tefilin and Tzitzit

Earliest time to say blessings over tefilin and tzitzit/talit is mi'sheyakir (in New York, 36-40 minutes before sunrise).

Very Early Shacharit: How To Begin

If you must say shacharit very early:

1. Say birchot ha'shachar;

2. When you reach the end of *yishtabach*, if it is:

- 36 minutes (or less) before sunrise:
 - Pause after the blessing (ending *El chay ha'olamim*),
 - Put on your *talit* and *tefilin*, and
 - Say the appropriate blessings.
- More than 36 minutes before sunrise:
 - Put on your *talit* and *tefilin* WITHOUT saying the blessings. Later, after it is less than 36 minutes before sunrise:
 - Hold your *tzitzit* and say the *tzitzit* blessing,
 - Move your *tefilin* slightly,
 - Say the *tefilin* blessings (if you are in a place in the prayer service where you are permitted to interrupt).

WHEN TO PRAY: SHACHARIT: WHAT TIME TO FINISH

When To Pray: Shacharit: What Time To Finish

You must say the *shema* no later than the end of the third halachic hour of the day in the morning. If you did not say it in time:

1. If it is before the fourth halachic hour of the day, say the entire *shacharit* service, as long as you will complete the *amida* before the end of the fourth halachic hour.
2. If it is after the fourth halachic hour of the day but before the end of the sixth halachic hour of the day, say *birchot ha'shachar* (and you may also say *korbanot*) and then skip all of *shacharit* up to the *amida*, which you should say as soon as possible.

WHEN TO PRAY: SHACHARIT: BLESSINGS OF DAYBREAK (BIRCHOT HASHACHAR)

When To Say Blessings of Daybreak (Birchot HaShachar)

Both men and women may say *birchot ha'shachar* all day, until sunset (beginning from *alot ha'shachar*—72 minutes before sunrise).

Where To Say Blessings of Daybreak (Birchot HaShachar)

You may say *birchot ha'shachar* at home, in the *synagogue*, or along the way.

NOTE You should say *birchot ha'shachar* for yourself and not have the prayer leader fulfill your requirement.

WHEN TO PRAY: SHACHARIT: L'OLAM YIHEI ADAM

When To Say Mekadeish et Shimcha BaRabim

You may only include God's name in *Baruch ata Adonai, mekadeish et shimcha ba'rabim* if:

- You have not yet said the full morning *shema*, and
- It is still before the third *halachic hour* of the day.

NOTE If you already said the morning *shema*, whether on time or not, you may still return to fill in the morning blessings. When you get to *l'olam yihei adam*, don't include God's name in the

concluding blessing. Rather, say, “*Baruch ata, mekadeish et shimcha ba'rabim.*”

When To Say Baruch She'Amar

After the fourth *halachic* hour, unless in extreme circumstances, neither men nor women may say any of the prayers from *baruch she'amar* through the line before the *amida*.

Shacharit: Might Return To Sleep and Miss Latest Time To Say Shema

SITUATION You wake up after daybreak, but you might go back to sleep and thereby miss the time for saying *mekadeish et shimcha ba'rabim* and *shema* (both of which must be said by the third *halachic* hour of the day).

WHAT TO DO You should say at least the:

- Blessing on washing your hands,
- Blessings on studying *Torah*, including *Elohai neshama* and all other related sayings, and
- Complete *shema*--with the condition that:
 - If you sleep past the latest time for *shema* (*sof zman kriet shema*), this *shema* fulfills your obligation; but
 - If you do not go back to sleep, this *shema* does not fulfill your obligation.

Then, whether you go back to sleep or not, having made the condition allows you to say the full blessing of *mekadeish et shimcha ba'rabim*, including God's name, if you get to *l'olam yihei adam...* before the third hour of the day.

NOTE If you said the *shema* when you woke up but did not made the condition, you would not be able to say the concluding blessing *mekadeish et shimcha ba'rabim* with God's name when repeating the *shema* (but you may say it without using God's name: see [When To Say Mekadeish et Shimcha BaRabim](#)).

NOTE If you go back to sleep, don't repeat the blessings on washing hands and studying *Torah* when you wake up.

WHEN TO PRAY: SHACHARIT: SHEMA

SHACHARIT: SHEMA: WHEN TO SAY SHEMA

Earliest Time for Shema (and Amida)

Earliest time to say *shema* and *amida* is 72 minutes before sunrise, *b'di'avad*, since the guideline is *halachic* “day.”

NOTE *L'chatchila*, you should say *shema* anytime from 3 minutes before sunrise until the end of the third *halachic* hour of the day.

Latest time To Say Shema

Shema may be said anytime during the day. But to fulfill the *halachic* requirement of saying *shema* in the morning, *shema* must be said by the end of the first quarter of the daylight hours, known as the “third hour” of the day. To derive this time, divide the time from sunrise to sunset by 4 and add that to the time for sunrise.

Late Shema: L'Olam Yehei Adam by Third Hour

SITUATION

You will not have time to say the morning *shema* by the end of the third hour of the day, but you will say

l'olam yehei adam by then.

WHAT TO DO

Instead of saying the first line of shema, say:

- El melech ne'eman.
- Entire shema. Then
- Paragraph that ends in mekadeish et shimcha b'rabim.

Saying Shema after Proper Time

Even if you have not said the morning shema by the latest proper time (no later than the end of the first quarter of the daylight hours), say it as soon as you can.

SHACHARIT: SHEMA: WHEN TO SAY SHEMA BLESSINGS

When To Say Shema Blessings

Neither men nor women may say the blessings that precede and follow the shema after the fourth *halachic* hour of the day. In extreme circumstances (if compelled or forced), men (but not women) may still say the shema blessings until *halachic* midday.

Shacharit: Shema: El Melech Ne'eman

SITUATION

You are not with a minyan. You begin saying the shema and you realize you had forgotten to say El melech ne'eman before beginning the shema.

WHAT TO DO

Finish the shema; do not go back to say El melech ne'eman (and your saying the shema is still valid).

WHEN TO PRAY: SHACHARIT: SHEMONEH ESREI/AMIDA

When To Say Morning Amida

Say the morning amida by the first third of the day (by the 4th hour), but you may still say it until halachic midday, b'di'avad, except if you delay intentionally.

SITUATION

You are running out of time to say the morning amida. You have said the shema without saying yishtabach or anything following yishtabach (except for the shema).

WHAT TO DO

Just say the amida.

SITUATION

You wake up too late to say the amida before *halachic* noon:

WHAT TO DO

- Wait until a half-hour after *halachic* noon and then say mincha, and then
- Repeat the mincha amida as tashlumin.

NOTE

Men who intentionally delayed saying shacharit past the fourth *halachic* hour of the day may not say that amida at all and may not say the mincha amida as tashlumin.

See Minyan: Keeping Pace: Shacharit Minyan.

WHEN TO PRAY: MINCHA

Timing of Mincha

Mincha may be said from ½ hour after halachic midday until sunset.

Mincha Gedola

Mincha gedola is the earliest time that you may say mincha: from 1/2 halachic hour after halachic midday until 2 ½ halachic hours before sunset.

Mincha Ketana

Mincha ketana is the preferred time period for saying mincha: from 2 1/2 halachic hours before sunset until sunset.

WHEN TO PRAY: MA'ARIV

When To Say Ma'ariv

Ma'ariv may be said from sunset (or even from plag ha'mincha if mincha was said early enough).

NOTE If you say ma'ariv before dark, you must repeat the three paragraphs of the shema once it is actually halachic night.

REASON Shema must be said after dark.

When To Say Mincha To Allow Early Ma'ariv

To be permitted to say ma'ariv early, before sunset, say mincha no later than 1 ¼ halachic hours before sunset.

WHAT TO PRAY

WHAT TO PRAY: FOR WHAT TO PRAY

Ask for Ultimate Goal

During personal prayers, ask for the ultimate goal of what you seek, not for the means of getting there.

EXAMPLES

- Ask to find an appropriate spouse very soon (rather than praying to marry a specific person).
- Ask to get a good job (rather than praying to get a specific job for which you will interview).

Praying for a Miracle

You may not pray for a miracle or any occurrence that would require a large deviation from nature.

WHAT TO PRAY: PERSONAL REQUESTS

WHAT TO PRAY: PERSONAL REQUESTS: AMIDA

Where To Add Personal Requests in Amida

You may add personal requests to the amida on weekdays (not Shabbat or Jewish festivals) in these prayers:

- For livelihood:
 - In the amida's 9th paragraph (bareich aleinu), between mi'tuvecha and u'vareich shnateinu.
- For a general request:
 - In the amida's 16th paragraph (shema koleinu), before ki ata shomei'a.
 - Even better, just before saying yihiyu l'ratzon.

WHAT TO PRAY: PRAYING FOR SICK PERSON

Yehi Ratzon of Refa'einu for a Sick Person

To pray for a sick person, say the yehi ratzon inserted into the refa'einu (8th) paragraph of the amida on weekdays (but not on Shabbat or Jewish festivals) either:

- When saying the amida (add your request after "makoteinu"), or
- After reciting Tehilim (Psalms) for the sick person (see [Concluding Tehilim with Yehi Ratzon of Refa'einu](#)).

Praying for a Very Sick Person

When you have been praying for a sick person who might have died: assume he or she is still alive until you know otherwise.

Praying for a Sick Non-Jew

You may pray for a sick non-Jew to be healed.

NOTE Use his or her normal (first and last) names in any language he or she uses. It is customary to use the sick person's mother's name.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: SHEMA

SHEMA: MENTAL PREPARATION

Shema: Mental Preparation

When saying the shema, focus on the idea that God is:

- Everywhere,
- Infinite,
- Unique,
- Present now and always.

Witness to God's Uniqueness

We are witnesses to the fact that God is unique, as alluded to in the word "eid"--made up of the "ayin" of shema and the "dalet" of echad.

Love God

We are required to love God with our:

- **Hearts** (Good Inclination--yetzer ha'tov--and Evil Inclination--yetzer ha'ra),
- **Souls** (regardless of whether we are happy with Hashem's decrees or not), and
- **"Much-ness"** (interpreted to mean with all of our material belongings).

SHEMA: WHAT TO WEAR

What To Wear for Shema in Shacharit

Men should wear a talit katan (for married men, also wear a talit gadol) and tefilin in order to say shema in shacharit. However, if none are available, say the shema without them.

SHEMA: WHAT TO SAY

Men and Shema in Shacharit

Men must say shema in shacharit and the blessings before and after.

Women and Shema in Shacharit

Women are not required to say the full shema or the blessings before it. Even if women do not say the whole shema, it is proper for them to say the first line of the shema and baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed.

NOTE If women say entire shema, even though they are not required to do so, it is a mitzva.

Amen before Shema

Some say the pre-shema blessing in shacharit or ma'ariv with the leader. Best is to finish the blessing before the leader does and then reply amen when he finishes saying the blessing.

Baruch Hu before Shema

Don't say baruch hu u'varuch shemo in response to a prayer leader saying the two pre-shema blessings.

Starting Shema before Prayer Leader Says

If you are late to shacharit or ma'ariv minyan and start the shema before the prayer leader has finished saying “emet” at the end of the shema, do not say El melech ne'eman.

SHEMA: HOW TO SAY

Covering Eyes for First Line of Shema

Cover your eyes with either hand when saying the first line of shema. This is to help prevent distraction. There is no need to remove your glasses first.

NOTE Covering your eyes for the shema is a widespread custom, not a halacha.

"Stretching Out" Echad in Shema

Stretch out the first line of the shema by pausing after saying “echad” and before saying Baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed.

NOTE

- It is incorrect to stretch out the “chet” + vowel sound (chaaaaaad).
- It is incorrect (and much worse) to say a vowel sound after the “dalet” (echadihhh!), since that changes the word and by doing so, you are not saying the shema.
- The “dalet” stops the sound and should not be pronounced as a syllable.

Kissing Tzitziyot in Shema

Kiss all four tzitziyot in a talit gadol when saying the shema. Just kiss the front two tzitziyot if you only wear a talit katan. Doing either one is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

GA'AL YISRAEL/ HAMELECH BI'CHVODO

Saying Ga'al Yisrael with Leader or Amen

The prayer leader should say out loud the blessing preceding the amida (ga'al yisrael for shacharit; ha'melech bi'chvodo for ma'ariv). If you:

- Are up to where he is in the prayers, say the last blessing with him (and don't say amen but do say amen in ma'ariv).
- Pray slowly and will not be able to join the minyan for saying the amida, you should start earlier than the minyan and catch up at ga'al yisrael.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA: PRE-PRAYER

Amida: Bathroom Needs

If you need to use the toilet, you may not say the amida.

NOTE If you could refrain—even with difficulty—from using the bathroom for 72 minutes after you finish the amida, it is OK b'di'avad.

Amida: Intention/Concentration (Kavana)

When saying any amida, concentrate (at least for the first blessing) on the idea that you are standing in front of God (but if you did not concentrate, don't repeat the blessing or the amida).

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA: WITH WHOM TO PRAY

Amida: With Whom To Pray

Say shemoneh esrei (amida) with a minyan—ideally starting together. The key is to begin with the other people, even if you will not finish at the same time. You should not begin before the congregation begins saying any amida.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA: LOCATION

AMIDA: LOCATION: CHANGING

Amida: Location: Moving Away

You may not move from where you began saying the amida until you finish the amida.

EXAMPLE

You may not get on or off a bus in the middle of saying the amida.

NOTE It is better to say the abridged version of the amida (this appears in some *siddurs*) if you do not have time to say it without interruption (but you may say the abridged version only during the summer, since you must say mashiv ha'ruach and other additions during the winter).

EXCEPTIONS Walking To Avoid Being Disturbed

You may walk to another place, even in the middle of the amida, if you are disturbed or distracted where you are, such as to move away from:

- An immodestly dressed woman or other visual distraction,
- Bad smell,
- Animal, or
- Noise (such as people talking).

Walking To Correct a Mistake

You may walk across the room—even in the middle of the amida--in order to look in a book of halacha to see how to correct a mistake or omission you made while saying the amida.

AMIDA: LOCATION: WHERE TO FACE

When To Face Jerusalem

Face toward Jerusalem when saying the amida.

NOTE You may not stand with your back to an ark containing a Torah scroll, so you might need to modify the direction in which you are facing.

How To Face Jerusalem

To face Jerusalem, turn toward the “great circle”--the shortest route over the surface of a sphere or the globe (not necessarily eastward). If you don't know which is the correct direction, or if facing toward Jerusalem would make you face improperly dressed people, feces, or other distracting or disgusting items, then focus your thoughts on Jerusalem and face any direction.

Where To Face for Wisdom or Wealth

When praying:

- To gain wisdom, face slightly south.
- To gain wealth, face slightly north.

This is a non-binding suggestion, not a halacha.

AMIDA: LOCATION: NEAR SOMEONE PRAYING

Amida: Someone Praying

Don't cross within 7 feet (4 amot, or 2.1 m) in front of someone who is saying the amida, even if there is an intervening chair or other furniture in front of the person who is praying. If you finish before someone who is directly behind you, you must wait for the person to finish his or her amida before you step directly back. However, you may step back on an angle so that you do not end up in front of the person who was behind you.

Amida: Someone Blocking the Way while Praying

You may walk in front of someone who is praying in a doorway or otherwise blocking the way, since they are not allowed to block other people from entering.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA: VOLUME

How Loud To Say the Amida

Whisper the individual amida so that you can just hear yourself but people standing near you cannot hear you, whether you are praying as an individual or as a prayer leader (during your private amida).

Amida Phrases That Are Never Said Aloud

These phrases are never said aloud, not in the personal amida and not in the reader's repetition:

- Ki shem adonai ekra
- Adonai sifatai
- Elohai netzur
- Yihiyu l'ratzon imrei phi.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA: ACTIONS

AMIDA: ACTIONS: STANDING

Amida: Standing Up

Stand up when saying the amida. Unless you are not able to stand unaided, you may not lean on something if you would fall over if that item were removed.

Amida: Standing with Feet Together

Stand with your feet together to resemble the angels, who only have one leg, during the private amida and for kedusha.

AMIDA: ACTIONS: SITTING

Amida: Sitting for Concentration

You may sit during the amida (and other standing prayers) to avoid distraction, such as when you might be jolted in a moving vehicle or disturbed by people passing in the airplane aisle.

AMIDA: ACTIONS: STEPPING

Amida Actions: Steps Before and After

Stepping To Begin the Amida

After saying ga'al Yisrael, take three steps forward (any size of steps is fine):

- Step forward with your right foot,
- Step forward with your left foot, then
- Step forward with your right foot so that both feet are touching at the heels and at the balls (so that you are standing as if you had one leg, like the angels!).

NOTE Taking three steps backward immediately before taking three steps forward, as instructed in some *siddurs*, defeats the purpose of taking the three steps forward. The purpose of stepping forward is to symbolically approach Hashem. If you step backward and then take your three steps forward, you are back to where you began and have not approached Hashem at all!

If you do not have enough room in front of yourself to take three steps forward when beginning your amida, step back somewhat (at least a few seconds) before you say ga'al Yisrael. There is no need to take three steps back; a single large step that will give you room to take three steps forward is all that is needed.

By making a practice of taking three steps back, people have made the stepping backward part of the entire procedure, and it should not be.

Similarly, once you have finished saying the amida and walked three steps backward, wait at least three seconds before walking forward so as not to defeat the purpose of having stepped backward. Take as many steps as you need to get back to your seat--one step should suffice.

Amida Actions: Stepping Before Kedusha

You do not need to take three steps forward (or any steps at all!) before saying kedusha.

AMIDA: ACTIONS: HITTING YOUR CHEST

When To Hit Your Chest during Prayers

Hit your chest near your heart with your fist at:

- *Chatanu...* and *... fashanu...* in slach lanu,
- First line of Avinu malkeinu (except on Rosh Hashana),
- Ve'al cheit and ve'al chataim in the al cheit for Yom Kippur, and
- *Ashammu* on
 - Rosh Hashana,
 - 10 Days of Repentance,
 - Fast days, and
 - Selichot.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA: INTERRUPTIONS

Responding to Prayer Leader before Elohai Netzur

SITUATION You have finished saying the final amida blessing “...ha'mevareich et amo Yisrael ba'shalom,” but you have not yet said Elohai netzur.... You now need to respond to the prayer leader when he says kaddish, kedusha, blessings, or modim.

WHAT TO DO Quickly say the line “Yihiyu l'ratzon imrei phi...” and then you may reply to all parts of the public prayer, except that you may not say “Baruch hu u'varuch shemo.” Then you may say Elohai netzur.

NOTE If you need to say the mourner's kaddish, say the entire line of Yihiyu l'ratzon imrei phi and then say mourner's kaddish. You may step back at Oseh shalom in kaddish and then, after completing saying kaddish, you may say Elohai netzur.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA: ERRORS

AMIDA: ERRORS: TASHLUMIN

Introduction to Amida: Errors: Tashlumin

Introduction to Missed Amida/Tashlumin

If you accidentally miss any amida, you may make up for it (tashlumin)--unless you intentionally missed it.

Amida: Errors: Missed Amida/Tashlumin: Regular Days

Missed Ma'ariv Amida

If you accidentally did not say the amida for ma'ariv:

- Say the normal shacharit amida the next morning with the other men in the minyan.
- Say ashrei.
- When the leader begins his repetition of the amida, say the amida along with him, word for word, including kedusha.
- After saying ha'el ha'kadosh, finish your amida at your own pace.
- If you are not with a minyan, say ashrei and then repeat the shacharit amida.

Missed Shacharit Amida

If you accidentally did not say the amida for shacharit:

- Say the normal mincha amida with the other men in the minyan.
- Say ashrei.
- When the leader begins his repetition of the amida, say the amida along with him, word for word, including kedusha.
- After saying ha'el ha'kadosh, finish your amida at your own pace.
- If you are not with a minyan, say ashrei and then say the mincha amida a second time.

Missed Mincha Amida

If you accidentally did not say the amida for mincha:

- Say the normal ma'ariv amida with the other men in the minyan.
- Say ashrei.
- Say the ma'ariv amida a second time. Skip modim.
- If you are not with a minyan, say ashrei a second time and repeat the ma'ariv amida.

NOTE At the next prayer service, say whatever is the correct amida for that later prayer service, even if it is

not the same amida that you missed.

If you miss mincha on Friday, say the ma'ariv service for Shabbat and repeat that amida again.

NOTE Once the time for the next amida has passed, you may not make up the missed amida.

EXAMPLE

If you missed mincha on Thursday, you may only say tashlumin for mincha as long as you may still say ma'ariv, which is daybreak of Friday morning.

Amida: Errors: Missed Amida/Tashlumin: Shabbat/Jewish Festivals

Even if you forgot to say a prayer service on Shabbat and Jewish festivals, say the next prayer service amida and repeat THAT amida to make up (tashlumin) for the one you missed--even if it is no longer Shabbat or the Jewish festival.

EXCEPTION

There is no tashlumin for musaf. However, you may say musaf until sunset, even if you already said mincha.

NOTE If the time for mincha has arrived (½ hour after halachic midday), you must say mincha before saying musaf (but if you could join a mincha minyan later, you may say musaf now).

SITUATION

You miss Shabbat mincha.

WHAT TO DO

Say ata chonantanu in ma'ariv, but only for the first time you say the amida, not the second time (which is tashlumin).

SITUATION

You forget to say ma'ariv on Saturday night.

WHAT TO DO

Say ata chonantanu on Sunday morning in the second amida (which is tashlumin).

If Doubt about Whether You Said Amida

If you are not certain whether you said an amida:

- On a weekday, assume that you did not say the amida and say it anyway. Intend that:
 - If you forgot the previous amida, this makes up for it, and
 - If you did say the previous amida, the second one is a nedava (free-will “offering”).
- On Shabbat and Jewish festivals, do not say the amida twice as tashlumin.

REASON You may not say a voluntary prayer service (nedava) on these days.

Men who intentionally delayed saying shacharit past the fourth halachic hour of the day still say that amida until midday but if they did not say it by midday, they may not say tashlumin. See [Minyan: Keeping Pace: Shacharit Minyan](#).

AMIDA: ERRORS: AMIDA ADDITIONS

INTRODUCTION: AMIDA: ERRORS: AMIDA ADDITIONS

Introduction: Amida: Errors: Amida Additions

If you forgot to say, or incorrectly said, a phrase in the amida, you must correct your errors in:

- Mashiv ha'ruach
- Ha'el ha'kadosh
- Tein bracha/Tein tal u'matar l'vracha

- Ya'ale v'yavo (except Rosh Chodesh night).

Do not correct errors in other additions/changes if you have already said the blessing for that paragraph, such as:

- Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and Ten Days of Repentance changes (except ha'melech ha'kadosh)
- Al ha'nisim
- Aneinu
- Ya'ale v'yavo (if Rosh Chodesh night).

NOTE You may correct any prayer error within 2.5 seconds of making it.

NOTE If you omitted part of the amida that would normally require you to repeat the amida, you do not need to repeat the amida if you intend (have kavana/concentrate from the beginning of the reader's repetition until the end of the repetition) to have your amida covered by the reader's repetition.

AMIDA ERRORS: MASHIV HARUACH

Introduction to Amida Errors: Mashiv HaRuach

Saying the seasonal addition to the amida of mashiv ha'ruach... begins at musaf of Shmini Atzeret. The last time it is said is on the first day of Passover in musaf.

Amida Errors: Mashiv HaRuach

What: Mashiv HaRuach

Where: Amida 2nd paragraph

Error: Omitted or said in wrong season

SITUATION Did Not Finish Paragraph

WHAT TO DO You must return to beginning of paragraph (Ata gibor...).

SITUATION Already Finished that Paragraph

WHAT TO DO You must stop saying the amida and repeat the amida from the beginning.

EXCEPTION If you erroneously said Mashiv HaRuach in a country that needs rain after Passover, don't repeat the blessing and don't return to the beginning of the amida.

AMIDA ERRORS: HAEL HAKADOSH

Amida Errors: HaEl HaKadosh

What: Ha'el ha'kadosh

Where: Amida 3rd paragraph

Error: Said ha'el ha'kadosh instead of ha'melech ha'kadosh on days between/including Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur

SITUATION Already Finished Paragraph

WHAT TO DO You must stop saying the amida and start the amida from the beginning.

AMIDA ERRORS: CHONEIN HADAAT/YISMACH MOSHE/TIKANTA SHABBAT/ATA ECHAD/RASHEI CHODASHIM/ATA VICHARTANU

Amida Errors: Chonein HaDaat/Yismach Moshe/Tikanta Shabbat/Ata Echad/Rashei Chodashim/Ata Vichartanu

What: Chonein HaDaat/Yismach Moshe/Tikanta Shabbat/Ata Echad/Rashei Chodashim/Ata Vichartanu

Where: Amida 4th paragraph

Error #1: You Said the Wrong Paragraph on Shabbat or Jewish Festival

EXAMPLES

- You said the weekday version on Shabbat or Jewish festival--or the reverse.
- You began to say the version for a different Shabbat service (say, it is Shabbat mincha and you said the version for Shabbat shacharit).

WHAT TO DO

1) If you erroneously began the fourth paragraph for weekday on Shabbat or Jewish festival ma'ariv, shacharit, or mincha:

Finish the erroneous blessing and then begin the correct version.

2) If you erroneously began the fourth paragraph for weekday at musaf:

Stop wherever you are and say correct fourth paragraph.

3) If you began to say the fourth paragraph from the wrong Shabbat service:

It is OK, b'di'avad.

Error #2 You Said the Wrong Paragraph on a Weekday or at any Musaf:

EXAMPLE

You said the weekday fourth paragraph at musaf for Rosh Chodesh.

WHAT TO DO

Stop wherever you are and say correct fourth paragraph.

AMIDA ERRORS: TEIN BRACHA/TEIN TAL U'MATAR L'VRACHA

Amida Errors: Tein Bracha/Tein Tal U'Matar L'Vracha

Outside of Eretz Yisrael, begin saying Tein tal u'matar l'vracha at ma'ariv of Dec. 4. In a secular leap year, begin saying it at ma'ariv of Dec. 5 (but there might be rare exceptions!).

Where: Amida 9th paragraph

Error: Said tein bracha or tein tal u'matar l'vracha in the incorrect season

SITUATION Did Not Finish Paragraph

WHAT TO DO You must return to beginning of paragraph (bareich aleinu).

SITUATION Already Finished that Paragraph

WHAT TO DO

- If you said tein bracha in the wrong season, you may add tein tal u'matar l'vracha in shema koleinu, just before ki ata shomei'a...
- If you said tein tal u'matar l'vracha in the wrong season, you must return to the top of the paragraph.

SITUATION Already Finished Shema Koleinu

WHAT TO DO If you did not correct your mistake in shema koleinu, you must return to the beginning of bareich aleinu.

SITUATION Already Finished Amida (such as you are ready to take 3 steps backward when you realize your error.)

WHAT TO DO You must repeat the entire amida.

NOTE If you said tein tal u'matar l'vracha in the wrong season but you are in a place that needs rain, you do not need to correct yourself or repeat that blessing.

AMIDA ERRORS: YA'ALEH V'YAVO

Amida Errors: Ya'aleh V'Yavo

SITUATION You forgot to say ya'aleh v'yavo in the 15th amida paragraph (*retzei*) when required on Rosh Chodesh day or *chol ha'moed*.

STATUS Not Yet Ready To Take 3 Steps Back

WHAT TO DO As soon as you realize that you forgot, return to the beginning of *retzei* and continue.

STATUS Ready To Take 3 Steps Back

WHAT TO DO You must repeat the entire amida from the beginning.

NOTE If you forgot to add ya'aleh v'yavo on Rosh Chodesh night, even if you just finished *retzei* when you realized that you had omitted ya'aleh v'yavo, do not repeat the amida.

AMIDA ERRORS: SIM SHALOM

Amida Errors: Sim Shalom

SITUATION It is mincha for a fast day and you said *shalom rav* instead of *sim shalom*.

WHAT TO DO If you realize that you erred before you finish saying that blessing, go back and say *sim shalom*. If you have already finished the final blessing, don't repeat.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA: AMBIGUITIES

Tein Bracha If in Eretz Yisrael Cheshvan 7/Dec. 4

If you are in Eretz Yisrael between Cheshvan 7 (when people in Eretz Yisrael begin saying *tein tal u'matar l'vracha*) and December 4 (when people outside Eretz Yisrael begin saying the phrase):

- Follow your home custom (say *tein bracha* in the 9th amida paragraph, *bareich aleinu*).
- Then, add *tein tal u'matar l'vracha* in the 16th amida paragraph (*shema koleinu*) between *al teshiveinu* and *ki ata shomei'a*.

REASON To cover both situations.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AMIDA: READER'S REPETITION

AMIDA: READER'S REPETITION: BEGINNING

Standing for Reader's Repetition of Amida

Ashkenazim commonly stand for the entire reader's repetition of the amida, but it is not the universal custom.

Adonai Sifatai by Prayer Leader

The prayer leader should say Adonai sifatai... quietly before saying the reader's repetition of the amida out loud.

Ki Shem by Prayer Leader

The prayer leader should not say ki shem... at all since some people have the custom of not ever saying ki shem... .

AMIDA: READER'S REPETITION: REPLYING

Replying during Your Private Amida

If you have finished the amida's yihiyu l'ratzon (but have not yet finished the segment from Elohai netzur through u'chshanim kadmoniyot), you may reply to:

- Bar'chu,

- Kedusha,
- Amen to ha'el ha'kadosh,
- Amen to shomei'a tefila,
- Modim anachnu lach (just those 3 words),
- Birkat cohanim, and
- Kaddish.

However, you may not say anything else (such as other *amens*) until you have completed the entire amida (including the last word, kadmoniot).

AMIDA: READER'S REPETITION: KEDUSHA

Say Minyan's Version of Kedusha

At a minyan with a custom different from yours, say their version of kedusha.

Bowing for Kara Zeh El Zeh

Some people bow from side to side for kara zeh el zeh ... but it is not required.

AMIDA: READER'S REPETITION: PRIESTLY BLESSING (BIRKAT COHANIM)

Birkat Cohanim: Pausing in Private Amida

When the priests/cohanim begin the Priestly Blessing (birkat cohanim), you must pause when saying your private amida and wait until they finish before continuing your praying.

Birkat Cohanim: Seeing Each Other

A cohen/priest does not need to see the congregants and they do not need to see him during birkat cohanim. Birkat cohanim is effective even if you are outside the synagogue when you hear it. But if you are at the front of the synagogue such that you would be behind the cohanim when they turn to face the congregation and say the blessing, you should move far enough so the cohanim will be facing you during the blessing.

Birkat Cohanim: Looking at Priests'/Cohanim's Hands

No one should look at the priests'/cohanim's hands while the cohanim say the Priestly Blessing (birkat cohanim).

Birkat Cohanim: Talit over Child's Head

It is a custom for fathers to cover their sons' heads with their talit while the priests/cohanim bless the congregation.

REASON So the boys do not to look at the Divine Presence (shechina) present at the priests'/cohanim's fingertips at that time.

NOTE The priests'/cohanim's hands should be covered by a talit anyway.

NOTE This custom applies to ANYTIME the priests/cohanim say birkat cohanim, whether on:

- Jewish festivals (the only time the priests/cohanim say this blessing outside of Eretz Yisrael), or
- Daily (as is done in Eretz Yisrael).

Birkat Cohanim: Priest/Cohen in the Room

If a priest/cohen is in the room during the Priestly Blessing (birkat cohanim), he must bless the non-cohanim. If he will not say the blessing, he must leave the room immediately after modim.

WHAT TO PRAY: SET PRAYERS: AVINU MALKEINU TO PSALMS

INTRODUCTION TO AVINU MALKEINU TO PSALMS

Introduction to Avinu Malkeinu to Psalms

It was not traditional for women or girls to say any of shacharit after the amida, other than saying alenu.

AVINU MALKEINU

When To Say Avinu Malkeinu

Say avinu malkeinu, even if you are praying by yourself, after amida of shacharit and mincha on:

- Public fast days, and
- Between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

Avinu Malkeinu on Tzom Gedalia

On Tzom Gedalia, in avinu malkeinu, say katveinu (not zachreinu).

TORAH READING

TORAH READING: OFFERING/DECLINING ALIYA

Consecutive Aliyot for Family Members

Consecutive aliyot (going up to the Torah during Torah reading) should not be given to brothers or to a father and son unless the aliyot are from different Torah scrolls. This is a custom.

Declining an Aliya

You should not decline an aliya, if one is offered to you.

TORAH READING: THE BIMA

Shortest Route to Bima

When you go up to the Torah, take the shortest route to the bima. This is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

Stand on Bima after Aliya

After getting an aliya to the Torah, stand on the bima until the next aliya has ended. This is to show respect for the Torah and not appear to be running away.

Returning to your Seat after Aliya

When you go back to your seat after an aliya to the Torah, take the longer way around the bima--even if it is inconvenient or you want to avoid someone who is along the way back to your seat.

TORAH READING: SAYING TORAH BLESSINGS

When Saying Torah Blessing

When called to the Torah, either:

- Say the blessing while looking to the side of the Torah, or
- Roll the Torah together before you say the blessing.

How Loud To Say Torah Blessings

Say the blessings over the Torah loudly enough for everyone to hear and respond “amen.”

TORAH READING: WHAT TO DO WHILE ON BIMA

Torah Reading: What To Do While on Bima

The oleh (person who gets the aliya) should lightly hold on to the handle of the Torah.

The oleh should read the Torah quietly along with the reader (ba'al koreh).

TORAH READING: ALIYA DONATION

Donation after Aliya

If you receive an aliya to the Torah on Shabbat and Jewish festival mornings, it is customary give a donation to the synagogue, but you are not required to do so by halacha (and you may not give the donation ON Shabbat!).

NOTE A synagogue may request a donation on Shabbat or Jewish festivals from someone who has received an aliya on Shabbat and may give that person a card to mail in after Shabbat has ended.

NOTE There is no expectation of giving a donation for aliyot on weekdays or at mincha on Shabbat.

MOURNER'S KADDISH

Responding to Mourner's Kaddish

When answering mourner's kaddish, respond after the person who you hear first.

Late in Joining Mourner's Kaddish

SITUATION All mourners should say kaddish in unison. You are a mourner. When you go to minyan, the other mourners are already saying mourner's kaddish.

WHAT TO DO You may join in as long as the other mourners have not yet said Yihei shmei. But you should join the other mourners wherever they are in the kaddish and not start from the beginning on your own.

More on Mourner's Kaddish

See Mourner's Kaddish.

U'VA L'TZION

Kadosh in U'Va L'Tzion with the Minyan

Say kadosh three times in u'va l'tzion together with the minyan in order to mimic the angels who say kadosh together with other angels.

NOTE You should interrupt what you are saying as long as it is permissible to do so, such as before baruch she'amar or after you have finished your amida.

HALLEL

Saying Hallel with a Minyan

When saying half- and full Hallel:

- It is preferable to say half-hallel with a minyan.
- You do not need to say full hallel with a minyan.

Order of Prayers with Hallel

To say hallel on Shabbat and Jewish festivals:

- You do not need to say full hallel immediately after shacharit.

- You may say musaf and/or hallel after mincha.
- Once it is time for mincha, you must say mincha before saying musaf or hallel (if you have not said musaf or hallel yet).

Timing of Hallel and Musaf

You may say hallel and musaf until sunset.

Hodu in Hallel

In hallel, the congregation repeats the line “*Hodu...*” after each of the four lines that the prayer leader says. Then the congregation says the next line before the prayer leader says it.

NOTE The congregation does not say the line “*Hodu...*” before the leader first says it.

BIRKAT HACHODESH

Announcing the New Month

Each month (except before Rosh Hashana), we say the blessing over the new month (birkat ha'chodesh). On Shabbat morning preceding the new moon, at the end of Torah reading, we announce the coming of the new month (Rosh Chodesh), including:

- The name of the month.
- The day and time the new moon will appear in Jerusalem.
- The day of the week that begins the new month (and sometimes the last day of the previous month).

We say some prayers that ask for good health, prosperity, and other good things.

Announcing Two-Day Rosh Chodesh Starting Shabbat

If Rosh Chodesh will be two days starting next Shabbat, say “Yihiyeh b'yom Shabbat kodesh ul'macharato b'yom rishon.”

TACHANUN

Shacharit: Tachanun: How To Say

See the Tachanun Section in How To Pray in Synagogue.

Shacharit: Tachanun: When Not To Say

Tachanun is related to judgment. Tachanun is NOT said at times of din/judgment:

- At night,
- On Tish'a B'Av,
- In a house of mourning, and
- Yom Kippur.

Tachanun is also NOT said at times of simcha/happiness:

At mincha before (and certainly not on):

- Shabbat,
- Jewish festivals,
- Rosh Hashana, and
- Rosh Chodesh.

At any prayer service on:

- Isru chag (the day after each of the Jewish festivals),
- Entire month of Nisan.

Nisan has more than 15 days that we omit tachanun, and once we omit it for most of the month, we don't say it at all.

- All of Chanuka, Purim, Shushan Purim, Tu B'Shvat, Rosh Chodesh, and from Rosh Chodesh Sivan until the day after Shavuot.
- Tishrei from shacharit before Yom Kippur until after Simchat Torah (Shmini Atzeret in Eretz Yisrael). Resume saying tachanun:
 - Second day of Cheshvan, or
 - Day after isru chag of Simchat Torah (this is the more prevalent custom among Ashkenazim). Each person should follow his or her family or community custom.

Any time these people are present in your minyan (or in any other minyan in the building) either before a circumcision or while still involved in the brit or meal:

- Mohel,
- Sandak, or
- Father of a boy having his circumcision.

NOTE This even applies to mincha if the brit will take place after mincha.

Any time a groom is present during the first week after marriage.

PSALM OF THE DAY/SHIR SHEL YOM

Shacharit: Psalm of the Day/Shir Shel Yom: Daytime

You may fulfill your requirement of saying Psalm of the Day (shir shel yom) only during the daytime.

PSALM 27/L'DAVID ADONAI ORI V'YISH'I

When To Say Psalm 27/L'David Adonai Ori V'Yish'i

Begin saying L'David Adonai ori v'yish'i (Psalm 27) on the first day (at night) of Elul, not the first day of Rosh Chodesh Elul (the 30th of Av). The last day to say this Psalm is 22nd of Tishrei (Shmini Atzeret). This Psalm is recited twice daily, in shacharit after shir shel yom and in ma'ariv after alenu, including on Shabbat and Jewish festivals.

ALENU

Who Should Say Alenu

Any Jew who happens to be in a synagogue should say alenu with the minyan, even if he is not joining the minyan for that prayer service.

When To Say Alenu

There is no time limit on when alenu may be said. Alenu should be said after each prayer service.

PSALMS/TEHILIM

Value of Saying Tehilim

The main value of saying tehilim is not in saying the tehilim themselves, but in the prayer said AFTER saying the tehilim (for someone to get well, for employment, etc.). The saying of tehilim strengthens the prayer enormously.

Concluding Tehilim with Yehi Ratzon of Refa'einu

If you say Psalms/tehilim for a sick person, you should conclude with the yehi ratzon that is sometimes added in shemoneh esrei in refa'einu.

Tehilim Additions to Regular Prayers

Rabbis may have their congregations add Psalms/tehilim or other prayers to standard services.

When To Say Tehilim

Both genders may say tehilim at night without restriction on which tehilim may be said; they may be said all night (or day).

SET PRAYERS: MINCHA

Mincha: Tzidkatecha

Girls and women never need to say tzidkatecha on Saturday mincha.

Mincha: Tachanun

If the minyan gets to tachanun after sunset, say tachanun until up to 8 minutes after sunset but do not put down your head for the first section.

SET PRAYERS: MA'ARIV

Shir HaMa'alot Hinei Bar'chu

Saying shir ha'ma'alot hinei bar'chu... before ma'ariv is a custom of some people, but it is not necessary.

Bar'chu at End of Ma'ariv

In Eretz Yisrael, it is customary to say bar'chu again at the end of ma'ariv.

NOTE This is not the custom outside of Eretz Yisrael, but if someone does say bar'chu again, the other people may respond.

When To Respond to Bar'chu

Wait until the leader has finished saying the line, “Bar'chu et Adonai ha'mevorach” before responding with “Baruch Adonai ha'mevorach l'olam va'ed.”

Saying HaMelech BiChvodo with Prayer Leader

As with the blessing ga'al yisrael in shacharit, the prayer leader should say out loud the blessing preceding the ma'ariv amida: ha'melech bi'chvodo. If you:

- Are up to where he is in the prayers, you may say the last blessing with him.
- Pray slowly and will not be able to join the minyan for saying the amida, you should start earlier than the minyan and catch up at ha'melech bi'chvodo.

Halachot of Ma'ariv Amida

See [What To Pray: Set Prayers: Amida](#).

When To Say Ma'ariv Psalm 27

Say Psalm 27 after alenu during Elul and most of Tishrei. For more about Psalm 27, see [When To Say Psalm 27/L'David Adonai Ori V'Yish'i](#).

BEDTIME SHEMA

HAMAPIL

HaMapil and Shema: Halacha, Not Custom

Saying “ha'mapil” and shema before going to sleep is halacha, not custom.

When To Say HaMapil

Ha'mapil may only be said at night, even if you normally stay awake all night (such as if you work a night shift).

NOTE The latest time you may say the *ha'mapil* prayer is daybreak (*alot ha'shachar*).

HaMapil When You May Not Fall Asleep

Do not say the *ha'mapil* prayer if you are flying through the night but are not certain that you will be able to sleep.

NOTE This also applies to anytime when you might not fall asleep at night.

If You Cannot Fall Asleep after HaMapil

If you cannot fall asleep after having said *ha'mapil* at night, you may talk, eat, say blessings, etc., but do not say the *ha'mapil* prayer again when you go back to bed.

SELICHOT

Selichot

You may say *selichot* by yourself.

NOTE You may only say the paragraph with God's 13 Attributes/Midot (beginning with *El melech...*) if you are praying with a minyan.

SIDDUR GUIDE: HOW TO PRAY IN SYNAGOGUE

Introduction to How To Pray in Synagogue

The synagogue (*shul*) prayer service may confuse the unfamiliar. Here is a brief guide to following the congregational prayers.

NOTE This Guide may be printed and given to people who are unfamiliar with the prayer services (or to people who are not yet completely comfortable in following the prayer services). It may be particularly useful for people who do not normally attend weekday minyans, especially people who are saying kaddish!

A printed copy may also be useful as a guide to a specific siddur. Before the prayer service takes place, the actual page numbers may be copied from the siddur onto the pages of the Guide for quick reference during the service. (This could be done by the user or by someone who is more familiar with the prayer services, as an aid to help the user follow what is going on.)

General Rules in Following/Answering the Leader

Ends/Beginnings of Paragraphs

Each individual says most of the prayers, but the leader sets the pace. He says out loud the last line or two of many paragraphs (and sometimes the next paragraph's first few words), to help others find where he is in the prayers.

Hint If you get lost, listen to the leader and try to find those words at the beginning or end of one of the paragraphs near where you think you should be!

Saying Amen

When the prayer leader/chazan says a blessing (Baruch ata adonai...) and finishes the final word, everyone usually replies amen.

Baruch Hu U'Varuch Shemo

It is common (but not required) to say baruch hu u'varuch shemo after hearing God's name (Adonai) when it is said in a blessing.

EXCEPTION No one should say baruch hu u'varuch shemo between bar'chu and the beginning of the amida.

NOTE

Some people say the phrase very loudly and slowly (pretentiously), but this wrong practice may prevent themselves and others from hearing the blessing's end and knowing when to say amen.

Praying Shacharit

This list mainly includes the parts of the prayer service that are said together or when in synagogue, not those said individually or at home.

NOTE If you need to use the toilet between *baruch she'amar* and *yishtabach*, say *asher yatzar* after saying *yishtabach* and before saying *yotzeir or*.

NOTE If you need to speak during the early part of shacharit, it is best to speak after *yishtabach* but before bar'chu. You should not speak during psukei d'zimra unless it is urgent or about the shacharit service.

Initial Blessings/Asher Natan

The initial blessings beginning with asher natan... through the end of ven brit may be said at home.

Ma Tov

Upon arriving in synagogue in the morning, say Ma tovu...

Talit

Married men (and also those with a tradition to wear a talit from bar mitzva age) normally put on their talit gadol on all days (except Tish'a b'Av morning).

For more details, see Talit (Gadol).

Tefilin

On weekdays, all men put on tefilin. They do not interrupt putting on tefilin to respond to other's prayers, not even to say amen.

For more details, see Tefilin.

Birhot HaShachar/Initial Blessings

If you have not yet said the initial blessings beginning with asher natan... through the end of ven brit, say them once you are in synagogue and after you have put on talit/tefilin (if relevant).

Everyone stands while the prayer leader reads the initial blessings aloud. They say amen after each one.

NOTE Individuals should not intend to fulfill their personal requirement to say those blessings by answering amen, since everyone should say the blessings for him/herself.

L'Olam Yehei Adam/Shema

L'olam yehei adam is said quietly, with everyone saying the shema line together.

Order of the Sacrifices

Some read (quietly) the order of the sacrifices.

13 Principles of Talmud Explanation/Kaddish

- The 13 principles of how the Talmud is explained are read quietly.
- Kaddish is said by any mourners.
- Everyone says, amen, yihei shmei raba...

NOTE Everyone, not just mourners, stands for kaddish; this is the custom for all kaddishes and for all services.

Mizmor Shir/Kaddish

- Mizmor shir is read quietly.
- Another kaddish is said by the mourners.

Baruch SheAmar

Baruch she'amar is said by everyone, standing. The leader says the final blessing out loud.

Verses (Psukim)

The following several pages are verses (psukim) from various sources, said by everyone quietly.

NOTE The leader says several intermediary lines aloud due to their importance and so that everyone else knows where he is.

Mizmor L'Toda/Yehi Chevod

- Everyone stands to say mizmor l'toda quietly (just for this paragraph).
- The next paragraph (yehi chevod) is read quietly.

NOTE Don't say mizmor l'toda the day before or during *Passover* (the Thanksgiving offering/Toda was chametz), or before Yom Kippur.

Ashrei and 5 Psalms

Ashrei and the following five psalms (#146 to 150) are said quietly by everyone; the leader says the final line or two out loud.

Baruch Adonai L'Olam Amen v'Amen

Baruch adonai... is said by the leader.

VaYevarech David

The next section (from va'yevarech David until after bar'chu) is said quietly by everyone while standing.

Shirat HaYam

Shirat ha'yam is read quietly by everyone.

Yishtabach/Kaddish

Yishtabach is said quietly by everyone together. The leader says the final line of yishtabach out loud and then kaddish.

Bar'chu

- The leader says Bar'chu et Adonai ha'mevorach.
- Everyone bows from the waist and replies (aloud), Baruch Adonai ha'mevorach l'olam va'ed (which is then repeated by the leader).
- Everyone says the blessing's ending ...u'vorei et ha'kol.

Shema and Its Blessings

The next paragraphs lead up to the shema:

- Leader says, “Et shem ha'el...”
- Everyone says aloud, together: Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh... and Baruch kevod Adonai mi'mkomo.
- Leader says the final line or two of La'el baruch ne'imot... and everyone responds amen.
- Everyone says ahavat olam quietly.
- Leader reads the final lines aloud.

NOTE It is the custom to not say amen to the blessing before shema.

- Everyone says the first line of the shema together and aloud, but Baruch shem... silently.
- Everyone reads the shema individually, and the leader repeats out loud Adonai eloheichem emet.
- Everyone reads the next paragraphs, through ezrat avoteinu, together, quietly.

Mi Chamocha

Stand for Mi chamocha until after the amida.

Adonai Yimloch

Everyone reads together and aloud: Adonai yimloch... until the final blessing before the amida.

NOTE At some time before completing that blessing, step back far enough (one large step is fine) so that you can take three small steps forward to begin the amida. If there is no room to step back, you may pray the amida without stepping forward.

The Amida

Amida: Details and Direction

For more details on saying the amida, see [What To Pray: Set Prayers: Amida](#)

For where to face during the amida, see [Amida: Location: Where To Face](#)

Stepping To Begin the Amida

After saying ga'al Yisrael, symbolically approach God by taking three steps forward (any size of steps is fine):

- Step forward with your right foot,
- Step forward with your left foot, and
- Step forward with your right foot.
- Bring your left foot to meet the right one, so that both feet are touching at the heels and at the balls (so that you are standing as if you had one leg, like the angels!)

Bowing in the Amida

Next, with your feet still together, do knee-bowing at the start and end of the first paragraph. You will also be bowing at:

- Beginning of modim (waist-bowing).
- End of modim (knee-bowing at Baruch ata Adonai of the blessing ending u'lecha na'eh l'hodot).

NOTE For how to do knee-bowing and waist-bowing, see [Amida: Actions: Bowing.](#)

Slach Lanu

In slach lanu, when saying ki chatanu and ki fashanu, hit your chest over your heart with your fist.

Reason We are saying that we sinned, so we strike our heart for leading us astray.

Ending the Amida

Symbolically take leave of God by taking three steps back after Adonai tzuri v'go'ali:

- Step back on your left foot,
- Step back on your right foot,
- Step back on your left foot (and then place your right foot next to your left foot).
- Bow to the left while saying *Oseh shalom bi'mromav...*,
- Bow to the right while saying *Hu ya'aseh shalom alenu*, and
- Bow to the middle (straight in front of you) while saying *Ve'al kol yisrael v'imru amen*.

Then pause for at least three seconds before walking forward or sitting down.

Reader's Repetition of Amida

At kedusha, everyone stands (even if they were sitting so far for the amida's repetition) with their feet together, again imitating the angels who only have one leg.

- The leader says *nekadeish* (in some places, everyone says *nekadeish*).
- Everyone says the next line together (kadosh, kadosh, kadosh...).

NOTE When saying kadosh each of the three times, rise up on the balls of your feet and return to “feet flat” so you will be able to rise up three times total. Some people also rise on their feet when they say the next line (baruch kevod), but it is neither required nor a universal practice.

- After the leader says *Halleluya*, everyone else may move their feet (or sit down, if that is their custom).
- On fast days, the leader says an extra paragraph in shacharit (other paragraphs in mincha are said by everyone).

NOTE These extra paragraphs usually appear in small--or tiny!--print in siddurs near where they get said. Look for asterisks to show where to insert them. It might be helpful before beginning shacharit to ask someone to point out exactly what to say and when.

Tachanun

When To Say Tachanun

Tachanun is usually said on weekdays.

How To Say Tachanun

Tachanun is said differently, depending on if there is a Torah scroll in the room, as follows:

Tachanun If Torah Scroll Present

Tachanun with Torah Scroll: Sun., Tues., Wed., Fri.

To say tachanun on Sundays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, when a Torah scroll is present:

- Say Va'yomer David sitting down, while resting your head on your left arm (unless you are wearing tefilin on your left arm, in which case lean onto your right arm).

NOTE Rest your head on your left arm even if you are left-handed. Some type of cloth should separate your face and your arm when doing this, but if your arm is bare and you don't have a talit or other garment with which to cover your arm, you do not need to put your head down at all. There is no problem with not being permitted to put your face on your bare arm, just that there is no point in doing so.

- When you reach shomer Yisrael, lift your head up and sit normally while saying the paragraphs until v'anachnu lo neida ma na'aseh.
- Before saying “na'aseh,” stand up for the remainder of tachanun.

Tachanun with Torah Scroll: Mon., Thur.

To say tachanun on Mondays and Thursdays, when a Torah scroll is present:

- Say tachanun standing until Va'yomer David... at which time, everyone sits down.
- Follow the directions above for the remainder of tachanun.

Tachanun If No Torah Scroll

Put your head down only if there is a Torah scroll in the room. When you say tachanun in a room in which there is no Torah scroll, sit for the first part (without resting your head on your arm), remaining sitting for shomer yisrael..., then stand for va'anachnu lo neida.

For more about putting your head down for Tachanun, see Tachanun.

Hallel

- When hallel is said, most of the psalms are said quietly by everyone. (In some synagogues, several of the psalms are sung in unison.)
- The lines beginning Hodu l'adonai... are read aloud by the leader.
- Everyone else responds aloud, Hodu l'adonai... and reads quietly the next line (which the leader then reads aloud when they finish).
- Similarly, Ana adonai is read responsively by the leader, followed by everyone else.

Kaddish

The leader says kaddish out loud.

Torah Reading (Mondays and Thursdays)

- Everyone reads quietly the phrases va'yehi be'nso'a... and brich shmei.
- The Torah is taken out and carried to the bima.
- As each man (called an oleh) is called up to the Torah:
 - The oleh says Bar'chu...
 - Everyone responds Baruch Adonai....
 - The oleh repeats that line and says a blessing.
 - Everyone answers amen.
- After each reading, the oleh says one more blessing and everyone replies amen.
- After the third aliya, the Torah is lifted up.
- Everyone says, V'zot haTorah...
- The Torah is rolled and wrapped.
- Meanwhile, the leader reads four paragraphs beginning, Yehi ratzon mi'lifnei avinu...
- The final paragraph, Acheinu kol bet yisrael... is read by everyone aloud.
- The Torah is put back while everyone reads two psalms quietly.

Ashrei/U'va L'Tzion

- Everyone reads ashrei quietly, followed by la'menatzeiach and u'va l'tziyon.
- Everyone together says, Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh and Baruch kevod.

Kaddish

The leader says kaddish.

Alenu

Everyone says alenu together.

Kaddish

Mourners say kaddish.

Psalm for the Day

Psalm for that day is read by everyone.

Kaddish

One more kaddish is said by the mourners.

L'David

- During Elul and into Tishrei, *L'David* is read by everyone.
- One more kaddish is said by the mourners.

Praying Ma'ariv

V'hu Rachum

Everyone reads the two introductory lines of v'hu rachum.

Bar'chu

- Leader says bar'chu.
- Everyone else responds, baruch Adonai....
- The leader repeats that line.
- Everyone reads the next paragraph/blessing.
- The leader says that final line out loud.
- Everyone responds amen.

NOTE Don't say baruch hu u'varuch shemo at all during ma'ariv.

Shema and Its Blessings

- The leader repeats the final two words of the shema and the word *emet*.
- Everyone continues quietly saying the phrases until Mi chamocha.
- Mi chamocha is said by everyone together including by the leader, who then also reads the next line.
- Everyone says Adonai yimloch... together, continuing through the end of the next blessing, which is repeated by the leader.
- Everyone says *hashkiveinu* quietly.
- The leader says the blessing shomer amo Yisrael la'ad out loud.
- Baruch Adonai l'olam... is said through to the end by everyone quietly.
- The leader says the final line and the final blessing out loud.

NOTE Baruch Adonai l'olam is not said in Eretz Yisrael.

Kaddish

The leader says kaddish.

Amida

Everyone says the amida silently and individually.

Kaddish

The leader says kaddish.

Alenu

Everyone says alenu together.

Kaddish

Kaddish is said by any mourners.

SHABBAT

INTRODUCTION TO SHABBAT

Goal of Creation

Shabbat was the goal of Creation. Just as God completed the world's creation on the sixth day and ceased His work on the seventh, so Jews are supposed to imitate God and not do any creative work on the seventh day. Everything we need for living through Shabbat must be prepared ahead so that we do not do any creative activities on Shabbat.

Our observance of Shabbat thus testifies that God created the world. In the Shabbat kiddush, we mention the Exodus from Egypt, too, to testify to the world that God is continuously involved in our lives.

By ceasing our normal efforts to dominate the physical world, we can appreciate the spiritual aspects of our existence.

On Shabbat, all observant (shomer Shabbat) Jews receive an extra “soul.”

Zachor and Shamor Remember (Zachor) the Sabbath day to make it holy—Exodus/Shmot 20:8

Observe (Shamor) the Sabbath day to make it holy—Deuteronomy/Devarim 5:12

Shabbat has two dimensions:

- Zachor “Remember,” encompassing positive (“to do”) commandments, and
- Shamor “Observe,” encompassing negative (“refrain from”) commandments.

NOTE Women, who are normally exempt from positive, time-dependent commandments, must do both positive and negative Shabbat commandments since, according to tradition, God said both words simultaneously. This is unlike Jewish festivals, when women are often exempt from positive, time-dependent commandments.

Zachor: Positive Shabbat Commandments

What Are Positive Shabbat Commandments

Positive Shabbat commandments include:

- Lighting candles,
- Making kiddush evening and morning,
- Making havdala,
- Honoring Shabbat (Kivod Shabbat), and
- Enjoying Shabbat (Oneg Shabbat), including eating three meals on Shabbat.

Honoring Shabbat: Special Food and Clothes

Honoring Shabbat includes eating tasty food and wearing nice clothes.

Shamor: Negative Shabbat Commandments

Shabbat Laws from the Torah (Shabbat D'Oraita)

What Are Melachot

On the Jewish day of rest, we refrain from 39 creative activities (melachot) that had been used to build the Tabernacle in the wilderness. These 39 melachot, prohibited by the Torah, are listed in the mishna of Shabbat and in later halacha books.

The word melacha is frequently mistranslated as “work,” but work has nothing to do with the Jewish concept of melacha. Some melachot are physically strenuous (plowing, grinding wheat, skinning an animal) and some are easy to do (drawing, baking). The defining point is whether the activity is one of the 39 creative, value-adding labors. Emptying your pockets before leaving an eruv (so you are not “carrying”) may seem confusing to someone who thinks that resting on Shabbat means refraining only from hard physical labor!

What Are Toldot

Toldot are variations of the 39 melachot. These types of melacha are also prohibited by the Torah.

Intention and Other Considerations

Most Torah (d'oraita) prohibitions of melacha on Shabbat are for cases in which you:

1) **Intend a permanent change.**

Often, actions that may be forbidden when they cause permanent change, will be permissible by Torah law if the result is only temporary. Or

2) **Intend or act for a specific purpose.**

Random or unintended actions are generally not prohibited by Torah law. (However, actions that are not prohibited by the Torah, may be prohibited by Chazal.)

Whether you may benefit from a melacha done on Shabbat depends on intention:

- A Jew who intentionally does a melacha on Shabbat may never benefit from that melacha.

NOTE Any other Jew may benefit from that melacha as soon as Shabbat is over.

- A Jew who does melacha on Shabbat by mistake (shogeg) may benefit from that melacha immediately after Shabbat ends.

In order to violate a prohibited melacha d'oraita, the melacha must be done as follows. If any of these do not apply, then the melacha is forbidden d'rabanan but not d'oraita:

- **K'darko**--The action must be done in a normal way.
- **Tzorech tikun**—The action must be done for a constructive purpose.
- **Tzricha l'gufa**--You must need the normal result of that action.
- **Asiya b'yachid**—The action must be done by one individual (if commonly done by just one person).
- **Mit'aseik**--You must realize that you are doing a melacha.

Shabbat Laws from Chazal (Shabbat D'Rabanan)

Chazal instituted additional restrictions, such as:

- Activities that might lead directly to violating a Torah prohibition.
- Use of items not designated for Shabbat use (muktza). For a good explanation of muktza from the TorahTots website, please click [here](#).

- Activities that might lead one to think that a prohibited activity is permissible (*mar'it ayin*--the appearance of the eye).
- Activities that are not appropriate for *Shabbat*, even though they are technically permissible according to the *Torah* (“*uvda d'chol*”).
- *Tircha*--Exerting a physical effort to accomplish a result that is not required for *Shabbat*.

Enjoying *Shabbat/Oneg Shabbat*

Chazal instituted laws to engender a positive *Shabbat* atmosphere and experience. Beyond the actual *halachot* of *shamor* and *zachor*, we have a concept of enjoying *Shabbat* (*oneg Shabbat*)—of enhancing our experience of *Shabbat* by doing whatever each person finds to be enjoyable and relaxing--as long as it is neither destructive nor violates the laws of *Shabbat*. The criteria are subjective. To fulfill the idea of honoring *Shabbat*, do things you would not do just for yourself if it were not *Shabbat*. Take essential life activities such as eating and sleeping and do them more and better and make them especially enjoyable.

Meals as *Oneg*

On *Shabbat*, we eat better foods and more types of food than we would normally do on weekdays.

The main idea behind meals for *Shabbat* is enjoyment (*oneg*; by contrast, the main idea for *Jewish festivals* is joy--*simcha*), so on *Shabbat* you should eat bread and either fish, poultry, or meat (but only if you enjoy them).

In order to have a special appetite for our *Shabbat* evening meal, we don't eat a full meal with bread on Friday afternoon.

Special *Shabbat* Songs (*Zmirot*)

Special songs (*zmirot*) are sung at the various *Shabbat* meals. Some *zmirot* have an aspect of prayer to them.

Studying *Torah*

Studying *Torah* on *Shabbat* is another way of increasing our spiritual experience. It honors the *Shabbat* and should bring about enjoyment of *Shabbat*.

Shabbat and *Muktza*

For information on *Shabbat* and *muktza*, see section below, [Shabbat: Muktza](#).

Weekday Talk

Don't talk about subjects that are forbidden to do on *Shabbat* (weekday subjects); for example, don't talk about what you will do after *Shabbat* is over. There is no prohibition about discussing actions from the past as long as no planning is discussed.

SHABBAT: ZACHOR

WHEN IS SHABBAT

WHERE DOES THE DAY BEGIN

Where the Day Begins: Three Opinions

There are three main opinions on where the day begins:

- 90 degrees east of Jerusalem;
- 180 degrees east of Jerusalem; and
- Eastern extent of land at Jerusalem latitude (in China, near Shanghai).

WHICH DAY IS SHABBAT

SHABBAT: IDL AND REGION OF SAFEK/DOUBT

Introduction to Shabbat, IDL, and Region of Safek/Doubt

The International Dateline (IDL), which is 180 degrees away from Greenwich, England, crosses the Pacific ocean from north to south and divides a region of safek/doubt as to which day is Shabbat. This region's eastern boundary is a line 180 degrees east of Jerusalem, which lies between Hawaii and the US mainland; the western boundary is east of Shanghai. All countries in this region of IDL safek/doubt are island countries.

In a region of doubt, such as Tasmania, keep normal Shabbat (Shabbat d'rabanan) on local Saturday and keep Shabbat d'oraita on:

Friday if you are:

- West of mainland USA, but
- East of the IDL, and
- Not attached to the mainland.

In this category are some islands off the coast of Alaska, Cook Islands, Hawaii, French Polynesia (Tahiti, Bora-Bora, etc.), and most of the other islands in Polynesia.

Sunday if you are:

- West of the IDL, but
- East of Shanghai, and
- Not attached to the mainland.

In this category are Fiji, Japan, Kwajalein, Micronesia-Palau, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomons, Tasmania, Tonga, Truk, Vanuatu, Yap. Also parts of Taiwan, the Philippines, and Indonesia.

NOTE In all cases, you must still observe regular Shabbat on Friday night/Saturday.

SITUATION

You are in a place near the International Dateline (IDL) in which you are not sure which day of the week it is *halachically*: Shabbat or, if you are east or west of the IDL, Friday or Sunday.

WHAT TO DO

On the Friday or Sunday in question, there is no shyut (d'rabanan prohibitions, including muktza), so you may do all melacha d'rabanan WITHOUT a shinui. You may:

- Ask or tell a non-Jew to do anything, including a melacha d'rabanan or d'oraita.
- Ride in a cab or car driven by a non-Jew.

NOTE You may not drive a vehicle yourself.

NOTE You may open the door yourself, even if a light will come on, as long as you do not need to use that light to see.

- Use electricity--except for heat or light—including turning on a fan or air conditioner (heat and light are forbidden by the Torah).
- Use the telephone. (Using a cellphone may be permissible--ask a rabbi).
- Carry from a private domain (reshut ha'yachid) to another private domain, even through a public domain (reshut ha'rabim); but you may not stop walking in the public domain and you may not put the object down in the public domain unless you use a shinui.

- There is no practical way to light candles, even using a shinui, but a non-Jew may light them for you and you may say the blessing on the candles.
- Swim, surf, scuba dive, climb, and play all games that do not use melacha. You may not wring out clothes and if you are swimming or scuba diving, your swimsuit or wetsuit must be clean.
- Walk any distance (there is no techum Shabbat d'oraita).
- Kinyan. You may acquire items.
- Fly, including check in and getting on plane if:
 - The pilot is non-Jewish, and
 - You don't do any melacha d'oraita (including any writing) without a shinui.
- Use a computer if it automatically goes to sleep after less than 24 hours of not being used.
- Shower. However:
 - You may not use an “instant on” hot water system in which the water is heated as you use it; you may only use the hot water if it has a holding tank.
 - You may use only liquid soap; hard soap is forbidden.
- Ingest medicine (but you may not smear it on skin).
- Use some make up, such as rouge, mascara, eye shadow. You may not use lipstick.
- Open a refrigerator with light (and all other psik reisha d'la neicha lei).
- You may buy necessities on Friday or Sunday as long as:
 - The store owner is not Jewish (or if he/she is Jewish, does not write or print a receipt),
 - You do not write, and
 - There is no reshut ha'rabim.

You may also do melacha d'oraita if:

- You use a shinui (non-normal way of doing that action--this is forbidden d'rabanan on Shabbat but is allowed on the Friday or Sunday in question), OR
- Two or more people do the melacha together.

D'oraita, you may not:

- Cook food.
- Turn on lights (but you may turn them off).
- Carry from domains.
- Boneh – building any permanent structure.
- Write two or more letters of the alphabet.
- Drive--there is no practical way to drive using a shinui.
- Shave--there is no practical way to shave using a shinui.
- Use toothpaste (but you may use tooth-cleaning powder).
- Use skin cream--you may dab it on without smearing it.

However, you may do these following actions with a shinui on the Friday or Sunday in question, as follows:

- Cook food. You must put food in the cooking utensil first, then turn on the heat with shinui. You may turn off the heat even without a shinui.
- Turn on lights (such as with your elbow).
- Stop along the way when carrying from a private domain (reshut ha'yachid) to another private domain, even through a public domain (reshut ha'rabim). As a shinui, you may carry the object in your mouth (as long as it is not food), etc.

Note Carrying something in your pocket is NOT a shinui.

- Tear paper (such as putting toilet paper across knees and moving the knees apart).
- Write (such as with the opposite hand).

Flying East From Australia on Sunday

If you fly east from Australia on Sunday:

- Do not do any melacha d'oraita from the time you are east of Australia's east coast.
- Do not even do any melacha d'rabanan once you have crossed the international dateline (IDL).

NOTE Once you have crossed into local Saturday night after local dark, Shabbat ends a second time!

If You Cross IDL from Friday into Saturday

If you travel west and cross the international dateline (IDL) from Friday into Saturday, do not do any melacha (d'oraita or d'rabanan) while you are flying over the area of doubt (safek).

NOTE If you land after sunset Saturday night, you will have missed most of Shabbat that week.

SHABBAT: HOW TO PREPARE

INTRODUCTION TO SHABBAT: HOW TO PREPARE

Introduction to Shabbat: How To Prepare

Taking care of many of our physical needs before Shabbat begins allows us to enhance our physical rest and emphasize our spiritual nature on Shabbat.

To prepare, we make or buy the food we will need for Shabbat, clean the house, and put it in order. The custom is to shower or bath especially for Shabbat.

Before sunset on Friday, we turn on whatever lights we will need during Shabbat so that our homes are well lit. We leave the lights on until Shabbat is over (or we set timers to regulate when the lights go on and off since we cannot be involved with controlling them).

SHABBAT: LEAVING THE WORLD OF WORK

Distracting Work on Friday Afternoon

You may not do any work or get involved in any project that might distract you from preparing for Shabbat, beginning at twice the duration of plag ha'mincha. So allow 2 1/2 *halachic* hours (sha'ot zmaniyot) before sunset to prepare for Shabbat.

PREPARING SHABBAT FOOD

INTRODUCTION TO PREPARING SHABBAT FOOD

Introduction to Preparing Shabbat Food

Before Shabbat, we make or buy the food that we will need for Shabbat. Although cooking is forbidden on Shabbat, some food preparation is allowed after Shabbat begins. See Shabbat: Cooking.

Special Shabbat foods include two loaves of bread for each of the first two meals and, preferably, for the third meal, too.

CHALLA

WHAT TO USE FOR CHALLA

What Is Challa

Challa refers to the two loaves of bread (or matza) over which we say the ha'motzi blessing at Shabbat and Jewish festival meals.

The loaves must be:

- Whole, without significant parts missing.
- Made out of one or more of the Five Grains.

MAKING CHALLA

Six-Braid Challa for Shabbat

It is a non-binding custom to braid challa as a reminder of the 12 showbreads (lechem ha'panim) in the Temple that were changed each Shabbat. Proper practice is to braid each challa from six pieces of dough, as there were two columns of six loaves each.

NOTE Since these showbreads were not changed on Rosh Hashana and Jewish festivals, we may use round challot for those holidays (unless they fall on Shabbat or the holiday is Passover!).

NOTE Sectional challa should be made from six pieces but counted as one loaf: you may not separate the rolls of a “pull-apart” challa and count them as multiple loaves.

Breaking Apart Challot Baked Together

If you bake several units of dough in one pan and they expand into each other, you may not break them apart after baking and use them as separate challot. If they only slightly touch each other, you may separate them and use them as individual challot.

SEPARATING CHALLA (HAFRASHAT CHALLA)

INTRODUCTION TO SEPARATING CHALLA

Introduction to Separating Challa

Although challa refers to the two loaves of bread (or matza) over which we say the ha'motzi blessing at Shabbat and Jewish festival meals, challa also means the portion of dough or bread that we are obligated to give to the cohen/priests during Temple times. Today, we burn a token portion (“challa”) of dough.

NOTE Burning the challa is not considered to violate bal tashchit (needless destruction), since the challa is separated and destroyed to fulfill a mitzva.

SEPARATING THE CHALLA PORTION

Separating the Challa Portion

Separating Challa from more than 5 lbs. of Dough

After you knead more than 5 lbs. (2.3 kg) of flour at one time:

- Hold part of the dough (at least 1 fl. oz.) while it is still part of the main mass of dough;
- Say the blessing lehafrish challa min ha'isa;
- Separate a small amount (1 fl. oz. is sufficient) of the dough as challa; and
- Say harei zu challa.

Separating Challa from between 2.5 and 5 lbs. of Dough

SITUATION You prepare dough, in a single batch, from more than 2.5 lbs. (1 kg), but less than 5 lbs. (2.3 kg), of flour.

WHAT TO DO Separate a small amount (1 fl. oz. is sufficient) of the dough as “challa.” Don't say the blessing; just say harei zu challa.

NOTE If you mix at least 2.5 lbs. (1 kg) of dough, you must separate challa (without a blessing) even if you will not be baking some of the dough until another time.

Separating Challa from less than 2.5 lbs. of Dough

Don't separate challa if the dough was prepared from less than 2.5 lbs. (1 kg) of flour.

Separating Challa from Dough Mixed by Non-Jew

Don't separate challa if you acquire dough that had been owned by a non-Jew at the time it was mixed.

Separating Challa after Baking

You may separate challa after baking (on weekdays only) if you forgot to separate challa before baking.

SITUATION You forgot to separate challa from dough made of at least 2.5 lbs. (1 kg) of flour, it is now Shabbat or a Jewish festival. You want to eat the bread.

WHAT TO DO

- If you are outside Eretz Yisrael: You may leave part of the challa until after Shabbat or Jewish festivals. After havdala, separate the challa from the part that you had set aside.
- If you are in Eretz Yisrael: You may not use bread from which challa was not separated. Once Shabbat or the Jewish festival ends, you may separate challa and then eat the bread.

BURNING THE CHALLA PORTION

Which Piece of Challa To Burn

Once you intend a particular piece of dough to be the challa portion, you must burn that piece and not put it back into the main dough.

When To Burn the Challa Portion

There is no time limit for burning “challa.” You may save several pieces for burning together, but you may not keep them in a place where they might get used.

How To Burn the Challa Portion

You may burn the challa portion any way you wish. You must burn it completely.

CHOLENT

Cholent

At least one hot food should be eaten at the midday meal on Shabbat/Saturday.

GEFILTE FISH

Gefilte Fish

Eating *gefilte* fish, made of fish in which bones have been removed, avoids the necessity of doing the melacha of selecting (boreir) the bones from the fish. This allows a fish course to be eaten at a Shabbat meal (which, in addition to the meat, makes the Shabbat meal special because both fish and meat would not have been commonly served in poor areas during the week).

SHABBAT: SETTING THE TABLE

Setting the Shabbat Table

Set the Shabbat table with nice tableware and tablecloth. The custom is to have the table set and have bread on the table before Shabbat starts.

The tablecloth should cover the table during Shabbat meals, but you may remove and switch tablecloths.

Even if you have a beautiful and valuable table, you should still cover it for Shabbat (and Jewish festival) meals.

How To Cover the Challot

On Shabbat (and Jewish festivals), you should place a white cover above the challot and another below (unless you have a white tablecloth).

REASON To recall the layers of dew above and below the mun that the Israelites ate for 40 years in the desert.

NOTE If you have a fancy or beautiful cover for your challa that is not white underneath, you may put a white cloth or paper towel between the cover and the challa in order to have a white cover above the challa.

SHABBAT: EATING BEFORE

Appetite for Shabbat Dinner

Do not eat a full meal (any bread or a lot of mezonot) after halachic midday on Friday.

REASON In order to have a special appetite for Shabbat dinner.

NOTE You may eat other food after halachic midday on Friday.

Eating before Hearing Shabbat Evening Kiddush

See Eating from Start of Shabbat until Kiddush.

SHABBAT DOMAIN/TECHUM SHABBAT

INTRODUCTION TO SHABBAT DOMAIN/TECHUM SHABBAT

Introduction to Shabbat Domain/Techum Shabbat

Techum Shabbat (Shabbat domain) is the furthest distance a Jew may walk on Shabbat. Wherever you are when you start Shabbat determines your starting point for techum Shabbat :

- **City/Enclosed Area** If you start Shabbat in a city or enclosed area of any type, you may walk up to 0.7 mile (1 km) beyond the border (last house) of that city or enclosed area.
- **Uninhabited Area** If you start Shabbat in an uninhabited place, such as a forest, you may walk only within a 0.7 mile (1 km) radius of where you started Shabbat.

Shabbat Domain/Techum Shabbat: Item Brought from Outside

You may not use any item brought to you on Shabbat from outside techum Shabbat.

EXAMPLE

Even if a non-Jew brings you misdirected luggage sent on a flight that did not land until after sunset on Friday, you may not use the items inside until after Shabbat has ended, even if you need the items for Shabbat. Consult a rabbi for exceptions.

WHEN SHABBAT STARTS

WHEN SHABBAT STARTS: GENERAL

When Shabbat Starts: General

There are many approaches as to when to start Shabbat:

Men

For men, whichever is first:

- At sunset, or
- When they light candles intending to begin Shabbat then, or
- When they say Mizmor shir l'yom haShabbat.

Women

For women, whichever is first:

- When they light candles intending to begin Shabbat then (most people light 18 minutes before sunset but local customs can vary; e.g., Jerusalem), or
- In case of urgent need, just before sunset if they have not lit candles.

NOTE Even if a husband has finished *ma'ariv* for Shabbat, his wife is not required to start Shabbat when he does, and she may still light her candles at the normal candle lighting time. The husband does not need to wait outside until she has lit. However, the ideal situation is for the home to be ready (including table set) by the time the husband has finished *ma'ariv* and has returned home from synagogue.

Community-Wide Considerations

- If an entire community begins Shabbat at any time earlier than sunset on Friday, EVERYONE must begin Shabbat at that time.
- If there are at least two minyans in any community, no one is required to start Shabbat with the earliest one (but if you associate yourself with one of those minyans, you must follow their custom).

WHEN SHABBAT STARTS: IF SUN DOES NOT SET

When Shabbat Starts

NOTE There are many approaches as to when to start Shabbat!

Follow Nearest Jewish Community for Non-Setting Sun

If the sun does not set for more than 24 hours, such as north of the Arctic Circle in the summer, follow the nearest Jewish community's Shabbat starting time.

WHEN SHABBAT STARTS: WITHIN SHABBAT DOMAIN

Starting Shabbat within Shabbat Domain/Techum Shabbat

If an entire community starts Shabbat early, individuals must also start early.

NOTE If any part of the community starts on time, you may also do so.

Starting Shabbat outside Shabbat Domain/Techum Shabbat

If you are outside techum Shabbat (which may be as little as 0.7 miles, or 1 km, past the last house of an inhabited area—city, village, etc.), you may start Shabbat at sunset even if the nearby community starts early, as long as the rabbi from that community does not have authority over your area.

SHABBAT CANDLES

SHABBAT: CANDLES: MEANING

Shabbat: Candles: Peace of Home and Festive Feeling

The original purpose for lighting Shabbat candles was to enhance the peace of the home (shalom bayit --so that people could walk around without stumbling in the dark), and so Shabbat candles were lit where people would eat dinner Friday night. But we now rely on the idea that candles help provide a festive atmosphere.

SHABBAT: CANDLES: WHEN TO LIGHT

Shabbat: Candles: Earliest Time To Light

You may not light Shabbat (or Jewish festival) candles before plag ha'mincha. The candles must burn until at least dark (tzeit ha'kochavim) and someone must be there to see the light from the candles after dark.

SITUATION Mincha minyan begins at plag ha'mincha. You cannot light candles at home and still get to mincha minyan on time.

WHAT TO DO You must say mincha on your own (anytime from half an hour after mid-day until sunset). You will light candles after plag ha'mincha but before sunset and not join the mincha minyan.

Shabbat: Candles: Normal Lighting Times

In many countries, candle lighting time is 18 minutes before sunset.

NOTE In Jerusalem, many people have the custom of lighting candles 40 minutes before sunset.

Shabbat: Candles: Lighting with Delay until Sunset

Under extenuating circumstances, women may make a “condition” by saying “I am lighting Shabbat candles but not starting Shabbat until sunset” to delay Shabbat until sunset, when it will begin anyway.

NOTE Women should not routinely start Shabbat at sunset since the proper time for women to begin Shabbat is at candle lighting (typically 18 minutes before sunset).

REASON An opinion exists that Shabbat actually begins at 18 minutes before sunset; that is the origin of this time for women to begin Shabbat.

Shabbat: Candles: Latest Time To Light

You may not light after sunset (or after whatever time the entire community starts Shabbat if they start Shabbat before sunset).

NOTE If a woman lights candles after sunset, she not only violates Shabbat but she must light one extra candle on every subsequent Shabbat for the rest of her life.

SHABBAT: CANDLES: WHERE TO LIGHT

Shabbat: Candles: Lighting at Dinner Location

Light Shabbat candles wherever you will eat dinner.

NOTE If eating elsewhere, do not light Shabbat candles at your own home unless you will be home for some period of time after dark while the candles are burning (otherwise you have made a bracha l'vatala). You must see the candles burning for at least one minute after dark (tzeit ha'kochavim).

SHABBAT: CANDLES: WHO LIGHTS

Shabbat: Candles: One Person per Home Lights

Shabbat candles should be lit only by one person per home. Priority order: wife; then husband; then children. Girls should not be encouraged to light Shabbat candles except when no parent can.

NOTE Single people should light Shabbat candles in their homes if they will eat there.

Shabbat: Candles: Have Others in Mind When Lighting

Whoever is lighting the Shabbat candles should light for all other people who will be eating dinner in that home. So a host/hostess where you will eat should have you in mind when he or she lights Shabbat candles.

However, it is customary for any married woman to light candles wherever she will eat. Unmarried women do not need to light their own candles (as long as the host/hostess has them in mind when lighting), but they are not prohibited from doing so.

SHABBAT CANDLES: HOW MANY TO LIGHT

Shabbat: Candles: Wives: Light Two (or More)

Wives should light two candles for Shabbat (and Jewish festivals), even though we say the blessing over “ner” (“candle” in the singular). Lighting any more candles than two is custom.

Shabbat: Candles: How Many To Light when Eating Elsewhere

A wife lighting Shabbat candles in a place other than her own home lights only two candles, even if she normally lights more than two candles in her own home.

Adding a Candle

If you missed lighting candles one Shabbat, the custom is to light an additional candle with your normal candles every subsequent Shabbat during your lifetime.

NOTE If you eat at someone else's home for Shabbat and they light candles for you, you do not (even as a custom) then add a candle to those your normally light on subsequent Shabbats.

SHABBAT: CANDLES: BLESSING

Shabbat: Candles: How To Do Blessing: Women

Here is the order for blessing over the Shabbat candles by women:

- Light the candles,
- Put your hands in front of your eyes (this a universal custom), and
- Say the blessing lehadlik ner shel Shabbat.

NOTE It is a custom to make requests at candle lighting, but rabbinic guidance may be helpful in how to structure the request.

Shabbat: Candles: How To Do Blessing: Men

Here is the order for blessing over the Shabbat candles by men:

- Say the blessing, and then
- Light candles.

NOTE If a man accepts/starts Shabbat when he lights Shabbat candles, he should cover his eyes and say the blessing AFTER lighting, as women do. Otherwise, he does not need to cover his eyes when saying the blessing.

Shabbat: Candles: Lighting with Wrong Blessing

If you said the blessing for Jewish festival candles instead of for Shabbat candles:

- Women may not correct themselves, but
- Men may say the correct blessing and light the candles.

NOTE If the man has already lit the candles before realizing that he had said the incorrect blessing, he should:

- Extinguish the candles,
- Say the correct blessing, and then

- Light again (assuming he has not yet started Shabbat and that it is not yet sunset).

SHABBAT: CANDLES: HOW LONG MUST BURN

How Long Must Shabbat Candles Burn

Shabbat candles must burn at least until dark and you have also eaten the bread of ha'motzi.

SHABBAT: MINCHA BEFORE

WHAT TIME IS MINCHA

Earliest Mincha before Shabbat

The earliest mincha before Shabbat is one-half hour after halachic midday, as with all mincha prayers.

SHABBAT: MINCHA AND CANDLE LIGHTING

Saying Mincha after Lighting Shabbat Candles

A woman or girl who has already lit Shabbat candles may not say mincha for Friday afternoon, even if she lit (after plag ha'mincha but) long before sunset time, unless she intended not to begin Shabbat when she was lighting the candles (and intending to begin later should only be done in urgent situations, not routinely).

SHABBAT: EVENING PRAYERS

SHABBAT: EARLY MA'ARIV

Shabbat: Ideal Time for Ma'ariv

The ideal time for ma'ariv on Friday night is whenever will make everyone (or most people!) happy. It can be any time from plag ha'mincha (1 1/4 halachic hours before sunset), until 72 minutes before sunrise, but should properly be said before midnight.

Saying Ma'ariv at Plag HaMincha

You may say ma'ariv on Friday afternoon (erev Shabbat) as early as plag ha'mincha (1 1/4 halachic hours before sunset), as long as you say mincha before saying ma'ariv. So, if it is now plag ha'mincha, you may say mincha and then follow it as soon as you wish with ma'ariv.

NOTE On erev Shabbat, you do not need to say mincha before plag ha'mincha in order to say ma'ariv before sunset. This is unlike on weekdays, when you must say mincha before plag in order to say ma'ariv before sunset.

Answering Kedusha If You Accepted Shabbat

SITUATION You have begun Shabbat early and you are at a minyan where they are saying kedusha for Friday.

WHAT TO DO Reply to kedusha.

Beginning Shabbat Early When Friday Is Rosh Chodesh

SITUATION You begin Shabbat early when Rosh Chodesh falls on Friday.

WHAT TO DO Do not say ya'aleh v'yavo in ma'ariv (along with the normal Shabbat prayers).

KABBALAT SHABBAT

WHEN TO SAY KABBALAT SHABBAT

Start Kabbalat Shabbat Ideally before Sunset

Kabbalat Shabbat should ideally be started before sunset, and you should ideally get to bo'i challa at about sunset time. But you may start Kabbalat Shabbat after sunset and even after dark.

Latest Time To Say Kabbalat Shabbat

The latest time to finish saying Kabbalat Shabbat is before daybreak on Saturday morning.

Kabbalat Shabbat and Jewish Festivals

Kabbalat Shabbat is mostly omitted when Shabbat falls on:

- Jewish festivals,
- Chol ha'moed, and
- Right after the last day of a Jewish festival.

On these days, only Mizmor shir... and Adonai malach... are said.

LECHA DODI

Directions for Lecha Dodi

When saying Lecha Dodi:

- Face your normal direction for the first stanzas;
- For bo'i v'shalom, ideally, face the entrance to the synagogue (but the common practice is to face away from the aron kodesh).

VAYECHULU

Saying VaYechulu with Others

Friday night, it is a nice custom for men to say va'yechulu with at least one other man. It is best (but not required) to say va'yechulu with the entire minyan.

REASON The idea is that we are attesting (with other people, as in a court) to God's having created the world.

SHABBAT: MEALS

INTRODUCTION TO SHABBAT: MEALS

Introduction to Shabbat: Meals

Three Shabbat Meals

We are required to eat three Shabbat meals, as a rabbinic (d'rabananan) enactment to enjoy Shabbat (oneg Shabbat). The first Shabbat meal must be at night and the remaining two must be during the day (the third meal must be eaten after halachic midday). Friday night dinner and the first meal on Saturday are preceded by kiddush. For the first two Shabbat meals, say ha'motzi over two complete loaves of bread, each of which is at least 1.3 fl. oz. in volume. For the third meal, the ideal is to use two complete loaves of bread, but the requirement of eating the third meal can also be fulfilled by eating any food other than salt or water.

Source of Saying Shabbat Kiddush

- Saying kiddush on Shabbat night is a commandment from the Torah (d'oraita).
- Saying kiddush on Saturday morning is a rabbinical (d'rabananan) enactment.

NOTE If you did not say Friday night kiddush, you must say that version of kiddush on Shabbat morning and it is then a requirement from the Torah (d'oraita). Do not begin with va'yechulu; instead, begin with

borei pri ha'gafen and say the second blessing of kiddush.

Source of Kiddush Location

Saying kiddush at the place where you will eat your meal is a *rabbinical* (d'rabanan) enactment.

Shabbat Kiddush-Meal Quantities: Evening

- For evening kiddush, a minimum of 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) of wine must be blessed on and at least half must be drunk.
- For the evening meal, as on Shabbat lunch and all required Jewish festival meals, a minimum of 1.9 fl. oz. of bread must be eaten within four minutes.

Shabbat Kiddush-Meal Quantities: First Meal on Saturday

Shabbat day first meal has two separate eating requirements. They may be combined (say/hear kiddush and start the main meal right away) but are often done separately (say/hear kiddush and then eat some mezonot; the main meal is eaten later in the day).

NOTE Since eating and drinking requirements on all morning kiddushes (both Shabbat and Jewish festivals) are d'rabanan, the required beverage amount for morning kiddush is only 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) instead of the d'oraita 4 fl. oz. (119 ml), which is required for kiddushes for Shabbat evening.

1) Morning kiddush requires a halachically legal “meal” with these elements:

- a) Blessing on a minimum of 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of wine (or other beverage),
- b) Someone's drinking at least 2 fl. oz. of the beverage, followed by
- c) Eating at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of some type of mezonot (or bread) within four minutes.

NOTE If you drink at least 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of wine within 30 seconds, you do not need to eat mezonot.

NOTE You do not need to drink the wine or other kiddush beverage to fulfill “establishing a meal.” You may hear kiddush and then simply eat the required amount of bread or mezonot. This applies to Shabbat or Jewish festivals, evening or morning.

The kiddush “meal” does not have to satiate.

NOTE If you have not fulfilled the requirements for kiddush, you may not eat other foods, such as fruit or fish at a kiddush.

2) **The real meal (kovei'a se'uda) of Shabbat lunch requires eating** at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of bread (or matza during Passover!) within four minutes. It should include enough food to satiate.

NOTE You can simultaneously fulfill the requirement to “establish a meal” and to “eat a meal” by eating one (the same) piece of bread.

For details on fulfilling the first two meals' requirements, see [Shabbat: Kiddush](#).

Shabbat: Eating a Meal Requirement: Third Meal

For details on fulfilling the third meal's requirements, see [Shabbat: Third Meal \(Se'uda Shlishit\)](#).

SHABBAT: KIDDUSH

SHABBAT: KIDDUSH: REQUIREMENTS

Shabbat: Kiddush: Requirements

To do Shabbat kiddush,

- Say, or hear, the Shabbat kiddush blessings/segments, and
- “Establish a meal” (kovei'a se'uda).

For details, see [How To Do Shabbat Evening Kiddush](#) or [How To Do Shabbat Daytime Kiddush](#).

NOTE There is never any requirement on an individual to drink kiddush wine (except at the Passover sefer), but the kiddush wine must be drunk by one or more persons.

To fulfill kiddush requirements of “establishing a meal,” you need not drink the wine or grape juice (but someone must drink it). Instead, you may hear kiddush and then simply eat the required amount of bread or mezonot (see above). This applies to Shabbat or Jewish festivals, evening or morning.

SHABBAT: KIDDUSH: WHO MAY MAKE

Jewish Man or Woman Making Kiddush

As on Jewish festivals, any adult Jew, male or female, may say kiddush for him/herself and also include any other Jews of any age or gender.

REASON Any person who may fulfill the mitzva of kiddush may say it for another person.

NOTE Women are obligated to say (or have said for them) Shabbat morning kiddush.

SHABBAT: KIDDUSH: WHAT TO DRINK

Ideal Kiddush Beverage: Wine/Grape Juice

Wine (or grape juice) is the ideal and proper beverage for kiddush (and havdala).

REASON Wine is considered to be a prestigious beverage.

Diluting Kiddush Wine

There is no need to dilute wine before drinking it.

SHABBAT: KIDDUSH: HOW MUCH TO POUR

Pour Revi'it for Shabbat Kiddush

As on Jewish festivals, the minimum volume of kiddush beverage on which you may say Shabbat kiddush (or havdala) is a revi'it, as follows:

- 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) for d'oraita cases such as Shabbat (or first-day Jewish festival) evening kiddush, and
- 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) for d'rabanana cases such as kiddush for Shabbat lunch.

How High To Fill Shabbat Kiddush Cup

Ideally, fill your kiddush cup to just above the rim, even if the cup is larger than 4 fl. oz. (119 ml). Don't make the cup overflow.

NOTE If you did not fill it to the rim, it is still OK.

If Not Enough Wine

If there is not enough wine or grape juice for Shabbat (or Jewish festival kiddush) and havdala:

- Set aside the first cup for havdala; then, if there is one more cup,
- Use it for the morning kiddush.
- See How To Do Shabbat Daytime Kiddush and How To Do Shabbat Evening Kiddush .

SHABBAT: KIDDUSH: CUP & WINE BOTTLES

Shabbat: Your Own Kiddush Cup

As on Jewish festivals, if you want to drink kiddush wine, you may hold your own cup of wine (or grape juice) during kiddush or receive wine or grape juice from the kiddush leader's cup, but neither is required.

Shabbat: Kos Pagum

Do not use a *kos pagum* for *kiddush*. *Kos pagum* means either:

- “Physically damaged or broken drinking utensil”: (You may not use such a cup for *kiddush l'chatchila*), OR
- Cup of wine, grape juice, or any beverage that has been drunk from.

This beverage may not be used for a *kos shel bracha* until at least a small amount more of some beverage has been added to the existing beverage.

Shabbat: Uncovered Wine Bottles/Cups

You do not need to close the wine bottle or cover the other wine cups while the first of several people says *kiddush*, whether on *Shabbat* or *Jewish festivals*.

Shabbat: Washing Wine Glass

There is no need to wash a wine glass before using it if it is already clean.

Shabbat: Pouring Back Wine

You may pour excess wine from *kiddush* back into the bottle as long as there is more wine already in the bottle than what you are pouring back and as long as the bottle has been *toveled*.

If there is less wine in the bottle than in your glass, you must pour at least one drop of wine from the bottle into your wine glass or cup before you pour it back into the bottle.

SHABBAT: KIDDUSH: HOW MUCH TO DRINK

Drinking Cheekful for Shabbat Kiddush

As on *Jewish festivals*, the minimum total volume of *Shabbat kiddush* beverage that must be drunk--usually by the *kiddush*-maker (*mevareich*) but it may even be by several people combined--is a cheekful (*m'lo lugmov*), as follows:

- 2 fl. oz. (59 ml) within 30 seconds of beginning to drink for *d'oraita* cases such as *Shabbat* evening *kiddush* (as well as first-night *Jewish festival kiddush* and all havdalas), and
- 1.7 fl. oz. (50 ml) within 30 seconds of beginning to drink for *d'rabanan* cases such as *Shabbat* lunch *kiddush* (as well as first-day *Jewish festival* lunch *kiddush* and all second-day *Jewish festival* kiddushes).

NOTE If no one drinks the *kiddush* beverage, a blessing was made in vain (*bracha l'vatala*), and the commandment to say or hear *kiddush* has not been fulfilled.

SHABBAT: KIDDUSH: WHEN TO SPEAK OR DRINK

When To Drink or Speak after Kiddush

Once the leader (*mevareich*) has said *kiddush* for other people and someone has drunk at least 2 fl. oz. (59 ml) of wine (or other appropriate beverage) over which *kiddush* was made, you may:

- Speak, even without having drunk anything yourself.
- Drink.
- Eat.

SHABBAT: KIDDUSH: WHEN TO BLESS AFTER KIDDUSH

When You Must Say the Kiddush Blessing after Hearing Kiddush

You must say the blessing on wine if you:

- Heard *kiddush*, then

- Spoke, and
- Now want to drink some wine, even from the cup over which kiddush was made.

NOTE If you heard someone make kiddush over a *she'hakol* beverage and you drank from that cup, you must say borei pri ha'gafen before drinking wine or grape juice later in the meal.

SHABBAT KIDDUSH: STANDING OR SITTING

Shabbat: Kiddush: Standing or Sitting

Various customs apply to whether to stand or sit during kiddush (or havdala). Follow your tradition.

SHABBAT: TWO LOAVES (LECHEM MISHNEH)

SHABBAT: TWO LOAVES (LECHEM MISHNEH): WHY TWO LOAVES

Shabbat: Two Loaves: Double Portion

The two loaves of bread on Shabbat reminds us of the double portion of mun we received in the desert. Even though one portion would have been eaten by Shabbat morning, we still use two loaves in the morning and two for se'uda shlishit as a reminder of the miracle.

SHABBAT: TWO LOAVES (LECHEM MISHNEH): WHAT TO USE

HaMotzi: Bagels

You may use two bagels for the two Shabbat loaves (lechem mishneh) even though they are already sliced most of the way through.

HaMotzi: Crackers

The minimum volume of a cracker or crispbread (such as Ryvita or Wasa) that may be used for lechem mishneh is 1 oz. (30 ml).

HaMotzi: Other Foods

You may not substitute other foods for the two loaves (lechem mishneh).

EXAMPLE You may not use two apples or two cans of fish.

SHABBAT: TWO LOAVES (LECHEM MISHNEH): WHOLE LOAVES

How Much Challa May Be Missing

Less than 1/48th missing is still considered a whole loaf. So if you only have two challot (or other loaves of bread) for Shabbat, you might be able to use one loaf twice, as follows:

- Wash your hands,
- Say ha'motzi,
- Cut off a piece that is less than 1/48th of the loaf, and
- Eat it.

REASON You may consider the remainder of that loaf as still being a full loaf and you may re-use it for your Shabbat morning meal.

NOTE If you have pieces of bread or other mezonot, you may:

- Cut off less than 1/48th of the loaf,
- Eat the additional pieces of bread to make a total of at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56ml), and then
- Re-use the same loaf for Shabbat morning.

SHABBAT: TWO LOAVES (LECHEM MISHNEH): HOW TO COVER

How To Cover the Challot

See [How To Cover the Challot](#).

SHABBAT: TWO LOAVES (LECHEM MISHNEH): HOW TO WASH FOR

How To Wash for HaMotzi

See [HaMotzi: Washing Hands](#).

Shabbat: Two Loaves: What HaMotzi Covers

See [HaMotzi: Which Foods HaMotzi Covers](#).

SHABBAT: TWO LOAVES (LECHEM MISHNEH): WHICH TO CUT

Friday Night: Cut Lower Challa

On Friday night, hold the two [challot](#) together, one on top of the other, but cut the lower one (for [kabbalistic](#) reasons).

Saturday Morning: Cut Upper Challa

On Saturday morning, cut the upper [challa](#) of the two [challot](#). (For [Jewish festivals](#), cut the upper loaf at night and day.)

SHABBAT: TWO LOAVES (LECHEM MISHNEH): HOW TO CUT

Mark the Challa

Mark the bread with a light cut before saying [ha'motzi](#). Then make the real cut in the same place.

NOTE It is customary to just make a mark on the [challa](#). You may cut almost all of the way through, but you must be able to pick up the bread by the small end and have it hold up the big end.

SHABBAT: TWO LOAVES (LECHEM MISHNEH): SALT

Why Dip Challa in Salt?

Before eating bread (at any time, not just on [Shabbat](#) or [Jewish festivals](#)), dip the bread in some salt.

REASON #1 Salt makes the bread taste better and it is more prestigious for blessing.

REASON #2 Salting the bread makes it like a sacrifice (which had salt added to it).

NOTE You may sprinkle salt on the bread, but [kabbala](#) recommends dipping.

SHABBAT: TWO LOAVES (LECHEM MISHNEH): WHEN TO EAT OR SPEAK AFTER HAMOTZI

Eating or Speaking after HaMotzi

If someone said [ha'motzi](#) for you, you should wait until he or she eats some of the [challa](#) before you eat.

NOTE This is an issue of respect and courtesy ([derech erez](#)) and not a [halachic](#) issue. However, you may not speak until after you have eaten some of the bread--any amount is sufficient.

SHABBAT: DINNER

SHABBAT: DINNER: SHALOM ALEICHEM AND EISHET CHAYIL

Shalom Aleichem and Eishet Chayil

A widespread (but not universal) custom before [kiddush](#) is to sing "[Shalom Aleichem](#)"; many men also sing "[Eishet Chayil](#)."

SHABBAT: DINNER: BLESSING THE CHILDREN

Blessing the Children

A widespread custom is for parents to bless their children before [kiddush](#) on Friday night. See [Blessing the Children/Birkat HaBanim](#).

SHABBAT: DINNER: KIDDUSH

SHABBAT: DINNER: EATING BEFORE KIDDUSH

Eating a Full Meal before Shabbat

See [Appetite for Shabbat Dinner](#).

Eating from Start of Shabbat until Kiddush

Once [Shabbat](#) begins for you—either at sunset or before (such as if you lit [Shabbat](#) candles)--you may not eat or drink before hearing [kiddush](#).

NOTE Women and girls may make [kiddush](#) anytime after lighting candles.

SHABBAT: DINNER: HOW TO DO KIDDUSH

How To Do Shabbat Evening Kiddush

To fulfill the two requirements for [Shabbat](#) evening [kiddush](#):

1. Say, or hear, the [Shabbat](#) evening [kiddush](#) blessings/segments:
 - [Borei pri ha'gafen](#) (on wine or grape juice only), OR [Ha'motzi](#) (on two [challot](#) if you have no wine or grape juice, as [chamar medina](#) is not permitted for [Shabbat](#) evening [kiddush](#). See [Challot for Evening Kiddush](#)) AND
 - [Mekadeish HaShabbat](#).
2. Establish a *halachic* “meal” ([kovei'a se'uda](#)) by either:
 - Drinking 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) of wine (or grape juice) within 30 seconds, OR
 - Eating at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of bread or [mezonot](#) of any type (within 4 minutes) shortly after saying or hearing [kiddush](#).

NOTE For evening [kiddush](#), the custom is to go straight to the meal without delay (with no [mezonot](#) or snacking first). [B'di'avad](#) if you snacked, it is still OK.

What To Drink for Shabbat Dinner Kiddush

Wine (or grape juice) is the only drink permissible for Friday evening (or *Jewish festival evening*) [kiddush](#). If you do not have wine or grape juice with which to make evening [kiddush](#), see [Challot for Evening Kiddush](#).

Challot for Evening Kiddush

To use two [challot](#) for [kiddush](#) instead of wine:

- Wash hands and say blessing [al netilat yadayim](#).
- Say [kiddush](#) but substitute [ha'motzi](#) for [borei pri ha'gafen](#).
- As soon as you finish saying [kiddush](#), eat the bread as normal.

SHABBAT: LUNCH

SHABBAT: LUNCH: EATING BEFORE KIDDUSH

EATING BEFORE SHABBAT SHACHARIT

Eating before Making Shabbat Kiddush

You may eat non-mezonot and non-bread food before praying Shabbat shacharit and without making kiddush, in order to avoid hunger or hypoglycemia (low blood sugar).

Women and Minimum Prayer before Saying Shabbat Kiddush

The minimum prayer that a woman should say on Shabbat (or Jewish festival) morning before saying kiddush and eating some food is birchat ha'shachar.

EATING AFTER SHABBAT SHACHARIT

Eating Only after Fulfilling Shabbat Kiddush Requirements

Once you have said the amida of Shabbat shacharit, you may not eat any food until you have said (or heard) kiddush and finished kiddush requirements by either:

- Drinking at least 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) of wine/grape juice, or
- Eating at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of mezonot or bread.

Eating before Shabbat Midday

Don't fast on Shabbat (except Yom Kippur!) past halachic midday:

- If you will not finish shacharit before halachic midday, you should eat or drink earlier in the day, even before you begin shacharit—water can be sufficient for this purpose.
- If you will finish shacharit but not musaf by halachic midday:
 - Finish shacharit,
 - Make kiddush,
 - Eat some mezonot, and then
 - Return to say musaf.

SHABBAT: LUNCH: HOW TO DO KIDDUSH

How To Do Shabbat Daytime Kiddush

There are two requirements for Shabbat daytime kiddush: Say or Hear Kiddush Segments/Blessings and Establish a Halachic Meal (kovei'a se'uda):

1. Say or Hear Kiddush Segments/Blessings

You must say, or hear, the Shabbat daytime kiddush segments/blessings and someone must drink at least 2 fl. oz. (59 ml) of the kiddush beverage:

- **Say or Hear Kiddush Segments/Blessings**
 - **Torah segment(s):** V'shamru bnei Yisrael (even beginning from al kein).
 - **Blessing over at least 3.3 fl. oz. (99ml) of drink:**
 - Borei pri ha'gafen (if on wine or grape juice), OR
 - She'hakol nihiyeh bi'dvaro (if on other beverage/chamar medina).

NOTE For Saturday (or Jewish festival) lunch and havdala, you may use any beverage (chamar medina) commonly drunk for social purposes (not just for thirst) in the country in which you are saying kiddush. The ideal is to use wine or grape juice.

- **Drink at Least 2 fl. oz. (59 ml) of the Kiddush Drink**

This amount may be drunk by one person or by several people together.

2. Establish *Halachic Meal (Kovei'a Se'uda)*

You must establish a *halachic meal (kovei'a se'uda)* shortly after saying or hearing *Shabbat morning kiddush* by either:

- **Drinking Wine**--at least 4 fl. oz (119 ml) of wine (or grape juice) within 30 seconds, OR
- **Eating Bread/Mezonot**--at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread or *mezonot* within four minutes.

NOTE The second half of making *kiddush*, “establishing a meal” (*kovei'a se'uda*), can be fulfilled simultaneously when you fulfill the subsequent, separate *Shabbat* requirement for “eating a meal” but in that case, you must eat 1.9 fl. oz. of bread.

NOTE If you make, or hear, *Shabbat morning kiddush* on any beverage except wine or grape juice, you must also eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread or *mezonot* within four minutes to establish the *kiddush* meal. If you do not want to eat bread or *mezonot*, only drinking at least 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) of wine (or grape juice) within 30 seconds will fulfill all the *kiddush* requirements.

NOTE If you have not fulfilled the *kiddush* requirements, you may not eat other foods, such as fruit or fish at a *kiddush*.

NOTE Once you have heard *kiddush* and either eaten the required bread or *mezonot* or drunk the required 4 fl. oz. of wine or grape juice, you do not need to say or listen to *kiddush* again if you eat your actual meal later (except if you need to say *kiddush* for other people who have not yet heard or said *kiddush*).

SHABBAT: SECOND MEAL

How To Fulfill Eating Shabbat Second Meal

You must eat a second meal on *Shabbat* (or *Jewish festival*) day with at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml, 1/4 cup) of bread—even if you already said *ha'motzi* but ate less than 1.9 fl. oz. of bread at *kiddush*.

NOTE Ideally, begin your second meal before halachic midday. But you may eat your second meal anytime after *shacharit* and before sunset.

SHABBAT: TORAH AT THE TABLE

Torah at the Table

Saying some *Torah* at each meal--anytime bread is eaten and at least two people are eating--is a custom but not a *halacha*. But, *Torah* can be said anytime!

Shir HaMa'alot as Torah

Saying *shir ha'ma'alot* before *birkat ha'mazon* fulfills the custom to say *Torah* at the meal.

SHABBAT: THIRD MEAL (SE'UDA SHLISHIT)

SE'UDA SHLISHIT: WHAT TO EAT

What To Eat for Se'uda Shlishit

Ideally, fulfill the commandment of a third meal (*se'uda shlishit*) by:

- Washing hands,
- Saying the *ha'motzi* blessing over two *challot*, and
- Eating at least the minimum amount (1.9 fl. oz., or 56 ml) of bread.

You may, however, fulfill the requirements of *se'uda shlishit* by eating any solid food which gives nourishment—as long as you can say the after-blessing and have eaten at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of that food.

NOTE If you ate some food after completing your Shabbat day meal (the second meal of Shabbat) and after halachic midday, you can consider that to be your se'uda shlishit, even if you did not intend it to be when you ate it.

SE'UDA SHLISHIT: WHEN TO EAT

When To Eat Se'uda Shlishit with Bread

The ideal is to wash hands and say ha'motzi for se'uda shlishit before sunset. However, you may still say ha'motzi for se'uda shlishit until 2 minutes before dark (tzeit ha'kochavim) if you have not yet eaten your se'uda shlishit. Once you have begun your meal before sunset, you may continue until long after dark.

When To Eat Se'uda Shlishit without Bread

If you are eating a snack without bread, you must finish eating and say the after-blessing by at least 2 minutes before dark.

If you washed and ate bread, you may continue your meal even after dark.

Latest Time You May Eat on Shabbat

If you finished eating (and saying birkat ha'mazon/bracha achrona for) a full meal or even a snack that you intended to constitute your se'uda shlishit, you may not eat any more once the sun has set on Saturday until after you have made or heard havdala.

NOTE If you did not intend for the food to constitute your se'uda shlishit, see When To Eat Se'uda Shlishit with Bread or When To Eat Se'uda Shlishit without Bread, above.

Eating Se'uda Shlishit before Mincha

If you will not have time to start se'uda shlishit after mincha but before sunset, you may eat se'uda shlishit before mincha.

NOTE Eating se'uda shlishit before mincha is preferable to beginning eating se'uda shlishit after sunset.

SE'UDA SHLISHIT: WHO MUST EAT

Who Must Eat Se'uda Shlishit

Women, as well as men, are required to eat se'uda shlishit.

SE'UDA SHLISHIT: BIRKAT HAMAZON

Wine from Se'uda Shlishit Birkat HaMazon

If you recite birkat ha'mazon after se'uda shlishit over a cup of wine, you may only drink the wine if the meal ended before sunset.

NOTE Wine from birkat ha'mazon of se'uda shlishit that ended after sunset may be used for havdala EXCEPT if the meal was a sheva brachot meal.

REASON The bridegroom, bride, and leader may drink the wine--and one of them must drink the wine!--as part of the seven blessings, even though they were recited after sunset.

MELAVE MALKA

Eating Melave Malka a Halacha

Eating something for the melava malka on Saturday night is a halacha, not a custom.

Melave Malka Shir HaMa'alot until Midnight

Say shir ha'ma'alot until midnight (halachic chatzot) if you eat a meal with bread after Shabbat is over, but only if the meal is eaten as a melave malka.

SHABBAT: CONCLUSION

SATURDAY EVENING BEFORE HAVDALA

EATING BEFORE HAVDALA

Eating/Drinking before Havdala

You should not eat or drink from sunset (or from the time you finish se'uda shlishit) until after havdala, but drinking water during that time period is not forbidden by halacha.

Birkat HaMazon Additions for Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh Saturday Night

SITUATION Rosh Chodesh begins on Saturday night. You started se'uda shlishit and continued to eat--including eating at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread after dark. It is time for birkat ha'mazon.

WHAT TO DO Say birkat ha'mazon additions for Shabbat (shir ha'ma'alot, retzei, migdol yeshuot) AND any others for the next day (such as ya'aleh v'yavo for Rosh Chodesh).

NOTE If you did not eat at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread after dark, only say the birkat ha'mazon additions for Shabbat.

Forgetting Ata Chonantanu

If you forgot to say ata chonantanu after Shabbat (or Jewish festivals), you do not need to repeat the anida. But, if you then ate food before saying havdala, you must repeat the anida including ata chonantanu.

WHEN SHABBAT ENDS/MOTZA'EI SHABBAT

Shabbat Ends at Dark

You may not end Shabbat before dark (appearance of three medium-size stars--tzeit ha'kochavim).

When Is Dark

Shabbat (and Jewish festivals) ends at "dark": when three medium-sized stars are visible overhead.

NOTE To find medium-sized stars, look for stars to appear in the west—those will be large stars. When large stars appear in the west, medium-sized stars should be visible overhead.

If you are in a place where the sun sets but the sky will not get dark any time that evening, ask a rabbi what to do.

How Long between Sunset and Dark

Some communities end Shabbat 42 minutes after sunset, which is when some rabbis in New York observed that it gets dark. At other latitudes, the interval may vary considerably, from shorter toward the equator or much longer toward the poles.

NOTE In New York, dark is at 45 minutes after sunset in the winter and 50 minutes in the summer, according to Rav Moshe Feinstein. Some people wait 72 minutes after sunset before doing any melacha.

SAYING BARUCH HAMAVDIL

Baruch HaMavdil Bein Kodesh L'Chol To Do Melacha

After it is dark, say Baruch ha'mavdil bein kodesh l'chol (just those words--not God's name or any of the standard words used in blessings!) if you want to end Shabbat and do weekday activities (melachot) before saying ma'ariv's anida or havdala.

REASON This fulfills the commandment of "zachor" for Shabbat and allows you to do melacha.

NOTE But it does not allow you to eat or drink, once you have finished se'uda shlishit, until you hear or say havdala.

Baruch HaMavdil... and Birkat HaMazon at Third Meal

SITUATION You washed your hands, said ha'motzi, were eating your meal (this could be se'uda shlishit or even a fourth meal) and it is now dark. You want to do melacha.

WHAT TO DO If you have not yet finished se'uda shlishit, saying Baruch ha'mavdil bein kodesh l'chol after dark on Saturday night does not affect the Shabbat additions you will then say in birkat ha'mazon. So, you may say Baruch ha'mavdil bein kodesh l'chol and do melacha, and then continue to eat your meal or say birkat ha'mazon INCLUDING the two Shabbat additions of retzei and ha'rachaman hu yanchileinu yom she'kulo Shabbat u'menucha l'chayei ha'olamim.

HAVDALA

INTRODUCTION TO HAVDALA

Introduction to Havdala

Havdala is said after Shabbat, Jewish festivals, Rosh Hashana, and Yom Kippur. Shabbat havdala is more extensive than after Yom Kippur and Jewish festivals.

Shabbat havdala consists of:

1. **Beverage:** Wine, Grape Juice, or Chamar Medina
Wine is always the preferred beverage for all havdalas because it is prestigious.
2. **Spices**
The extra soul we are given on Shabbat leaves after Shabbat is over, so we sniff a pleasant odor to cover for that loss.
3. **Flame**
The Shabbat havdala flame commemorates that Adam HaRishon (the first man) created fire after the first Shabbat.

HAVDALA: REQUIREMENTS

To Fulfill Havdala Requirements

To fulfill the requirement for havdala, each person (not only the mevareich) should:

- Hear the blessing on wine;
- Smell the spices; and
- See the flame.

NOTE If you do not do so when hearing havdala, you should smell a spice and see a flame later and then say those blessings at that time.

HAVDALA: WHEN TO SAY

When To Say Havdala

B'di'avad, havdala after Shabbat may be said day or night until Tuesday at sunset.

NOTE From Sunday at daybreak on, use only the wine, not the candle or spices, and don't say the first paragraph (hinei El yeshu'ati...).

Waking Up for Ma'ariv and Havdala...

If you went to sleep before sunset on Saturday and planned to wake up for ma'ariv, yet slept through the night...:

- Say shacharit Sunday morning;
- Repeat the amida for tashlumin; then
- Make havdala.

NOTE If you did not intend to wake up for ma'ariv, don't say tashlumin at all.

HAVDALA: WHO SHOULD MAKE/HEAR

Who Must Hear or Make Havdala

Men and boys older than 13 years old and women and girls older than 12 years must each hear or say havdala for themselves.

Who May Make Havdala

Any Jew, male (13 years old or more) or female (12 years old or more), may say havdala for himself or herself and for anyone else.

NOTE The husband may say havdala for his wife and children even if he fulfilled his personal havdala requirement at the synagogue.

NOTE There is a difference of opinion as to whether women are required to say the blessing on fire, but the common practice is for women to say it. If a woman says havdala for a man, he must still say borei me'orei ha'eish for himself.

HAVDALA: BEVERAGE

Which Havdala Beverage

Wine or grape juice is the preferred beverage for havdala, but any common beverage (chamar medina) that is drunk for social reasons is acceptable.

NOTE Wine from birkat ha'mazon of se'uda shlishit may be used for havdala EXCEPT if the meal was a sheva brachot and as long as the wine was not drunk from at the meal.

How To Fill the Havdala Cup

For havdala, pour at least a revi'it (4 fl. oz., or 119 ml) for enough wine (or other beverage being used) to overflow the cup. This is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

REASON Doing so is a symbol of blessing (siman bracha) that we are so rich that the wine or other drink that we spill is not important. Don't overflow your cup if you are using wine from a shmita year!

How To Hold the Havdala Cup (and Spices)

Hold the havdala wine (or other beverage) in right hand when saying the beverage blessing (then switch and hold the spices in the right hand for the spices blessing).

How Much Havdala Beverage To Drink

To be able to say the after-blessing, you must drink at least 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) from the havdala cup within 30 seconds.

If you drink only 2 fl. oz. (59 ml), you will fulfill the commandment of havdala but you will not be able to say any after-blessing.

Havdala: Who Drinks the Beverage

For men: No one should drink the havdala beverage except the person saying havdala. This is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

For women: This custom does NOT apply to women. Women who say havdala for themselves may give their havdala beverage to someone else to drink.

NOTE During the Nine Days, the person saying havdala may drink the wine.

Havdala Beverage: Standing or Sitting

Sitting or standing while drinking wine from havdala (or kiddush) is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

Drops of Havdala Wine above Eyes or in Pockets

Putting drops of havdala wine above your eyes or in your pockets is a non-binding custom, not a halacha.

HAVDALA: SPICES (BESAMIM)

Havdala Spices Only on Saturday Night

The only havdala for which we use spices and candle is Saturday night. After Yom Kippur, just use wine and a candle, see Yom Kippur: Ending: Havdala. See also How To Hold the Havdala Cup (and Spices).

What To Use for Havdala

You may use any nice-smelling substance for havdala "besamim," not just spices; but the source of the scent must be natural. There is no priority for using cinnamon.

NOTE For besamim, you may scratch a lemon or orange or other aromatic fruit and sniff the fruit itself (but not your hand). However, say the normal havdala blessing, borei minei v'samim, instead of the normal blessing for smelling fruits (ha'hotein rei'ach tov ba'peiros).

How Many Spices To Use for Havdala

Only one spice is needed for the spice blessing for havdala, even though the blessing uses the term minei, which is plural.

How To Hold the Spices

For how to hold the spices, see How To Hold the Havdala Cup (and Spices)

HAVDALA: CANDLE

Using Two Wicks To Fulfill Borei Me'orei HaEish

To fulfill the havdala candle blessing borei me'orei ha'eish ("me'orei" is plural and requires more than one flame), you must use a candle with at least two wicks or any two other objects with a flame.

EXAMPLES

- Two single-wick candles.
- Two matches.
- One match and one candle.

Using a Light Bulb for Havdala

A clear incandescent light bulb may be used for havdala if necessary and is considered to be multiple wicks.

Holding Hands Up to the Light

Holding fingers toward the havdala candle flame is a non-binding custom.

NOTE We hold up our hands to the light because the minimum amount of light needed to fulfill the mitzva of the candle is to be able to see the difference between the skin of one's hand and one's fingernail. Doing so also creates shadows of our fingers on the palm of our hands, illustrating the bein or l'choshech (between light and darkness) segment of the havdala prayer. There are also kabbalistic reasons.

HAVDALA: FINAL BLESSING

Havdala: Final Blessing

The normal havdala ending blessing is Baruch ha'mavdil bein kodesh l'chol. When Saturday night is a Jewish festival, say instead Baruch ha'mavdil bein kodesh l'kodesh.

SHABBAT: SHAMOR

SHABBAT: "ACQUISITIONS"

Shabbat: Permitted Acquisitions

You may not acquire items (*kinyan*) on Shabbat unless they are needed for that Shabbat or for doing a *mitzva*. The classic example of doing something for Shabbat is bringing food or drink to a house for Shabbat lunch, which the house owner acquires on Shabbat for Shabbat. Other permissible *kinyan* on Shabbat:

- Giving a *siddur* or *chumash* to use on that Shabbat.
- Giving permissible medicine for use on that Shabbat.

NOTE For limitations on bringing a newspaper into your house on Shabbat, see Shabbat: Mail and Periodicals.

SHABBAT: ANIMALS

SHABBAT: ANIMALS AND MUKTZA

Shabbat: Moving Animals

All animals are *muktza* on Shabbat, even pets, since they do not have a practical use. Moving the animal or its fur or picking up an animal is a violation of *muktza*.

REASON Originally, all animals were owned for specific practical purposes (cats to catch mice, dogs for protections, horses for traveling...) and they were not used as pets as they are today (for companionship, to pet, etc). Some *poskim* say that some pets are not *muktza* since they are similar to toys.

SHABBAT: ANIMAL CARE

Shabbat: Feeding Animals before Yourself

If you do own an animal, you must generally feed it before you are permitted to eat your own food. If you eat first, you have violated a Torah commandment.

Shabbat: Dog-Walking inside Eruv

You may walk a dog or other animal on a leash on Shabbat within an eruv or inside an enclosed property.

Shabbat: Dog-Walking outside Eruv

You may walk a dog or other animal on a leash on Shabbat outside a private domain, but you must hold the leash within 10 1/2" (27 cm) of the end and no part of the leash may droop to within 10 1/2" of the ground at any time.

Muktza: Feeding Animals that Do Not Belong To You

You may not feed animals that do not belong to you on Shabbat (even if they are tame).

EXCEPTION It may be permissible to feed dogs on Shabbat even if they do not belong to you. Consult a rabbi.

SHABBAT: ANIMALS' DOING MELACHA

Training Animal To Violate Shabbat

You may not train your dog or other animal to turn on or off lights for you on Shabbat.

SHABBAT: TRAPPED ANIMALS

Shabbat: Trapping/Releasing Animals

You may not trap wild animals on Shabbat (or on a Jewish festival). You may release a wild animal that is trapped in a trap or cage by opening the door or gate, but you may not move or lift the cage when the animal is in the cage.

NOTE The question behind this was asked by my niece Eliza when she was 6-years-old—ANYONE can ask intelligent and useful questions!

Shabbat: Feeding Wild Trapped Animal

You may not feed wild animals on Shabbat. *But*, if you intend to keep an animal that you trapped, you **MUST** feed it.

SHABBAT: BATHING

Shabbat: Showering

It is forbidden to shower on Shabbat.

Shabbat: Blotting Hair

You may blot your hair with a towel on Shabbat as long as you don't squeeze or wring out your hair.

SHABBAT: BIOLUMINESCENCE

Shabbat: Bioluminescence

You may use bioluminescent light on Shabbat and you may carry the light within an eruv or a building (if it is permitted to carry there), but you may not activate it on Shabbat.

SHABBAT: BOOKS

Shabbat: Books with Writing on Side

On Shabbat, you may open a book that has words or letters printed on the edge of the book, even though the words will be made unreadable.

Shabbat: Marking Pages in Books

You may mark pages in a book, whether secular or holy, on Shabbat by:

- Putting slips of paper in the book (but only if the slips were torn before Shabbat began).
- Bending the page corners, whether the books are secular or Jewish holy books.

SHABBAT: BRAIDING HAIR

Shabbat: Braiding Hair

You may not braid (or unbraid) hair on Shabbat.

SHABBAT: BRUSHING TEETH

Shabbat: Toothpaste

You may not use toothpaste on Shabbat.

Shabbat: Water, Tooth Powder, Toothwashing Liquid

You may use water, tooth powder, and toothwashing liquid on Shabbat but, to avoid squeezing the toothbrush bristles, you must put the water or toothwashing liquid into your mouth and not on the brush.

Shabbat: Rinsing Toothbrush

You may rinse your toothbrush if you will use it again on Shabbat, but don't squeeze out the water.

Shabbat: Flossing

You may floss your teeth on Shabbat as long as your gums do not bleed.

NOTE You may not cut the floss on Shabbat, so it is best to cut it before sunset. Even if you did not cut the floss ahead of time, you can still pull out a length of floss and clean your teeth, but be careful not to cut it off when you are finished.

SHABBAT: BUSINESSES

SHABBAT: OWNING BUSINESS OPERATED ON SHABBAT

Owning a Business Operated on Shabbat

A business whose sole or major owner is Jewish may not be operated on Shabbat (and Jewish festivals), even by non-Jewish employees.

NOTE There may be possibilities to allow operation by relinquishing majority control, but the issues are complex and rabbinic guidance is essential.

SHABBAT: INTERNET BUSINESS

Shabbat: Internet Business

Running a business that accepts orders and payments over the internet during Shabbat is complicated. The main issue is collecting payments. Consult a rabbi for specific cases.

SELLING TICKETS FOR SHABBAT FLIGHTS

Selling Tickets for Flights on Shabbat

A travel agent may sell airline tickets during a weekday to a Jew for flights on Shabbat-- but a Jew may not depart a flight on Shabbat!

SHABBAT: CANDLESTICKS

Shabbat: Candlesticks: Moving Candle Holders

You may not remove candle holders from a table on Shabbat, but you may ask a non-Jew to remove them for you if you need the space.

SHABBAT: CARRYING (HOTZA'A)

SHABBAT: CARRYING (HOTZA'A) AND DOMAINS

Transferring Object from Domain to Domain

On Shabbat (or Yom Kippur), you may not transfer an object between and among domains unless there is a city eruv (which allows carrying within the borders of the eruv).

NOTE Domains may be of three types:

- Private Domain (reshut ha'yachid),
- Public Domain (reshut ha'rabim), and
- Carmelit.

Moving Items in Legal Public Area (Reshut HaRabim)

In a halachically public area (reshut ha'rabim) with no eruv, on Shabbat you may move a stationary object up to 4 amot (6'9 1/2", or about 2 meters) from the place where you find it. If you are already transporting the object when you realize it, do whichever one of the following applies:

SITUATION You are walking on Shabbat in a public domain (reshut ha'rabim) that does not have an eruv and find something in your pocket.

WHAT TO DO

- If you were walking and are still walking, go back to the most recent private domain and leave the item there. (If you cannot reasonably get back to where that was, continue to your destination and drop the item inside the first private domain you reach.)
- If you have already stopped walking, drop the item where you are.
- If you had stopped walking and then resumed walking, drop the item where you are.

Carrying in Mouth on Shabbat

You may not carry items in your mouth outside a private domain or an eruv on Shabbat.

EXAMPLES

- Outside a private domain or an eruv, you may not carry food in your mouth that you were eating when you left your house.
- You may not chew gum in a public area without an eruv.

Carrying Children on Shabbat outside Eruv

You may not carry children on Shabbat in a public domain without an eruv.

SITUATION An eruv breaks or is down on Shabbat.

WHAT TO DO Do not tell someone who is carrying a child, pushing a stroller, or in a similar situation that the eruv is down.

NOTE If a person is not carrying a child, pushing a stroller, etc., tell him or her that the eruv is down.

Using Cane, Crutches, Wheelchair outside Eruv

You may use a cane, crutches, or a wheelchair if any of these are needed on Shabbat, even without an eruv.

Carrying Ticket within Eruv

If an eruv includes your house and a sports field, you may carry your ticket to a sporting event on Shabbat, but it is best if you leave the ticket at the entrance with a ticket-taker before Shabbat starts. Such activity is not in the spirit of Shabbat but is not forbidden.

Wearing Watch with No Eruv

You may not wear a non-decorative watch on Shabbat where there is no eruv or if you have the custom of not relying on eruvs. If you would wear your watch as a piece of decorative jewelry even if it did not work, you may wear it on Shabbat even without an eruv.

Wearing Collar Stays with No Eruv

You may wear collar stays on Shabbat even where there is no eruv.

If You Do Not Use the Eruv

If you do not normally carry on Shabbat even in an area with an eruv, you may not ask another Jew to carry something for you. But if the other Jew does carry an item, you may use it.

ERUV CHATZEIROT FOR BUILDINGS

INTRODUCTION TO ERUV CHATZEIROT FOR BUILDINGS

Introduction to Eruv Chatzeirot for Buildings

On Shabbat, you may not carry items in a building (such as a condominium) owned by more than one Jew (even if the other owners are not religious), from a condo into the hallway or from the hallway into a condo unless:

- There is an eruv around the building, or
- You have made an eruv chatzeirot with all the other owners.

NOTE If none of the other owners are Jewish, you do not need to make an eruv.

NOTE If you do not normally rely on municipal eruvs, you should not carry outside your apartment (such as in the building's halls—even if your building is within a municipal eruv), unless the building has an eruv chatzeirot.

Eruv Chatzeirot: Hotel/Apartment Building with Central Kitchen

If you are in a hotel or apartment building that has a central kitchen from which most of the residents usually eat, you do not need to make an eruv chatzeirot.

Eruv Chatzeirot When Manager Has Right To Enter Your Apartment

You do not need an eruv chatzeirot if you are in an apartment building even without a central kitchen but where:

- The building owner has property in each apartment, and
- The building owner or manager has the ability and the right to enter your apartment and the other apartments.

OUTDOOR ERUV

INTRODUCTION TO ERUVS

Introduction to Eruvs

An eruv forms a boundary around an area of land in order to create a private domain (reshut ha'yachid).

Carrying items within that domain is permitted on Shabbat. The eruv boundary may include a variety of structures such as:

- Real physical structures—whether natural (such as tree trunks, bushes) or man-made (buildings, fences, cars);
- Natural topographic features (such as slopes); and/or
- Presumptive doorways (often made of poles and wires or strong string).

Solid or Halachically Solid

Two structures (regardless of how thick or wide they are) within 10.5 inches of each other are considered to be halachically solid and constitute a single structure; this is called lavud.

NOTE A halachically solid wall may have gaps of more than 3 tefachim (10.5 in.) high or wide (i.e., in either dimension) as long as the other dimension is less than 3 tefachim wide.

EXAMPLES

A halachically solid wall can be made of a:

- Wide mesh of ropes or strings; the cross strings are very far apart, as long as the vertical strings are within 10.5 inches of each other.
- Picket fence; each vertical slat must be within 10.5 inches of the adjacent slat OR each horizontal piece that connects the vertical slats must be within 10.5 inches of the adjacent horizontal piece.
- Chain-link fence.

Height

All vertical eruv components must be at least 40 inches high. There is no maximum height for the eruv if it is a halachic doorway (tzurat ha'petach--two uprights and a horizontal bar above and connecting the two).

Width

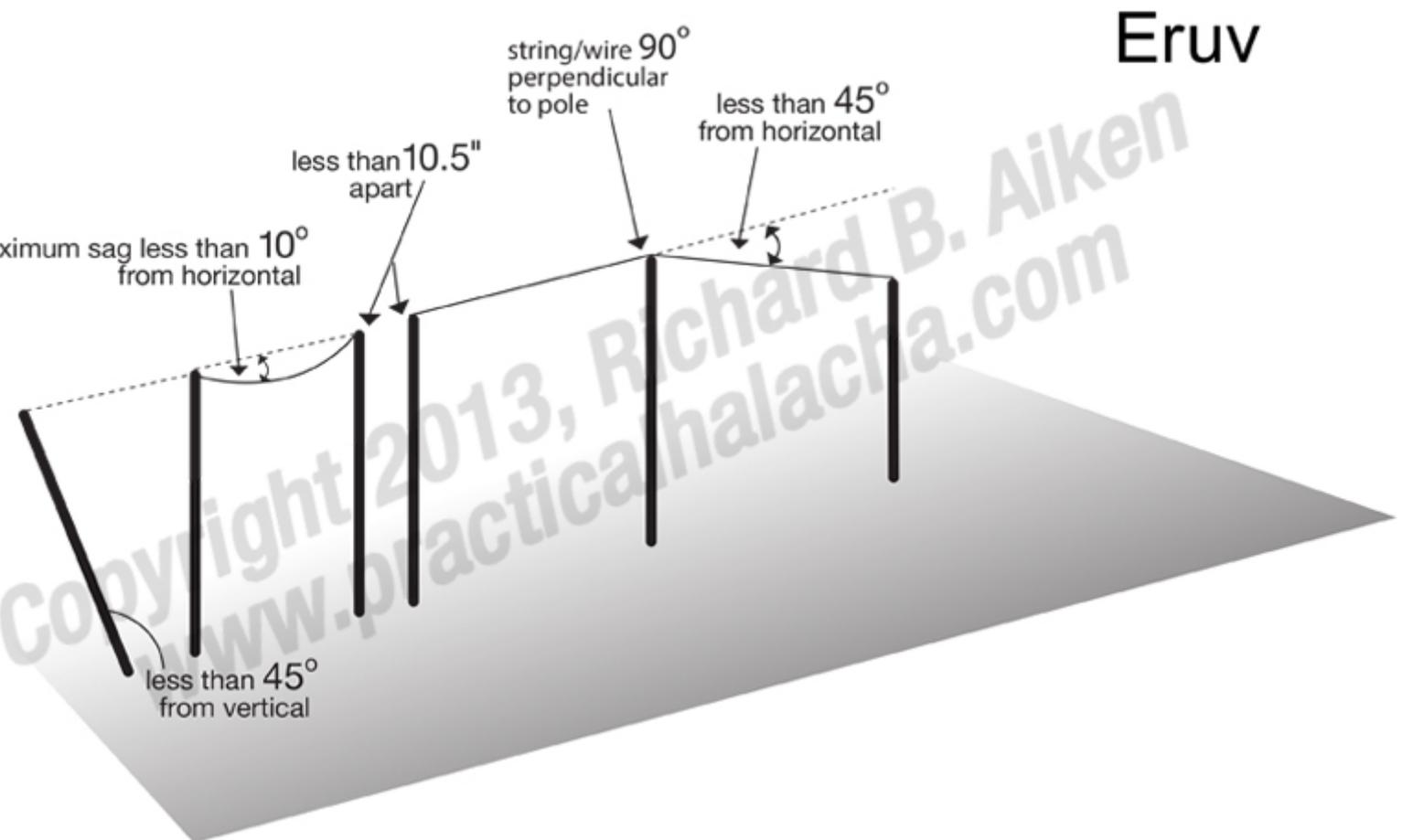
A solid component (for example, a board, wall, house, etc.) must be at least 12 inches from side to side.

Non-solid components (for example, a series of narrow bushes, a series of trees with trunks less than 12 inches across, various types of fences, etc.) must be within 10.5 inches of each other and of the ground, both horizontally and vertically, for the entire distance between adjacent trees/bushes. They must be at least 40 inches high or wide.

Connectors

Vertical components, such as poles, that are connected above or below in the following ways are also halachic walls, regardless of how far apart they are:

- Connected above, such as with a board or string that rests across the tops of vertical poles, and which are at least 40 inches above the ground at all points along its course, or
- Connected below within 10.5 inches of the ground, such as bushes or small trees with branches that come within 10.5 inches of the ground at all points (even at the attachment point to the trunk). Components must reach up to at least 40 inches above the ground.



ERUV: LENIENCIES

Eruv: Leniencies

Almost all *eruv*s in cities use leniencies.

ERUV: DIMENSIONS

ERUV BORDER: WALLS

Measurements for Walls as Eruv Border

Walls that begin within 10 1/2" (27 cm) of the ground and extend upward to at least 40" (1 m) above the ground are *kosher* as *eruv* walls.

Amount of Gap in Eruv Border

Eruv walls must total more than 50% of the *eruv* border on each side, so that most of the expanse of the *eruv* is enclosed, either by an actual wall or by the form of a doorway (*tzurat ha'petach*), with no gate or gap over 10 *amot* (about 16' 8", or 5 m) wide.

NOTE In order to count as part of a border for a private domain, any doorway, gateway, archway, etc., must be intended to be a doorway, gateway, archway, etc.--and not there merely for decoration or function (as in supporting something above).

ERUV BORDER: BUILDINGS

Measurements for Buildings as Eruv Border

Buildings in a row, more than 10 *amot* (about 17.5 feet or about 5.3 m) wide and less than 10 *amot* (about 17.5 feet or about 5.3 m) from the adjacent buildings, constitute one *eruv* border for a domain and no *eruv* is needed on that side.

ERUV BORDER: BUSHES

Bushes as Eruv Border

Bushes may be a border if they are:

- So dense that a cat can't walk through them, and
- More than 40" (10 *tefachim*) high.

ERUV BORDER: CARS

Car as Eruv Border

You may use a car as a part of an *eruv*, as long as:

- The bottom of the car is within 10.5 inches of the ground, and
- One side of the car is in line with other parts of the *eruv*, such as with an actual wall, *lechi* + *mashkof*, or steep slope.

ERUV BORDER: "DOORWAYS"

LECHI DIMENSIONS

Incline of Lechi

A *lechi* for an *eruv* must be less than 45 degrees from vertical.

Thickness of Lechi

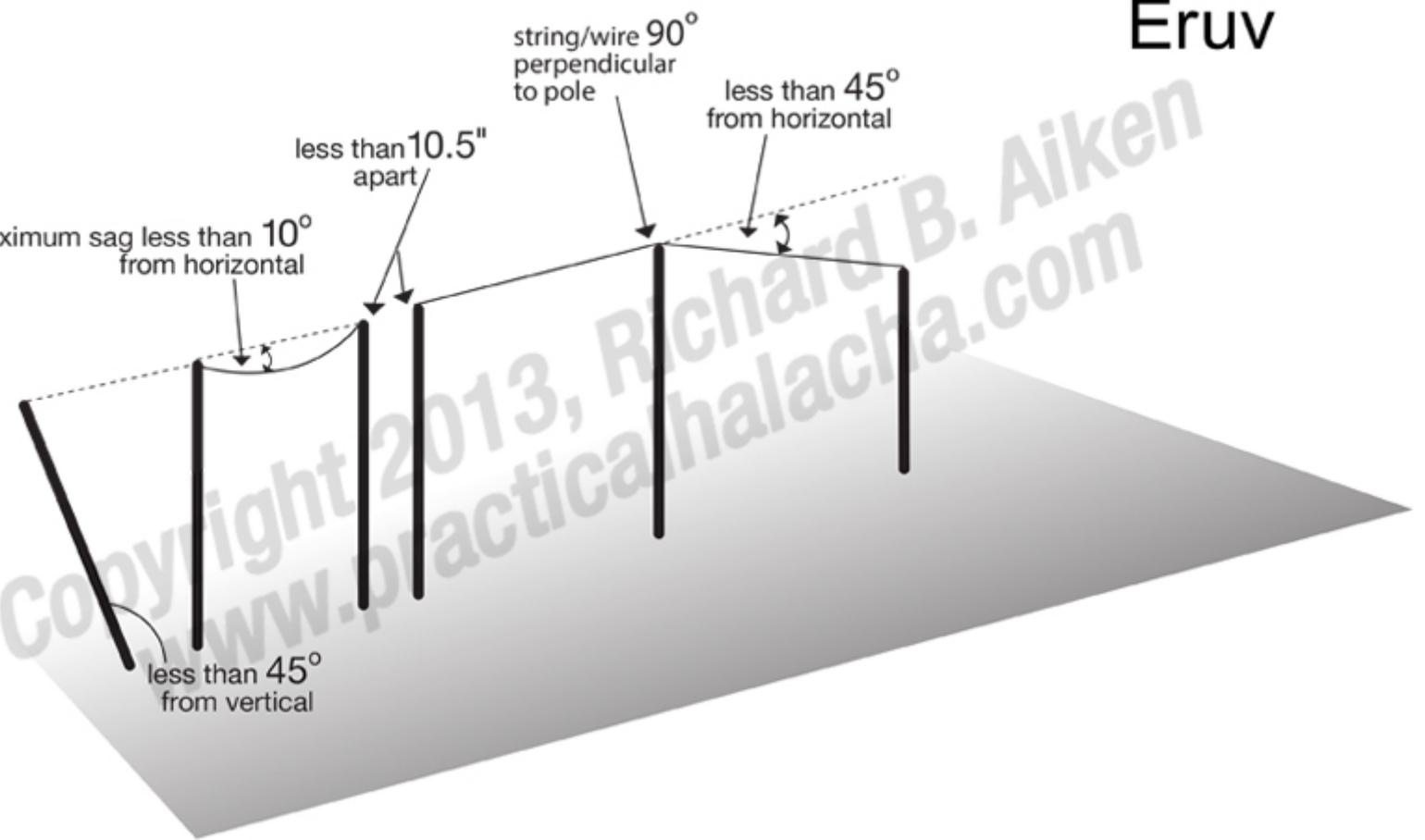
A *lechi* for an *eruv* may be of any thickness and any width; even a string or wire may be used, as long as it is sufficiently tensioned so as not to wave in the wind.

WIRE DIMENSIONS

Wire Slope

Slope of the wire at the top (the pseudo-lintel) must be less than 45 degrees from horizontal.

Eruv



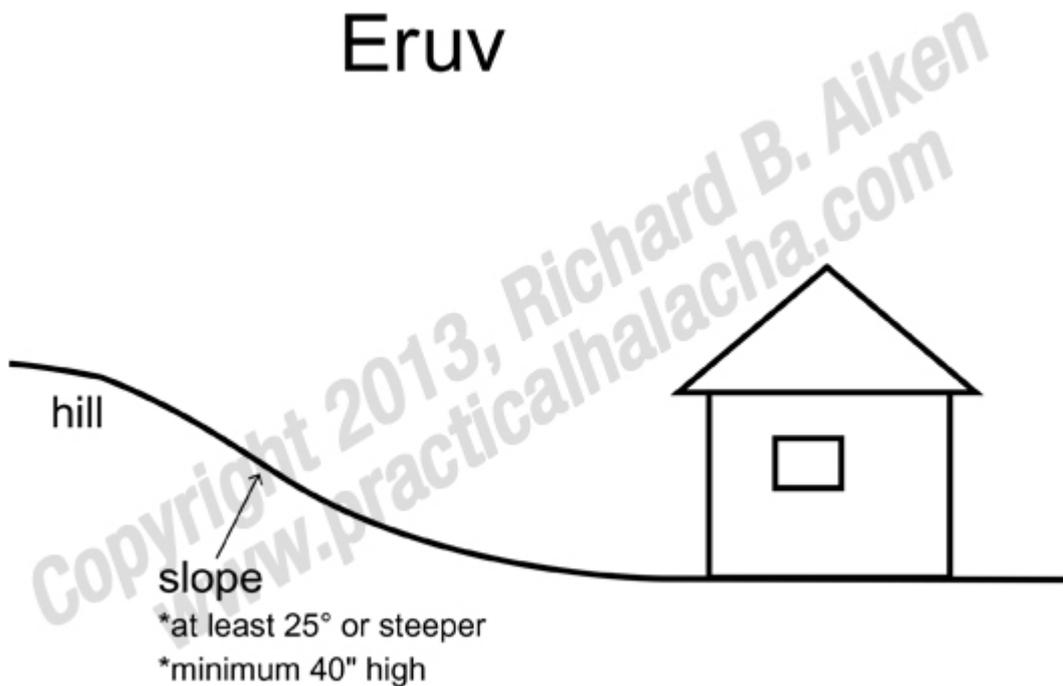
ERUV BORDER: ROOFS

ERUV BORDER: SLOPES

Slopes as Eruv Border

A slope of about 25 degrees from vertical that is steeper than 5 inches vertical for 12 inches horizontal (a 5" rise over a 12" run) constitutes an eruv border; it must be at least 40" high.

Eruv



Eruv Border: Tree Trunk

Tree Trunk as Eruv Border

You may use the trunk of a tree as part of an eruv, but consult a rabbi about the spacing and curvature of the roots.

ERUV BORDER: WATER

Slope of Body of Water for Eruv

A body of water may be an eruv border if the land:

- Slopes down into the water 40 inches or more, and
- Is more than 25 degrees from horizontal.

ERUV: PORCHES, AWNINGS

Porches and Awnings as Eruv

In general, porches and awnings on the outside of a house will not qualify as being part of the house for the halachot of carrying on Shabbat if there is no eruv. The porch or awning must be in the structure of a shape of a doorway (tzurat ha'petach): vertical poles and cross beams must be on TOP of the vertical poles in order to be considered a halachically enclosed area.

NOTE Since these are not intended to be a doorway, no mezuza is required on them.

SHABBAT: CHILDREN

SHABBAT: CHILDREN AND MELACHA

Children: Melacha

You may not have any child, even if younger than gil chinuch, do melacha for you on Shabbat.

SHABBAT: CHILDREN'S GAMES

SHABBAT: BALL PLAYING

Shabbat: Ball Playing in Yard or Eruv

If a private yard is enclosed, playing ball is not forbidden. Within a city eruv, do not play ball.

Shabbat: Retrieving Ball

You may retrieve a ball or other item that has fallen into a bush on Shabbat, but only if you can get it without moving the bush and only if the ball is still within an eruv or the private domain from which it fell.

Shabbat: Snowballs

You may make snowballs on Shabbat for purposes of playing.

SHABBAT: CARD PLAYING

Shabbat: Card Playing

Playing cards is not forbidden on Shabbat as long as you do not gamble or do melacha. You may sort a deck of cards into suits, but you must not remove unwanted cards (such as Jokers) from the deck, due to boreir.

SHABBAT: STICKERS

Shabbat: Stickers

Children may apply or remove stickers used for decoration or “jewelry” if the stickers will last less than 24 hours.

SHABBAT: CLOTHING

SHABBAT: BUTTONS

Extra Shirt Buttons on Shabbat

You may wear extra shirt buttons, sewn on to be used in the future if buttons fall off the shirt, outside an eruy on Shabbat, but not if you are already missing a button from your shirt and you plan to use one of those buttons in the future.

SHABBAT: FOLDING CLOTHES

Folding Clothes on a Crease on Shabbat

Don't fold clothes (including a talit) on an existing crease on Shabbat.

NOTE You may fold clothes on a new crease that was not there before you did the folding, but only if there is already an existing crease in the garment.

NOTE If there is not a crease from before you fold the garment, you may not make one.

SHABBAT: REMOVING DIRT FROM CLOTHING

Non-Embedded Dirt on Shabbat

- You may brush off non-embedded dirt or hair from the surface of clothing, on Shabbat.
- You may not remove dust, burrs, or anything that penetrates the surface of the garment, on Shabbat.

SHABBAT: REMOVING TAG FROM CLOTHING

Shabbat: Removing Tag from Clothing

You may not cut a tag off clothes on Shabbat.

SHABBAT: COLORING (TZOVEI'A)

Introduction to Shabbat: Coloring (Tzovei'a)

Since wool and/or leather was dyed for the Tabernacle in the desert, similar actions are forbidden today on Shabbat. Any action that causes one item or substance to change its color may be forbidden, even if it is not related to dyeing wool and/or leather.

Shabbat: Coloring (Tzovei'a): Food

You may not add a substance, whether food or other, in order to color food on Shabbat. You may add food to other food even if it will cause the other food to become colored as long as that is not your intention.

Shabbat: Coloring (Tzovei'a): Cloth

You may wipe a stain off of your face or hands onto a cloth or piece of paper if you do it to clean your face or hands on Shabbat, but not if you want to color the cloth or paper.

SHABBAT: COURIERS AND PACKAGES

Ordering Shipment that Arrives on Shabbat

You may not order a shipment—such as Fedex or other express delivery service—to arrive on Shabbat, but you may tell the shipper that it is OK with you if it is delivered Saturday night, as long as it can be delivered without violating Shabbat. For details about newspapers and other reading material delivered on Shabbat, see Shabbat: Mail and Periodicals.

SHABBAT: CUT FLOWERS

Shabbat: Putting Cut Flowers in Water

You may not put cut flowers into a vase or other utensil (with water in it) on Shabbat.

Shabbat: Adding Water to Cut Flowers

You may not add water to cut flowers in a utensil on Shabbat.

Shabbat: Moving Cut Flowers

You may move cut flowers in a vase or other utensil on Shabbat if they were in the vase or utensil since before Shabbat started, but if there are still some unopened buds on the stems, you may not put the cut flowers into direct sunlight.

SHABBAT: DOORS

Shabbat: Replacing Doors

Due to the melacha of boneh (building), on Shabbat you may not replace a:

- Door onto its hinges, or
- Sliding door onto its track.

Shabbat: Door Knocker

You may not use a knocker on a door on Shabbat. You may knock on a door using your fist or knuckles.

SHABBAT: DRAGGING

Shabbat and Dragging Heavy Objects

You may drag heavy objects over soil on Shabbat, but only if:

- You don't intend to make furrows, and
- Doing so will not inevitably (psik reisha) make a furrow.

SHABBAT: ELECTRIC EYES

Shabbat and Electric Eyes

You may walk into the path of an electric eye if it only prevents a door from closing but not if it causes the door to open.

SHABBAT: ELECTRICITY/ELECTRICAL DEVICES

Shabbat: Electricity/Electrical Devices: Turning Off

You may not turn off or disconnect an operating electrical device (such as an alarm, appliance, light, oven, or any machinery) on Shabbat, even using a shinui and even if the noise will prevent you from sleeping. You may ask a non-Jew to turn it off, but you may not ask a Jew, not even a child below bar/bat mitzva age.

NOTE If the device catches on fire, you may call the fire department or unplug it. However, there must be an actual danger or actual fire in order for you to disconnect it yourself. You may not disconnect the device if there is only a chance that it will catch fire.

SHABBAT: ELEVATORS/ESCALATORS

Shabbat: Riding Elevators

You may ride on an elevator if:

- The elevator stops at all floors, or
- A non-Jew pushes the button in order to ride the elevator himself.

NOTE You may get off only on the floor at which the non-Jew stopped; you may not have him or her push the button for a different floor for you.

NOTE You must enter the elevator while the door is already open but has not yet begun to close, even if your presence keeps the door open but not if it will cause the door to open.

NOTE You may not ride an elevator at all if a Jew pushes the button to any floor.

Shabbat: Riding Escalators

You may ride escalators on Shabbat if they:

- Run constantly, and
- Are not controlled by a foot treadle or an electric eye.

Shabbat: Asking Non-Jew To Help with Electric Door/Elevator

You may ask a non-Jew to open an electric door or to push the button to summon an elevator for you on Shabbat--even if he does not need to get to the floor you want--if you need to get to your room for any mitzva or Shabbat purpose, such as for a nap, to eat, or use the toilet.

REASON Even if a light comes on, it is d'rabanan (you do not need the light) and, therefore, you are permitted to ask the non-Jew to push the button.

SHABBAT: EXERCISE

Shabbat: Strengthening Exercise

You may not exercise on Shabbat to strengthen your body. You may exercise on Shabbat for enjoyment, for socializing, or other fun purposes if:

- No melacha is involved, and
- It does not appear to be for healing (refu'a) or health purposes.

EXAMPLE You may run on Shabbat if you like to run. You may not run on Shabbat if you don't like running but would do it to lose weight or to get in shape.

Shabbat: Roller Blading

You may roller blade on Shabbat.

Shabbat: Trapeze

You may swing and fly on a trapeze on Shabbat.

Shabbat and Swimming

You may not swim on Shabbat.

Shabbat and Weight-Lifting

You may change weights on barbells or on a completely mechanical (no electrical parts, no timers or indicators) weight machine on Shabbat.

Shabbat: Stretching

You may stretch on Shabbat (and Jewish festivals) to make yourself more comfortable but not if it appears that you are doing it as exercise for health.

SHABBAT: FOOD PREPARATION

SHABBAT: CHECKING FOR BUGS

Checking Product for Bugs on Shabbat

You may check produce for bugs on Shabbat or Jewish festivals but:

- On Shabbat, you may not remove any bugs.

REASON You may not move it with your hand due to the bug's being muktza and you may not rinse it off on Shabbat due to boreir.

- On a Jewish festival, you may remove the bug but not by hand.

EXAMPLE You may rinse a bug off produce on a Jewish festival.

NOTE You may not kill bugs on Shabbat or Jewish festivals. To do something that is certain to kill the bug is forbidden; if might not kill the bug, it is OK.

NOTE You may remove the bug along with part of the produce even on Shabbat.

SHABBAT: COOKING

INTRODUCTION TO SHABBAT: COOKING

Introduction to Shabbat: Cooking

Bishul B'Shabbat/Cooking on Shabbat

The Torah forbids cooking on Shabbat. “Cooking” means making food edible by heating it to above 120° F (49° C).

Cooking includes:

- You may not make a soft food hard (such as cooking an egg).
- You may not make a hard food soft (such as cooking meat).
- You may not, in any manner, heat (to 120° F or above) liquids that you will drink or foods with liquids—such as sauces and gravies--whether fully cooked or not.

Timing of Cooking

According to the Torah, you may eat food on Shabbat that had been placed on the heat source Friday afternoon but was not completely cooked by sunset.

REASON No action is being taken and the cooking will be completed by itself.

Kli Rishon and Kli Sheini

According to Torah law, food is only considered to be cooked if it has been directly heated from the heat source, such as a kettle on a fire or a pot on a flame (even if that utensil has been removed from its heat source). This is called a kli rishon.

Once you pour water from a kli rishon into a glass, the glass is a kli sheini. Some foods, such as an egg or tea, get cooked in a kli sheini (kalei bishul--easily cooked). These foods are forbidden by Torah law to be put into a hot kli sheini on Shabbat.

EXCEPTION Halacha allows spices and water to be “cooked” in a kli sheini.

NOTE If the water is less than 120° F, nothing gets halachically cooked in any kli, even in a kli rishon

Reheating/Replacing to Heat Source

1. Do Not Reheat Food Unless It Is *Halachically* Dry.

This includes heating on a hotplate, stove, or oven and applies to even fully cooked food. *Halachically* dry means the food is solid at either the beginning or the end of the cooking, or both. To determine whether a food is liquid (and therefore may not be reheated on Shabbat), shake the container. If the food does not move around, it is considered to be solid. (For when solid food may be reheated, please see Shabbat: Reheating.)

2. To Replace Heated Food onto/into Its Heat Source (*hachzara*):

- You must have taken it off with the intention of replacing it, and
- You may not put the utensil down onto a surface; you must continue to hold the food (or the utensil) in your hand.
- The heat source must be covered.

REASON Chazal were concerned that someone might see you put food on the heat, mistake it for actual cooking, and erroneously think that cooking is permitted on Shabbat.

NOTE You may not replace incompletely cooked food to a heat source.

REASON To do so would facilitate the cooking.

3. Do Not Put Food on a Heat Source that has Adjustable Controls.

This applies even to fully cooked food.

REASON You might adjust the heat and thereby violate a Torah law due to *shehiya* (stoking the fire or turning up the heat).

NOTE *Shehiya* is simple to avoid; just cover the flame (or electric heating element) and any temperature controls before Shabbat, as when using a blech (a metal sheet that covers the flames and controls). Then, on Shabbat, you may put fully cooked solid (but not liquid) food on top of other food (or utensils containing food) that were already on a blech from before sunset on Friday.

REASON Doing so does not look like you are cooking and the blech prevents you from adjusting the heat.

4. Do Not Insulate Food to which Heat Is Added.

You may not add insulation (which will help keep in the heat) during Shabbat to foods that are on a heat source, even to fully cooked foods, if they are “wet.” By rabbinic law, you may not apply heat to an insulated utensil—or apply any insulation that adds heat—even before Shabbat began and let it remain that way during Shabbat--even if the food was completely cooked before sunset on Friday.

NOTE Regarding food on a heat source, you may add insulation if there is at least one uncovered area at least the size of a quarter. Adding insulation on Shabbat is only a problem if the insulation completely surrounds the food or utensil on all surfaces and the top.

SHABBAT: HEATING LIQUIDS

Heating Liquids on Shabbat

You may not heat liquids by any method on Shabbat. You may put a hot water urn on a timer from before Shabbat, but you may not add any water to the urn once Shabbat has begun.

Heating Already Cooked Coffee or Tea on Shabbat

You may not brew coffee or steep tea on Shabbat. You may use:

- Instant coffee;
- Powdered, dried tea; or
- Tea that has already been steeped.

However, you may not add them directly to the hot water! You must:

- Pour or dispense the hot water into an intermediate utensil, and then
- Put the water and brewed or instant coffee or tea into that utensil.

SHABBAT: FOOD READY BY SUNSET

Blech and Food Fully or Incompletely Cooked by Sunset

When using a blech (sheet of metal to cover fire source and controls), it is customary for food to be fully cooked (edible) before sunset (or before candle lighting for a woman) to avoid the temptation to stir the food or increase the heat to help the food cook more quickly.

Replacing Lid and Food Incompletely Cooked by Sunset

For food that is not fully cooked, you may not remove and replace the lid (such as when checking to see if the food is cooked).

REASON Replacing the lid helps cook the food (the food's being fully cooked before Shabbat avoids this problem).

When using a crockpot or slow cooker with a glass lid, however, the food does not need to be fully cooked.

REASON You can see how well cooked the food is through the lid.

SHABBAT: REHEATING

SHABBAT: WHAT TO REHEAT

Shabbat: Reheat Solid Food but Not Liquid

You may reheat dry (not wet; not even damp), solid, cooked food, but not liquid food on Shabbat.

SHABBAT: HOW TO REHEAT

Shabbat: How To Reheat

How To Reheat on Hotplate or Blech: Before Shabbat Begins

1. Cover any cooking controls (knobs, switches, etc.) so no one adjusts them during Shabbat.
2. Cover the heat source with a "blech" (sheet of metal). This will help prevent Torah law violations by serving as a reminder not to adjust the heat. **NOTE** Some blechs also block the temperature controls, to help with the previous step.

NOTE To use a hotplate, remove the control knob before Shabbat.

3. Turn on the source of heat (hotplate, burner under the blech...).
4. Put onto the hotplate or blech at least one utensil containing food or water.

How To Reheat on Hotplate or Blech: After Shabbat Begins

1. Start with food that is fully cooked and solid (no liquids may be heated on Shabbat!). **NOTE** "Solid" food includes cooked meat with congealed jelly or cooked fish with jelly.
2. Place the fully cooked dry food on top of the food- or water-containing utensil that had been placed on the heating appliance before Shabbat began. Remember not to put the fully cooked food directly onto the hotplate, blech, or other heat source after Shabbat begins (even if there is a separation between the heat source and food).

NOTE After sunset on Friday, you may not put any incompletely cooked food (whether hot or cold) onto the

heated part of the heating appliance or move it from a cooler part of the blech to a hotter part.

NOTE At some time during Shabbat, someone must eat or drink from the food- or water-containing utensil that had been on the blech since before Shabbat began.

Sabbath-Mode Ovens

Sabbath-mode ovens have a switch that:

- Keeps the light on or off (according to the way you have set it), regardless of whether the oven door is open or closed,
- Makes a forced delay in the heating elements' turning on after the door is opened so that the heating element never goes on while the door is open, and
- Shuts off the timer and digital display.

Sabbath-mode ovens do not permit any normally forbidden cooking-related actions on Shabbat. You may not ever cook food on Shabbat, even in such an oven (or any other way)!

Reheating on Hotplate with Timer

Once Shabbat begins, you may not put food on a hotplate with a timer that turns on the hotplate during Shabbat.

Reheating in Microwave Oven with Timer

On Shabbat, you may not put food in a microwave oven and have a timer turn it on, even if no light will be lit. However, you may put the food into the microwave oven BEFORE sunset on Shabbat and have the timer turn on the microwave oven on Shabbat.

NOTE You must cover the microwave controls from before Shabbat.

Reheating in Hot, Turned-Off Oven

Dry food that has been fully cooked before Shabbat may be heated in an oven if the oven is off even if the oven is hot (120° F--49° C--or more).

NOTE If the oven is on, you may not heat the food.

Reheating Using a Warming Tray

On Shabbat, you may not heat food, whether liquid or solid, on a warming tray that is 120° F--49° C--or more. But if the tray is less than 120° F, it may be permissible. Ask a rabbi, since there may be other problems due to switching on or off the heating element, lights, etc.

Reheating by Covering (Hatmana)

Hatmana is forbidden on Shabbat and applies to an item or structure that retains heat.

- You may not, during Shabbat, place a food container in an item or structure, such as a blanket, that retains heat. You may do so if the food container was already wrapped before Shabbat.
- You may not add insulation (which will help keep in the heat) even before (and certainly not during) Shabbat to foods that are on a heat source, even to fully cooked foods, whether the foods are wet or dry.
- You may not apply heat to an insulated utensil--or apply any insulation that adds heat--even before Shabbat began and let it remain that way during Shabbat--even if the food was completely cooked before sunset on Friday.

SITUATION You wrap a pot in blankets before Shabbat, serve the food on Shabbat, and return it to a non-heat source.

WHAT TO DO You may rewrap it after eating to retain heat for later.

Heating Frozen Food

Frozen food is considered “dry” (unless it has ice crystals or frost on the outside) and, unlike liquids, may be heated (under some conditions) on Shabbat. See [How To Reheat on Hotplate or Blech](#).

SHABBAT: MIXING HOT AND RAW FOODS

Shabbat: Hot Liquids on Raw Foods

You may not pour a hot liquid (120°F--49°C - or more) onto raw vegetables, uncooked salt, or other raw foods on Shabbat. If a kli shishi is used, ask a rabbi what to do, as this is controversial.

Shabbat: Hot Soup and Cheese

You may not put cheese in hot (120° F--49° C—or more) water or soup on Shabbat.

REASON This is cooking/bishul. Even though the milk was probably pasteurized, there are other ingredients (such as rennet) that have not been cooked.

Shabbat: Mixing Hot and Pickled Foods

Pickles, sauerkraut, olives, and other pickled foods are considered raw and may not be put into hot food on Shabbat.

NOTE Pickled and salted foods are sometimes considered to be cooked regarding some halachot, but not in this case of putting them into hot food (which will actually cook them).

SHABBAT: SERVING HOT FOOD

Shabbat and Ladling Soup

You may ladle soup from a pot on a turned-off burner without having to remove the pot from the burner.

Returning Hot Soup or Cholent to Heat Source

To serve hot soup, cholent, etc., and then return the food to the hotplate, blech, or other covered heat source:

- You may pick up the pot or utensil containing the food from the hotplate, blech, or other covered heat source, but you must not put it down, even to partially rest on a table or other surface;
- You must intend to return the utensil and food to the hotplate, blech, or other covered heat source; and
- You may not remove/serve food from the utensil while it is still on the hotplate, blech, or other covered heat source.

SHABBAT: FOOD HEATED BY NON-JEW

Conditions for a Non-Jew To Put Food into Oven for a Jew

A non-Jew may put food in an oven for a Jew on Shabbat if:

- Oven controls are covered,
- Food is fully cooked, and
- Food is non-liquid.

If a Non-Jew Heats Food or Water for Self

If a non-Jew heats food or water on Shabbat for himself or for other non-Jews, a Jew may use the water and eat the food.

SHABBAT: FOOD HEATED BY SOLAR HEAT

Shabbat: Cooking by Solar Heat

You may cook or reheat food on Shabbat using solar heat, but only if the sun's rays directly cook the food. Practically, this can probably only be done by using a magnifying glass.

NOTE You may even cook or reheat liquids this way on Shabbat.

NOTE You may not cook the food by having the sun's rays first heat a surface—such as heating a black backing that will absorb heat--and then transfer it to the food.

SHABBAT: FOOD IN TURNED-ON OVEN

Shabbat: Food in Turned-On Oven

SITUATION Food is in a turned-on oven.

WHAT TO DO Even if the heating element is not on at that moment, once you have opened the door, you must remove any food from the oven. You may not leave food in there to be eaten later.

SHABBAT: DISHES

Shabbat and Sponging

You may not wash dishes with a:

- Sponge (even if it is on a handle),
- Dish rag, or
- Scrubbing pad (a pad that holds water and, when used, the water gets squeezed out).

Wide mesh or other items that do not normally hold water may be used.

SHABBAT: FREEZING

Shabbat and Making Ice Cubes

You may fill an ice cube tray on Shabbat if you intend to use the ice cubes during Shabbat.

SHABBAT: GRINDING (TOCHEIN)

Grinding on Shabbat: How Finely You May Grind

You may not grind, grate, or even finely chop or dice food on Shabbat. You may not use a garlic press on Shabbat.

The minimum size before violating the melacha of tochein varies by the type of food. The resulting pieces must be somewhat larger than the size you would normally use in order to be permitted.

Grinding on Shabbat: Avocados

You may crush or squash an avocado (such as when making guacamole) on Shabbat, but ONLY:

- Using a shinu'i (such as a spoon, knife, or spatula),
- Without using a specialized tool (such as a grinder, potato masher, or fork),
- If you eat it immediately after preparing it, and
- If you leave some pieces larger than you normally would.

NOTE If you intend for all pieces to be somewhat larger than usual but some end up small, it is OK.

Grinding on Shabbat: Eggs

You may pulverize a cooked egg (such as a hard-boiled egg) on Shabbat but:

- You may not use a specialized utensil (you may use a fork), and
- You must eat it immediately.

NOTE No shinu'i is needed.

SHABBAT: KNEADING (LASH)

Shabbat: Mixing Powders with Liquid

You may mix powdered food substances with liquids on Shabbat if:

- The resulting mixture will be fluid (you can pour it in a smooth and steady stream), AND
- You put whatever is normally added second into the container first and then add the component that is normally added first to the other substance, AND
- You mix it with your finger, not with a utensil.

NOTE You may not mix a powdered food substance with a liquid on Shabbat if it will result in a paste (such as wasabi).

Shabbat: Mixing Soft Foods

Mixing tuna and mayonnaise and or other soft or mushy foods is permitted on Shabbat; it does not constitute the melacha of kneading/lash.

SHABBAT: MUKTZA IN THE KITCHEN

Shabbat: Muktzah: Moving a Hotplate

You may move a hotplate on Shabbat but ONLY if you need the space where it is located. You do not need to use an unusual method (shinu'i).

NOTE You may not unplug an operating hotplate. If the hotplate will not go on again, you may unplug it--but only in a non-standard manner.

Shabbat: Muktzah: Moving an Empty Pot

Pots become muktza on Shabbat once the food in them is all gone. See [Introduction: Shabbat: Muktzah](#).

SHABBAT: OPENING/SEALING/TEARING

SHABBAT: BOTTLES

Opening Plastic Bottles on Shabbat

You may completely open plastic bottle caps on plastic bottles on Shabbat (even if doing so will leave a plastic ring on the bottle), as long as it is theoretically possible to dispense the liquid without completely separating the cap from the bottle.

REASON Since liquid can be poured with the cap still attached, the sealed bottle does not become a “new utensil”—a Shabbat violation.

However, if you will destroy letters that are printed on the cap, you may not open the bottle.

Opening Metal Bottle Caps on Shabbat

You may not open metal bottle caps on Shabbat if doing so will leave behind a metal ring. You may break the ring or open the bottle (and close it again, if desired) before Shabbat.

NOTE If you need the contents for Shabbat (such as if it is a bottle of wine), you may ask a non-Jew to open it for you. But if the wine is not cooked/mevushal, the wine will become non-kosher once opened and handled by a non-Jew.

SHABBAT: TWIST-TIES

Shabbat: Non-Permanent Twist-Ties

You may twist or untwist twist ties on Shabbat, but only if you intend them to be a non-permanent seal. If you will (at any time in the future—even long after Shabbat is over) remove the twist-tie, it is considered

non-permanent.

SHABBAT: TEARING

Shabbat: Tearing Paper and Plastic Wrap

You may tear paper, plastic, foil, or other wrappers around food in order to eat that food on Shabbat.

You may tear plastic and foil (but not paper) around napkins, plasticware, etc., that you need on Shabbat.

But you may not:

- Do so if you will inevitably tear through any words or pictures on the package.
- Use scissors.

Except for wrappers for food or eating utensils, do not tear paper, foil, toilet paper, parchment paper, plastic wrap, paper towels, etc., on Shabbat.

NOTE If there is a perforation, that makes the tearing worse.

NOTE If you do not have any torn toilet paper, tear it is an unusual way:

EXAMPLES

- Tear using the back of your hand.
- Spread the toilet paper across your knees and then spread your knees apart.

SHABBAT: SALTING

Shabbat and Salting Food

You may not salt certain foods, whether cooked or raw, on Shabbat if the:

- Salt will materially (not just due to the flavor of the salt) change the flavor of the food, as in salting cut or chopped onions or salting tomatoes.

NOTE You may dip the tomato or other food into salt using your hand as you are eating it.

- Foods have a shell; e.g., corn kernels (on or off of the cob), beans, peas.
- Salt has not been heated previously (e.g., during the processing of the salt) and the food you are salting is hot (over 120° F, or 49° C).

Leniency If the food has oil in it, you may add salt even if the food contains onions or has a shell. Even a thin layer of oil will exempt the salt.

NOTE You may pour salt into a liquid or a liquid onto salt, but you may not make a saturated salt solution (brine) on Shabbat.

SHABBAT: SELECTING/BOREIR

Introduction to Shabbat and Selecting/Boreir

Selecting Good from Bad and Bad from Good

Boreir Principle #1: You may eat anything in the manner in which it is normally eaten.

EXAMPLE Peeling an orange.

Boreir Principle #2: You may not use a specialized tool.

Boreir Principle #3: You may not remove “bad” from “good.”

WHAT TO DO Take good (edible or desired food) from the undesired (bad) components.

NOTE You may do this only when you are ready to eat it or when you are preparing the food to be eaten soon afterward.

NOTE Boreir is a complicated area of halacha. Because issues of boreir are almost always from the Torah (d'oraita, not d'rabanan), we are stringent in applying restrictions concerning boreir. Consult a rabbi for specific questions.

Selecting Undesired from Desired Food

On Shabbat, you may not usually separate totally undesired from totally desired food in a standard way, even without a specialized tool.

Undesired Mixed with Desired Food

However, you may separate undesired elements from desired food—even with a specialized tool—if the undesired food is mixed with some desired food (any amount that you would use or eat is enough). This is called “taking some good with the bad.”

SITUATION You want to remove fat on gravy.

WHAT TO DO You may remove fat along with some gravy.

REASON Boreir is separating bad from good. Here, the junction area is still intact, so separating fat from gravy is like separating good from good (gravy from gravy, not fat from gravy).

Removing Easily Removable Food in a Non-Standard Way

SITUATION The undesired food is easily distinguishable and easily removable from the desired food.

WHAT TO DO You may separate totally undesired food elements from desired food in a non-standard way-- using only your hand, fingers, or implement that is not designed for separation. That is, you may not use a utensil that is designed to separate food from other foods, substances, or parts of foods, such as a slotted spoon, peeler, or sieve. But you may pick a lemon seed off a serving of fish, for example.

NOTE As on Jewish festivals, an action needed to eat a food normally (derech achila) does not violate the prohibition of boreir on Shabbat. So you may peel a food that is normally separated from its peel or shell in order to be eaten, as long as you do not use a specialized instrument to do so. For example, on Shabbat, you may do the following by hand without a shinu'i:

- Peel an orange
- Remove the shell of a hard-boiled egg
- Separate peanuts from their shells.

NOTE If peanut shells are then put into a container that also has unshelled peanuts, you may not remove the empty shells from that mixture!

SITUATION You want remove dirt from a carrot's surface on a Shabbat.

WHAT TO DO You may remove the dirt with an altered method (shinu'i), such as scraping the peel with a knife (which is a tool not specialized for separating food)-- but not by using a peeler.

REASON The normal way to eat the carrot is to peel it.

Selecting Desired from Undesired Food

While eating food (and some time before--within the amount of time you would normally need to prepare a meal), you may select desired food from undesired (or inedible) substances by hand or non-specialized tool. You may not use a specialized implement.

EXAMPLE You may remove fish from its skeleton even before eating it, but you may not remove the skeleton from the fish (because you have removed bad from good).

NOTE Once Shabbat has begun:

- You may remove fish bones from fish while you are eating the fish, but not before you are eating the fish.
- You may cut open a melon such as a cantaloupe and shake the seeds out (this is because some of the seeds remain), or take a bite of the melon and spit out the seeds. **But you may not remove any remaining seeds using your hand or an implement.**

EXCEPTION If you take undesired elements along with the desired food, it is not considered to be separating: you may use a specialized tool and it does not have to be eaten soon (within the normal food-preparation time).

Shabbat: Removing Seeds in Foods

Shabbat: Easy to Remove

If each unwanted element is easy to identify and remove, there is no issue of boreir. Consult a rabbi regarding what is halachically considered easy to remove.

Shabbat: Removing Cantaloupe Seeds

You may remove cantaloupe seeds only by shaking, not by scooping, them out.

Shabbat: Removing Lemon Seeds

You generally may not remove lemon seeds (pits) from food. However, if you are squeezing a lemon and some pits get partly squeezed out, you may:

- Shake the lemon in order to shake off the pits, or
- Use your hand to remove the pits from the surface of the lemon.

Once the pits fall onto food, you may use your hand to push the seeds to the side of the plate. But you may not use any instrument to do so, not even a non-specialized instrument such as a spoon.

NOTE If there are only one or two seeds and they are easily differentiated from the food, you may remove them by any means, except by using an instrument that is intended to separate food from non-food or from undesired food, such as a sieve, strainer, or slotted spoon.

Shabbat: Separating Good Food from Bad in Your Mouth

Boreir does not apply to separating anything inside of your mouth: you may separate anything that way, even if you remove the bad from the good.

Shabbat: Salt Shaker with Rice

On Shabbat you may not, due to boreir, use a salt shaker into which rice has been added (in order to keep the salt dry).

Shabbat: Washing-Draining Food

You may wash or rinse food on Shabbat and pour off the water afterwards if there is no tangible dirt. (This is not boreir.)

If the food does have tangible or visible dirt, you may not wash or rinse the food.

You may wash and drain olives and other canned fruits and vegetables on Shabbat.

Shabbat: Dropping Unwanted Food

When you have food mixed with non-desired substances, you may remove the non-desired ones by picking up the entire mixture and dropping away the non-desired elements.

Shabbat: Fat from Gravy

You may skim fat from gravy as long as you take some gravy, too, with your spoon. Or, you may pour the gravy with the fat into a container and then pour off fat, including a little gravy, from the top.

SHABBAT: SQUEEZING (DASH)

Shabbat: Squeezing Fruit

On Shabbat, you may squeeze a lemon (or other fruit) onto solid food that you will eat right away but not into a container or into a liquid.

Shabbat: Squeezing Brine from Tuna

You may squeeze brine from canned tuna on Shabbat but only if you will eat the tuna soon afterward (at your next meal or snack).

Shabbat: Squeezing Liquid from Cooked Vegetables

You may squeeze liquid from cooked vegetables on Shabbat but only if you:

- Throw out the liquid, and leave some liquid together with the food,
- Eat the vegetables soon afterward (at your next meal or snack).

SHABBAT: FANS

Shabbat: Fans

See Shabbat: Moving a Fan.

SHABBAT: GARBAGE

Shabbat: Dumping the Garbage

You may dump garbage from inside a house on Shabbat if the garbage smells bad (as long as the outside garbage can is within an eruv or an enclosed property that is adjacent to the house).

SHABBAT: GLASSES

Shabbat: Sunglasses

You may use photosensitive glasses (such as photogray) on Shabbat.

Shabbat: Eye Glasses

You may wash reading glasses or sunglasses using liquid soap on Shabbat.

SHABBAT: HAIR/BEARDS

Shabbat: Hair Brushing

You may brush your hair on Shabbat but only if the brush bristles bend easily. You may not use stiff bristles since they might pull out some hair. Using a special brush for Shabbat is recommended but not required.

NOTE You may not use a comb.

Shabbat: Hair Cuts/Shaving

You may not have your hair cut and you may not shave on Shabbat (and Jewish festivals).

SHABBAT: HEATING AND COOLING

SHABBAT: ADJUSTING CONTROLS AND VENTS

Shabbat: Adjusting Temperature Controls

On Shabbat, you may not adjust temperature controls.

Shabbat: Adjusting Air Conditioning Vents

You may adjust air conditioning vents on Shabbat as long as you adjust them manually and not electronically.

SHABBAT: MOVING FANS AND HEATERS

Shabbat: Moving a Fan

You may pick up and move a fan on Shabbat (even if it is operating) if you need it elsewhere but you may not plug it in or unplug it on Shabbat.

Shabbat: Moving Electric Heater

You may pick up and move an electric heater on Shabbat (and Jewish festivals) if it is:

- Off, in order to use the space where it is.
- On, in order to use the space where it is OR if you need the heat elsewhere.

NOTE You may not unplug the heater if it is on. You may unplug it if it is off, but only in order to move it.

Shabbat: Moving Flame Heater

On Shabbat, you may not move a kerosene or other heater that has a flame.

Shabbat: Using Electrical Devices for Non-Electrical Purposes

You may use an electric radiator or other electrical appliances for purposes other than their intended purposes on Shabbat as long as the appliances are not expensive.

EXAMPLE You may use an electric fan or radiator to prop open a window.

SHABBAT: WATER HEATERS

Shabbat: Water Heater above 120° F

On Shabbat, you may not use water from any type of water heater, including solar heaters, if the water in the tank (or reservoir) is above 120° F (49 C).

Shabbat: Water Heater below 120° F

If you keep your water heater *permanently* set to less than 120° F (49° C) and if you turn off the heater before Shabbat, you may use that hot water on Shabbat. But you may not lower the setting just before Shabbat and then use hot water from that heater, since the water in the tank will still be hotter than 120° F for many hours (or even a day or more) after lowering the heater temperature.

NOTE If you will be using a large volume of hot water during Shabbat, consult a rabbi since the heating element might inevitably be turned on and that would be forbidden on Shabbat.

SHABBAT: INSECTS

Shabbat: Insects that May Carry Diseases

You may kill mosquitoes and other insects on Shabbat if they carry deadly diseases (which makes the insects a danger, or sakana). You may kill insects that might carry deadly diseases even if you do not know for certain that they do.

Shabbat: Biting or Stinging Insects

You may trap insects on Shabbat that may hurt you, such as mosquitoes (without diseases) or bees that might sting you. You may also trap them or chase them away with bug spray. You may not trap insects that just annoy you, such as gnats or flies.

SHABBAT: KEYS

SHABBAT: KEYS: KEY RING

Key Ring with House and Car Keys

If you keep your house key on a key ring with your car keys and you are within a private domain or an eruv, you may either:

- Remove the house key (even on Shabbat), or
- Carry the entire set of keys on the ring with you.

REASON The key ring and all of the attached keys are not muktza as long as they are on the key ring with the house key.

SHABBAT: KEYS: TIE CLIP OR BROOCH

Shabbat Key as Tie Clip or Brooch

On Shabbat, you may not carry a key by hanging it on a tie clip or brooch; it must be an integral part of the jewelry.

SHABBAT KEY IN SHABBAT BELT

Key in Shabbat Belt

A Shabbat belt key should be integrated into the belt, not hanging on.



Shabbat belt: Key must be an integral part of the belt

Do Not Stack Two Keys in Shabbat Belt

Do not stack two keys in a Shabbat belt: put them on separate connectors in a row. See Shabbat Key in Shabbat Belt.

How To Open Door with Key in Shabbat Belt

SITUATION You need to open a door with a key on a Shabbat belt in a place with no eruv.

STATUS You may not disconnect the key from the belt, stick the key in the door, and open the door in a way that the key enters a private domain.

WHAT TO DO You must either:

- Turn the key while the key is still on the Shabbat belt, OR
- Remove the key from the Shabbat belt (or take off the belt), open the lock, and then replace the key on the Shabbat belt before you open the door.

SHABBAT: KNOTS

Shabbat: Permanent Knots

You may not tie permanent knots on Shabbat. A permanent knot is a knot intended to remain tied for at least 24 hours. Any strings you connect on Shabbat must be able to come undone by pulling on a single string, such as a bow.

NOTE Since opinions differ on what constitutes a permanent knot, we do not even tie knots that are intended to be untied, such as a double figure-eight knot.

Shabbat: Double Bows

You may not tie a double bow on Shabbat.

SHABBAT: LCDS/LEDS

Shabbat: Causing LED To Light Up

You may not do anything on Shabbat that will cause an LED to light up.

NOTE You may not turn on anything that generates noticeable light AND heat on Shabbat (and Jewish festivals).

Shabbat: Causing LCDs/LEDs To Change

You may not use any item on Shabbat that will cause an LCD or LED to form or change letters or change an LCD display.

SHABBAT: LAUNDRY

Introduction to Shabbat: Laundry

You may not wash or hang up wet laundry on Shabbat (or Jewish festivals). The halachot for drying laundry depend on whether you use a clothesline or a dryer:

Shabbat: Laundry: Clothesline

You may take down laundry on Shabbat only if it was dry before sunset on Friday, and only if you don't:

- Transfer the laundry from one halachic domain to another (hotza'a), or
- Give the impression that the laundry had been washed on Shabbat (mar'it ayin).

If laundry on a clothesline is still wet at sunset on Friday, the laundry is muktza and you may not take it down or use it during Shabbat. This is different from the case of a dryer.

REASON On the clothesline, there is no certainty that the laundry will dry during Shabbat (it might rain, it might be cold or cloudy...), so the person cannot have in mind that it will dry during Shabbat.

Shabbat: Laundry: Dryer

Laundry in a dryer (even if it was wet at sunset) that was turned on before sunset on Friday (or Jewish festivals) is not muktza, even if you do not intend to wear it. You may remove the dry laundry from the dryer

on Shabbat as long as no light goes on.

SHABBAT: LIGHTS

Shabbat: Redirecting Lighting Fixture

You may redirect a light fixture on Shabbat, but only by moving it with a stick or other object (a shinu'i), not directly with your hand.

NOTE You may not turn the light on or off and you may not disconnect the light during Shabbat.

Shabbat: Moving Lighting Fixture

You may slide a lamp or other light fixture to where you need the light if it is not practical to move closer to the light, but not by using your hand directly (you must use a shinu'i such as a stick or other object).

- You may not plug in the cord or remove the plug from the wall.
- You may not turn the light on or off.

SHABBAT: MAKEUP

Shabbat: Applying Makeup

Women and girls may not apply any nail polish or makeup on Shabbat (and Jewish festivals), including mascara and lipstick. You may not even apply lip coatings such as ChapStick, even if just to prevent chapping.

NOTE Beware of “Shabbat makeup” that stays on longer than normal makeup but may not be applied on Shabbat.

Shabbat: Removing Makeup

On Shabbat (or Jewish festivals), a girl or woman may remove makeup.

SHABBAT: MAIL AND PERIODICALS

Shabbat: Bringing Mail inside House

Do not bring mail inside the house on Shabbat, unless it was delivered:

- From within techum Shabbat, AND
- Within an eruv, AND
- By a non-Jew, AND
- Already open.

REASON Most mail is muktza since it cannot be opened or used without doing mela'chā.

Shabbat: Bringing Newspaper inside House

You may bring a newspaper, magazine, or other reading material inside the house on Shabbat and read it if there is an eruv, unless it was:

- Brought from outside the techum Shabbat, OR
- Printed on Shabbat, OR
- Delivered by a Jew.

If any of these conditions apply, you may not use it in any way on Shabbat, even if all of the other conditions would have permitted its use. You may use it once Shabbat is over.

- NOTE** As a policy, you may tell delivery services that you do not need to have the item delivered until after dark.
- REASON** If the item is delivered on Shabbat, it is not being done at your request and, if it is reading material, you may read the material as long as the other conditions permit it--see above.
- NOTE** If you do not know where the reading material came from, you may not use it Shabbat.
- NOTE** Although taking possession of the newspaper, magazine, or other reading material is “acquisition” (kinyan), you may do so since you will use it on Shabbat.

SHABBAT: MEDICINES

INTRODUCTION TO SHABBAT AND MEDICINES

Introduction to Shabbat and Medicines

Health or Life-Threatening Condition

On Shabbat, you may not take medicine used to promote health. Whenever there is any question of a life-threatening disease or condition, you must take medicine.

Categories of Sick People

There are several categories of sick people:

- **Entire Body Is Affected**

EXAMPLE Fever.

STATUS You may take medicines for this category; pills, such as aspirin, are OK to take.

EXCEPTION You may not smear substances on skin UNLESS the fever is life-threatening, in which case even smearing is permitted.

- **Only Part of the Body Is Affected**

STATUS Some medicines may be used--consult a rabbi.

- **Discomfort**

STATUS Medicine generally may not be used.

SHABBAT: CREAMS AND OILS

Shabbat: Squeezing, Dabbing, and Smearing Medicinal Creams

You may squeeze a tube of cream on Shabbat, but you might not be able to use the cream on Shabbat for other reasons—consult a rabbi.

NOTE Smearing creams or ointments is permitted only in life-threatening situations. Otherwise, you may not smear cream on skin on Shabbat (or a Jewish festival) even using a shinu'i such as using the back of your hand or a toe.

Dabbing is permitted, but only when you are permitted to use medicine for that purpose.

EXAMPLE You may dab cream on Shabbat for a bee sting.

REASON The pain from the sting will affect the entire body.

EXAMPLE You may not use cream for a mosquito bite.

REASON It is only a local irritation.

NOTE You may not smear cream for either condition.

Shabbat: Massage Oils

You may rub olive oil, almond oil, and other massage oils onto your skin for the purpose of massage, but you may not use such oils for moisturizing rough or dry skin.

REASON Moisturizing rough or dry skin is a type of healing/refu'a.

SHABBAT: MEDICINE

Shabbat: Medicine for Chronic Diseases

You may take medicine on Shabbat for chronic diseases such as high blood pressure.

Shabbat: Medicine for Non-Chronic Diseases

You may take medicine on Shabbat for non-chronic illnesses, if skipping one day will prevent cure, but not if skipping a day will just delay your cure.

EXCEPTION If the disease affects your entire body, you may take the medicine anyway.

SHABBAT: PAINKILLERS

When You May Take a Painkiller on Shabbat

You may take a painkiller on Shabbat if the pain affects the entire body or if the pain keeps you awake.

NOTE This also becomes the criterion for whether to take the pain killer during the daytime: if the pain you feel during the day would keep you awake if you were trying to sleep.

SHABBAT: MOPS

Shabbat: Mopping

You may squeegee a floor on Shabbat (or Jewish festival)--as is commonly done in Israel, but you may not push the water onto earth or plants.

You may mop up a local spill but only without squeezing out the rag or mop.

SHABBAT: MUKTZA

INTRODUCTION: SHABBAT: MUKTZA

Muktza by Hand

Muktza (“set aside” in one's mind) is an item that normally has no permissible use (or no use) on Shabbat.

Muktza items may not usually be moved by hand on Shabbat—even if your hand is gloved—except for certain Shabbat needs, such as you need the space or the item. However, it is ALWAYS OK to move muktza items with any other part of your body.

ORIGIN

Chazal instituted muktza rules to make Shabbat special by requiring that actions be done differently on Shabbat than on weekdays. The basis for the idea of muktza was when Moses/Moshe instructed the Children of Israel in the wilderness to prepare the mun for Shabbat in order to eat it on Shabbat. Chazal extended the idea to prohibit moving by hand on Shabbat anything that was not prepared in one's mind before sunset on Friday.

CATEGORIES OF MUKTZA

The several categories of muktza vary according to their purpose and their permissibility to be moved.

Muktza Machmat Melachto L'Issur: Standard Use Forbidden on Shabbat

Purpose Item whose normal purpose is forbidden to be done on Shabbat.

Permissibility To Be Moved You may move this item by hand, without using a *shinu'i*:

- If you need the space where it is resting, or
- For a permissible use.

EXAMPLES

- Using a hammer to open a coconut.
- Using pliers to crack open nuts.
- Using a portable radiator to prop open a window.

No prior preparation or thought before Shabbat is required.

NOTE You may not move it just to protect the item.

Muktza Machmat Gufo: No Use

Purpose An item that has no use. This item is not normally ever designated for use; for example, a rock or stone. However, an item in this “no use” category is rendered non-muktza and usable on Shabbat as long as you had intended—before Shabbat or the festival began—to use it for a permitted purpose. As long as you intended that, you do not even need to use a shinu'i. If you did not intend, before sunset on Friday, to use this normally unusable item, then you may only move it using a shinu'i.

Permissibility To Be Moved Unless you prepared before Shabbat to use it for some permitted purpose on Shabbat, you may not move it by hand even for a permitted use and not even in order to use the space where it is resting.

NOTE You might need to use the item regularly for the non-standard purpose because for just a one-time use, it might not be permitted. Consult a rabbi.

EXCEPTION Garbage has no use. You may move garbage within your house (example: push the garbage across the room with your foot), but if you want to dump your garbage outside and you have a private domain or an eruv, you may pick it up and carry it outside.

Muktza Machmat Chisaron Kis

Purpose A valuable item that you are concerned may be damaged.

EXAMPLES Passport, porcelain china, or other expensive and fragile or difficult-to-replace objects.

Such an item may not be moved except for its designated purpose and you may not move it once you have finished using it. But once you are already holding it, you may take it to a place where you want to leave it and you do not need to drop it where it is when you finish with it.

Basis L'Davar Ha'Asur

Purpose Muktza item resting on a normally permitted item makes the lower item muktza too.

EXAMPLE A candlestick will render the table on which it stands muktza (unless there are one or more other items that are more valuable than the muktza item, in which case the table does not become muktza).

SITUATION There are multiple objects; some are permitted and some are not—for example, in a drawer.

WHAT TO DO If the permissible objects are more valuable than the non-permitted objects, you may open the drawer.

Non-Muktza on Top of Muktza

If you want a non-muktza item that was left on top of a muktza item from before Shabbat started, you may use it without restriction.

SITUATION

You discover you have coins in non-patch pockets of your pants that you will wear on Shabbat.

WHAT TO DO

You may empty coins out of non-patch pockets if you need to use the pants, but not by taking the coins out: you must dump them out of the pockets.

NOTE If you have coins in a patch pocket, the whole garment is muktza, unless you forgot that the coins were there or if you intended to remove the coins before Shabbat began but forgot to remove them (in which case you may shake the coins out of the pocket and the garment is not muktza).

Non-Patch Pockets

SITUATIONS

Pants with muktza items in the pockets are on your bed and you want to sleep on Shabbat afternoon.

WHAT TO DO

You may move the pants off your bed using any body part including your hands; no shinu'i needed.

Item that Becomes Muktza

If you are holding a permissible item and it becomes muktza, you may put it in safe place; you do not need to immediately drop it or put it down where you are.

EXAMPLE You are holding a pot from which you dispense all of the food. The empty pot is now muktza, but you may take it to the kitchen to put it down.

For More Information about Muktza

To see the TorahTots article on muktza, click [here](#).

SHABBAT: MUSIC

Shabbat: Kazoos/Whistles

You may not use a kazoo or a whistle on Shabbat, but you may whistle with your mouth.

Shabbat: Listening to Non-Jewish Musicians

You may listen to non-Jewish musicians performing on Shabbat if you do not need a ticket and if they are not playing particularly for Jews.

SHABBAT: NAIL CUTTING

Shabbat: Nail Cutting

You may not bite your nails or have them cut on Shabbat (and Jewish festivals). If you have a broken nail, you may ask a non-Jew to cut it off for you if it bothers you.

SHABBAT: NON-JEWS (SHABBAT GOY)

Asking Non-Jew To Do Melacha D'Oraita

You may not ask a non-Jew to turn ON a light or turn ON heat, or other d'oraita violations of Shabbat--even for a mitzva or for oneg Shabbat. However, you may ask a non-Jew to do a melacha d'oraita for any of a sick person's needs, even if there is no danger to the person's life.

NOTE You may tell a non-Jew to do melacha, even if it is d'oraita, for a mitzva or oneg Shabbat only if it is bein ha'shmashot (between sunset and dark).

Asking Non-Jew To Do Melacha D'Rabanan

You may directly instruct or ask a non-Jew to do melacha d'rabanan for you on Shabbat, but only:

- To prevent a large financial loss.

NOTE A large loss is subjective to the individual's actual wealth and also to that person's perception of what is a large loss. Consult a rabbi.

- For Shabbat needs.

EXAMPLE You may ask a non-Jew to unlock an electric hotel door or trigger an entrance door on Shabbat, since this is for a Shabbat need and the action is not prohibited d'oraita.

SITUATION A new guest arrives and you need the space on the table occupied by your Shabbat candlesticks.

WHAT TO DO You may not move the candlesticks, but you may ask a non-Jew to do so.

SITUATION You left a non-muktza item that you now need for Shabbat on a tree branch (or a child left one in a tree house!).

WHAT TO DO You may not climb the tree to retrieve the item, but you may ask a non-Jew to retrieve

EXAMPLE it. You may ask a non-Jew to turn on air conditioning.

EXAMPLE You may ask a non-Jew (directly, no need to hint) to turn off a light if it interferes with someone's sleeping.

- To allow doing a mitzva.
- For other pressing (and certainly for life-threatening) needs, such as health, even if the person not sick.

NOTE All of these are d'rabanan cases!

Hinting to a Non-Jew To Do a Melacha

You may hint or imply that you need something done in order to induce a non-Jew to do even a melacha d'oraita that will benefit you, but *only* if you don't need that action.

EXAMPLE Turning off a light; bringing a chair from outside an eruv.

Non-Jews: Melacha Bein HaShmashot

You may tell a non-Jew to do melacha for Oneg Shabbat.

SHABBAT: PUMPS

Shabbat: Well Water

You may use water from a pump-operated well on Shabbat (as on Jewish festivals), as long as the pump operation is not a psik reisha (inevitable and immediate consequence of using any water tap).

EXAMPLE You may use water from a well if it comes via an automatic pump that operates to fill a reservoir once the water level drops, but you may not:

- Operate the pump directly.
- Turn the pump on or off.

NOTE If there are variants to this situation, ask a rabbi.

SHABBAT: REFRIGERATORS

Shabbat: Opening Refrigerator when Compressor not On

On Shabbat, even though you may cause a compressor to turn on while you are using it or soon afterward, you may:

- Open the door to a refrigerator or freezer.
- Use a water cooler.

NOTE This also applies to water fountains such as in schools and *synagogues*.

Shabbat: Opening Refrigerator with Light or LED

On Shabbat, do not open a refrigerator door that has LEDs that illuminate when the door is opened. If you forgot to turn off the refrigerator light or if LEDs light up when you open the refrigerator door, consult a rabbi about what to do.

SHABBAT: ROOM SENSORS

Shabbat: Preventing Motion Detector from Lighting Up

If a motion detector will light up when you move, you must cover the detector before Shabbat or turn off the device.

Shabbat: Walking into Room with Motion Detector

Do not walk into a room on Shabbat that has a motion detector that causes LED lights or room lights to go on--unless you can enter the room without turning them on.

NOTE If you enter a room and then find that there is a motion detector that will turn on a light or an LED, you should not move until someone else has entered the room and the light has turned on. You may then leave while the light is still on.

NOTE Sometimes motion detector lights do not always go on, due to a defective detector or because you can walk slowly enough or out of the detector range. If so, then it is not a "psik reisha" and you may walk past the detector, even if it sometimes does turn on the lights. However, you may not use the light that goes on unless there is enough ambient light from other sources that you can see without needing the triggered light.

EXAMPLES

- If you can avoid triggering the LED by walking slowly, you may enter the room.
- If you can open a door slowly without triggering the LED, and by letting the door swing closed the LED will light up, you may do so and then walk past the detector while the LED is on, but only if the door takes at least 2.5 seconds to close.

SHABBAT: SECULAR STUDIES

Shabbat: Secular Studying

Studying secular subjects is not in the spirit of Shabbat but it is not prohibited.

SHABBAT: SOAP

Shabbat: Hard Soap

You may not use hard soap on Shabbat.

Shabbat: Soap Bubbles

Causing soap bubbles from lather on Shabbat is not a problem.

SHABBAT: SUNSCREEN

Shabbat: Sunscreens

To use a fluid on skin on Shabbat, even sunscreen that may be needed to protect damaged skin, it must flow without lumps and not be more viscous than honey at room temperature. Therefore, apply sunscreen only if fluid (but not a cream or thick liquid).

NOTE You may dilute sunscreen before Shabbat with water or alcohol, but some sunscreens do not become more fluid even with added water or alcohol.

NOTE On Shabbat, you may use oil for pleasure, such as for massage, but not for refu'a/healing purposes, such as to heal chapped skin.

SHABBAT: TALKING

Shabbat: Talking about Weekday Subjects

You may talk about weekday subjects on Shabbat if what you are discussing already happened, but you may not discuss plans to do activities that involve any type of melacha, even d'rabanan.

SHABBAT: TAPING

Shabbat: Taping Items Together

You may not tape items together on Shabbat if you intend for them to stay attached for more than 24 hours.

Shabbat: Taping Card to Hotel Room Door

You may tape a card to a hotel room door on Shabbat in order to prevent its locking you out.

SHABBAT: TELEPHONES

Shabbat: Telephones

If Shabbat is over where you are, you may speak by phone to non-Jews in a place where it is still Shabbat.

SHABBAT: TOILET

Shabbat: Flushing Toilet

Flushing a toilet on Shabbat is not a violation of transferring from domain to domain.

REASON It is considered too small a space to be a domain.

NOTE If the water comes from a pump-operated well, such as in rural or remote areas, consult a rabbi.

SHABBAT: TRANSPORTATION

INTRODUCTION TO SHABBAT: TRANSPORTATION

Introduction to Shabbat and Transportation

It is best to avoid traveling at all on Shabbat.

SHABBAT: AIRPLANES

WHEN TO LEAVE BY AIRPLANE BEFORE SHABBAT

Flying before Shabbat for Business

You may leave until sunset on Friday if you are flying for business, but you must be VERY careful to avoid doing any melacha while transiting Shabbat in flight!

Flying before Shabbat and Flight Delayed

SITUATION You are flying for business on Friday and the flight is delayed. The flight will leave after sunset.

WHAT TO DO

You may stay on the airplane.

NOTE If you are flying for pleasure, you must get off the plane before sunset (if possible).

SHABBAT: FLYING FOR BUSINESS

Flying through Shabbat for Business

If you fly through Shabbat (permitted for business only), you must keep even Shabbat d'rabanan while flying over the area of the earth that is in Shabbat.

If you fly east (such as from Asia to the US, across the Pacific) after Shabbat is over, you will re-enter Shabbat and may not do melacha on the airplane. Say the Shabbat prayers and kiddush at the appropriate local time where you are flying.

SHABBAT: FLYING FOR PLEASURE

How Much Time To Allow When Flying for Pleasure

You must not travel during any part of Shabbat if you are flying for pleasure. You must therefore leave with enough time to land and get to an accommodation before local Shabbat starts at your destination.

SHABBAT: LANDING

Shabbat: Landing at Connected Jetway

If you land before local sunset on Saturday and the jetway is connected to the terminal building, you may disembark but you must stay in the terminal building until Shabbat is over.

Shabbat: Landing at Unconnected Jetway

If the jetway is a ladder or not connected to the terminal, you must stay on the plane until after dark.

Shabbat: Police Orders To Leave Airport

If you land at an airport on Shabbat and the police or other authority orders you to leave, you may do so.

Shabbat: Taking Luggage from Airport

If you are ordered to take your bags outside of the airport or the building after landing on Shabbat, a non-Jew should take them for you.

SHABBAT: BOATS

SHABBAT: CRUISE FOR BUSINESS

Shabbat: Embarking for Business Trip

You may embark on a cruise for business until sunset on Friday. You must be on board before sunset, but the ship does not need to depart before sunset. You may not transact business on Shabbat.

SHABBAT: CRUISE FOR PLEASURE

Shabbat: Embarking for Pleasure Trip

You must leave by Tuesday at sunset for a pleasure cruise if you will still be on the cruise at Friday sunset. The ship must have departed before sunset on Tuesday.

SHABBAT: DOCKING

Shabbat: Docking before Sunset Friday

If your ship docks before sunset on Friday, you may get off on Saturday. Techum Shabbat is measured from the boat.

Shabbat: Docking after Sunset Friday

If the ship was not yet docked at sunset on Friday, you must stay on board during Shabbat.

Shabbat: Moored before Friday

If the ship was moored (anchored to the sea bottom without being connected to dry land) in shallow water before sunset on Friday, you may wade to shore as long as:

- You don't get your clothes wet, and
- You dry off your legs before walking on dry land.

You may not carry anything with you.

SHABBAT: CARS/VEHICLES

Shabbat: Riding with Non-Jewish Driver

You may ride in a vehicle with a non-Jewish driver on Shabbat only if:

- He or she doesn't do anything especially for you (for instance, the non-Jew is driving somewhere anyway and offers you a ride for free), and
- There is no possibility of mar'it ayin (appearing to do something not allowed, even though the act is technically allowed).

However:

- You must not open a door (which will turn on a light) or do any other melacha while riding with a non-Jewish driver on Shabbat.
- You may continue to ride on a bus or other public vehicle driven by a non-Jew even once the sun sets on Friday if you have already paid (or if it is free) and if the vehicle is not being driven just for you.
- You may not continue to ride in a car or taxi that is being driven for you once the sun sets on Friday even if you have already paid for it or if it is free, unless it will be dangerous for you to get out of the vehicle and walk to a safe place.
- You may not invite for a Shabbat meal Jews who may drive themselves to your home on Shabbat unless there is more than a 50% chance that they will arrive without driving on Shabbat.

SHABBAT: TREES

Shabbat: Tree Rope

You may only use a tree rope for swinging or climbing if separated from the tree by another entity, such as another rope, tire, or board.

Shabbat: Tree House

You may use a tree house on Shabbat only if both the tree house and access to it are completely separate from the tree. You might build such a tree house by putting tires on top of the tree branch and then building the house on top of the tires. The ladder or other access to the tree house must likewise be separated from the tree.

Shabbat: Walking between Trees/Bushes

You may walk between bushes or trees, even if they are close to each other, and you may use your body to make space for yourself to walk. But you may not push the trunks or branches away using your hand.

REASON The trees are muktza.

SHABBAT: VIDEOTAPING

Shabbat: Being Videotaped by a Jew

You may not be videotaped by a Jew on Shabbat even if it is not for your benefit, but there is no need to cover your face. If there is danger (for example, the town of Efrat in Israel has video monitoring 24/7), it is permissible to be videotaped. You should avoid appearing on a monitor on Shabbat, but being recorded is not prohibited.

SHABBAT: WALKING

Shabbat: Walking in Long Grass

You may walk on long grass on Shabbat unless by doing so you will definitely tear off some grass.

Shabbat: Walking on Sand or Soil

You may walk on sand or soil on Shabbat.

SHABBAT: WATER (POOL)

Shabbat: Dangling Legs

On Shabbat, you may dangle your feet or legs into a pool (or other body) of water up to whatever garment you are wearing. However, you may not let the garment get wet.

SHABBAT: WATER FILTERS

Filtering Potable Water on Shabbat

You may use a non-electrical water filter on Shabbat. The water must be potable before filtering.

SHABBAT: WATERING

Shabbat: Waste Water

On Shabbat, do not pour waste water onto any area where plants can grow.

SHABBAT: PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Preparing For Shabbat

Here are some suggestions (these are NOT halachot!) of what to prepare in advance of Shabbat. Add or delete to suit your needs!

Candle Lighting

- Check candle lighting time
- Set the candles in their holders (and have matches nearby)

Set the Table

Set the table, including the challa and its cover and the wine cup.

Kitchen Preparation

- Sharpen knives
- Tear paper towels
- Refrigerator: Turn off or unscrew lights; disconnect any LEDs or fans
- Set up blech
- Set up hot water urn

- Turn off stove, oven

Food Preparation

- Thaw frozen meat, fish, and other food that might take hours to defrost before being cooked
- Cook whatever can be cooked ahead of time on Thursday night, Friday morning, or earlier in the week
- Squeeze lemons; do any other boreir-type preparations
- Chill wine
- Open bottles and cans that will be needed on Shabbat
- Prepare tea essence

Cleaning

- Make beds
- Sweep or vacuum
- Dump garbage

Clothing

- Do laundry
- Empty pockets of muktza (or if there is no eruv, of everything!)
- For men, set out Shabbat talit

Muktza

Check that nothing you will need is beneath a muktza item

Personal Care

- Cut hair and nails, if needed
- For men, shave or trim beard and mustache, if needed
- Tear dental floss
- Tear toilet paper or put out tissues in bathrooms
- Open any new boxes of tissues

Electronics

- Set heat or air conditioning
- Turn on or off lights, or set timers for them
- If desired, turn off or disconnect:
 - Alarms
 - Cellphones and phones
 - Computers
 - Microwave detectors
 - Other electronics

Eruv

Check that the eruv (if any) is good

TAHARA/TUM'A

INTRODUCTION TO TAHARA/TUM'A

Introduction to Tahara/Tum'a

The Torah commands us to be kedoshim (holy, or set apart), requiring purity in what we eat, how we speak, what we wear, and how we behave. Tum'a is spiritual impurity generally resulting from transitions from life to death (even in a small measure; for instance—sleep or cutting nails). Tum'a inhibits or blocks us from achieving holiness.

Since we do not have a “red heifer” with which to make purifying water solutions, all people are considered to have some level of tum'a today.

Although there are three reasons to ritually wash hands—to add kedusha; to remove tum'a; and to remove dirt--tum'a normally has nothing to do with physical dirt. There are many types and levels of tum'a, with no exact progression. The following guideline is approximately in descending order from most impure to least:

Sources of the Different Levels of Tum'a

- Dead body (touching or being in same building with a dead body);
- Cemetery;
- Carcass of any dead animal not slaughtered by shechita;
- Women during and after menstruation or after childbirth (but before they immerse in a mikva);
- Sleep;
- Possibly a bathroom;
- Your hands' transferring tum'a to wet food;
- Your hands' transferring tum'a to bread;
- Food from under a bed on which someone slept;
- Intercourse or seminal emission;
- Having your beard, hair, or nails cut;
- Leather shoes;
- Touching body parts.

Depending on the level of tum'a, purifying may require:

- Washing your hands by the Three-Times Method.
- Washing your hands by the One-Time Method.
- Immersion in a mikva. OR
- Sprinkling with water that had been treated with ashes from a red heifer (which we do not have now).

NOTE Wearing a glove does not block your hand from receiving tum'a from urination or defecation.

However, wearing a glove does block tum'a from touching your shoes or petting a dog.

NOTE Even though some tum'a can only be transmitted by contact (and sometimes by contact when the tamei item is wet), tum'at meit (the ritual impurity of a dead person) does get transmitted simply by being in the same covered area. Therefore, food stored under a bed will get ruach ra'a during sleep, since sleep is considered to be a small version of death.

TUM'A: CAUSES

TUM'A: ANIMALS

Tum'a: Animals

Wash your hands with a cup, using the One-Time Method, after touching any animal.

REASON Due to the dirt (which may carry tum'a due to feces and other impure substances) assumed to be on the animal.

TUM'A: BATHROOM

Music in the Bathroom

You should not listen to Jewish music containing lines from the Torah (psukim) while you are in the bathroom.

Reading Material in the Bathroom

You may not take a Jewish publication into the bathroom if it contains words of Torah. You may read a newspaper or magazine that is printed in Hebrew as long as there is no Torah content.

TUM'A: BOOKS

Tum'a: Washing Hands and Books

You do not need to wash your hands before reading a book of hashkafa/halacha/Jewish philosophy or even Torah or Talmud from a book, unless you have touched something impure/tamei before reading.

TUM'A: CEMETERY

Tum'a above Cemetery

Ritual impurity from a cemetery goes up to the sky, so a cohen should not fly over a cemetery.

Tum'a within Cemetery

Ritual impurity (tum'a) in a cemetery comes from being within 4 amot (7 feet) of a grave. This is horizontal distance, regardless of how deep the body is buried.

NOTE A cohen may be in a cemetery as long as he does not get closer than 4 amot (7 feet) to any grave and he does not stand under any tree which extends over a grave.

Cemetery Blessings

Once inside a cemetery, after not having been in one for at least 30 days, say:

Baruch ata adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam
asher yatzar etchem ba'din, v'zan v'chilkeil etchem ba'din,
v'heimit etchem ba'din, v'yodei'a mispar kulchem ba'din,
v'hu atid l'hachazir u'lhachayot etchem ba'din.
Baruch ata adonai mechayeh ha'meitim.

Then say Ata gibor l'olam adonai (the 2nd paragraph of the amida) to the end of the paragraph. Omit the blessing at the end as well as mashiv ha'ruach and morid ha'tal.

TUM'A: CONTACT WITH DEAD NON-JEW

Tum'a: Contact with Dead Non-Jew

Contact with the body of a dead non-Jew confers tum'a, just as does contact with the body of a dead Jew.

Tum'a: Cohen Touching Dead Non-Jew

A cohen is forbidden from touching or picking up a dead body of a non-Jew as well as the dead body of a Jew.

Tum'a: Cohen and Non-Jewish Cemetery

A cohen should not walk through a non-Jewish cemetery unless he has an urgent need to do so.

Tum'a: Cohen Flying on Plane Carrying a Body

A cohen should not fly on a flight that has a dead body on it, even if the body is in the hold or baggage compartment (where it normally will be).

TUM'A: FOOD

TUM'A: FOOD OVERNIGHT

Tum'a: Leaving Cut Produce Uncovered Overnight

Some foods (such as onions, garlic, and scallions/green onions) will pick up ru'ach ra'a if:

- Peeled, AND
- Cut at both ends, AND
- Left overnight in a home, AND
- Raw (OR cooked) and not mixed with other foods, spices, or salt.

NOTE Under the above conditions, the food will pick up ru'ach ra'a even if stored in a sealed container after being cooked. However, if such an onion (raw or cooked) that is peeled and cut at both ends is mixed with something else--whether other foods, oil, spices, or salt--the onion will not pick up ru'ach ra'a.

Problematic foods:

- Onions,
- Garlic,
- Eggs (hard boiled or raw once they are out of their shell).

Not a problem:

- Unpeeled onions
- Cut and open lemons or other produce(excluding onions, garlic, and eggs).
- Raw onion, garlic, or eggs that were cut or peeled in a commercial facility and remain uncovered overnight.

NOTE You may not use an onion that has been left overnight under any circumstances (even if wrapped in clear plastic wrap, put into the refrigerator, etc.):

- That has been cut at the top and bottom, and
- Whose brown layer has been removed.

NOTE Spring/ green onions also attract ru'ach ra'ah, but only if you cut off all of the green and also the roots.

NOTE If the onion or garlic had been peeled and cut at both ends but you sprinkled some salt on it, then you may use it even if it has been left out overnight.

TUM'A: WET/DRY FRUIT/FOOD

Tum'a: Wet Food Normally Eaten by Hand

Wash your hands (without saying the handwashing blessing) before eating wet food, such as a piece of fruit with water on it or simply dry off the food, if possible.

EXCEPTION Food that is normally eaten with a spoon or fork (such as cereal or canned fruit) but only if you are eating it with a spoon or fork.

Tum'a: Handwashing for Bread

See [HaMotzi: Washing Hands](#) .

TUM'A: HAIR

Tum'a: Hair Cutting: Washing Afterward

Wash your hands using the One-Time Method after cutting (or having someone cut) your hair (or nails).

TUM'A: HOLY ITEMS

Tum'a: Bringing Holy Items into Area of Impurity

To carry a holy item into an area that has impurity, put the item in two nested containers (kis b'toch kis).

EXAMPLES

- A bag inside a bag.
- A bag and a folder.

TUM'A: HOSPITALS

Tum'a: Hospitals: Cohen Visiting Wife

A cohen may visit his wife in the hospital even though there are often dead people in hospitals but consult a rabbi.

TUM'A: NAILS

TUM'A: NAIL CLIPPING

TUM'A: NAIL CLIPPING: TIMING

Fingernails and Toenails on Same Day

Don't cut fingernails and toenails on the same day.

REASON That is done for dead people.

EXCEPTION The only major exception is women before they go to the mikva.

TUM'A: NAIL CLIPPING: ORDER

Cutting Fingernails and Toenails in Special Order

You do not need to cut toenails or fingernails in a special order or out of order unless you have a custom to do so.

TUM'A: NAIL CLIPPING: DISPOSAL

Tum'a: Putting Nail Clippings Down Toilet or Drain

Nail clippings, even from children and non-Jews, have ru'ach ra'a and need to be disposed of. The simplest way is to flush them down a toilet or wash them down a drain (but don't put them into the garbage).

NOTE Hair may be disposed of by throwing it into a garbage can.

Tum'a: Burning Nail Clippings

Burning nail clippings is OK (but it has kabbalistic complications and is bad for the person from whom the nails were clipped).

Tum'a: Burying Nail Clippings

Burying nail clippings is OK but only if they will not become uncovered later. Clippings are particularly bad for pregnant women to step on or over.

Tum'a: Nail Clipping: Washing Afterward

Wash your hands using the One-Time Method after cutting (or having someone cut) your nails (or hair).

TUM'A: NON-JEWS

Tum'a: Non-Jews

Non-Jews do not have ritual impurity (tum'a) the way Jews do. However:

- If a Jew touches or carries a dead non-Jew, tum'a is passed on to the Jew.
- If a Jew walks through a non-Jewish cemetery, the Jew should wash his hands the Three-Times Method.

TUM'A: PATIENT REVIVAL

Retroactive Tum'a

If a patient has no pulse, is chilled, and has no brain function but can be revived, there is no tum'a. If the person is not revived, the tum'a may be retroactive.

TUM'A: PRAYER

Prayer: Blessing near Tum'a

For purposes of prayer while tum'a is around:

1. Feces are OK once they no longer smell.
2. Urine and impure wash water are OK once absorbed in ground.
3. Spit/saliva is no problem.

TUM'A: SHOES

Tum'a: Leather Shoes and Washing

After touching leather shoes, you must wash your hands using the One-Time Method before saying blessings or prayers or before learning Torah.

NOTE If you do not have any water with which to wash your hands, say the blessing or prayer anyway but wipe your hands off on something before saying the blessing.

Tum'a: Leather or Synthetic Shoes

Only leather shoes are considered to carry tum'a.

REASON Leather shoes absorb sweat.

NOTE There is no problem with cloth or synthetic material shoes (as long as they are not sweaty-- even though they also absorb sweat).

NOTE

Soaking and scrubbing leather shoes to remove the absorbed sweat does not remove the requirement to wash hands after touching those shoes.

TUM'A: SLEEPING

Tum'a: Sleeping more than 30 Minutes

After waking from sleeping more than 30 minutes, don't touch your eyes, nose, mouth, ears, or other bodily orifices until you have washed your hands using the Three-Times Method.

Tum'a: Missing Opportunity To Say Blessing

SITUATION

You wake up after sleeping for more than 30 minutes and need to say a blessing immediately or else you might lose the opportunity to do so.

WHAT TO DO

Even though you have not washed your hands after sleep, you should say the blessing.

EXAMPLE

SITUATION

You are in bed and hear thunder.

WHAT TO DO

You should immediately say kocho u'gvurato even though you did not wash your hands (but you should quickly rub your hands on cloth or clothing first). If you then see lightning, you say oseh ma'aseh vreishit.

Tum'a: Walking before Handwashing

You should not walk 4 amot (6'10", or 2.1 m) before washing hands after sleeping more than 30 minutes etc., but the entire house may be considered 4 amot (in the sense of being your "domain" or personal space).

Tum'a: Food Under Bed When Sleeping

Do not keep food under your bed when you sleep; but if you did, you may eat or use the food

NOTE Wash the food three times, if possible, pouring with a cup as you would wash your own hands.

TUM'A: TOILET

Tum'a: Toilet

After using the toilet, you only need to wash hands if you touched the normally covered parts of your body or if your hands touched feces or urine. However, the custom is to wash hands anyway.

TUM'A: TOUCHING BODY PARTS

Tum'a: Touching with Finger

If you touch something that has transferable spiritual impurity (tum'a) even with just one finger, that entire hand becomes impure. In some cases, such as if you touch a dead body, your entire body will become impure (tamei).

Tum'a: Scratching your Head

You must wash your hands (the One-Time Method) if you scratch your head on a place where you have hair.

You do not need to wash your hands if you:

- Touch your hair

- Scratch a bald spot.
- Rub your head instead of scratching it.

REASON Scratching your head (where there is hair) causes tum'a because of any impurities that may be there.

NOTE Even if you have just shampooed your hair, you must still wash your hands.

Tum'a: Touching Body Parts after Saying HaMotzi

You must wash your hands again (but without a blessing) using the One-Time Method if you touch a normally covered area of your body or scratch your head where you have hair after you have said ha'motzi; but don't say ha'motzi again.

TUM'A: TRANSFERRING TO ANOTHER PERSON

Tum'a: Transferring Tum'a to Another Person

After sleeping, a person cannot transfer tum'a from his or her hands to someone who has already washed—whether hands are wet or dry.

TUM'A: UNCOVERED WATER

Tum'a: Water Uncovered Overnight

There is no problem with leaving water uncovered overnight.

TUM'A: REMOVAL

TUM'A: REMOVAL: GENERAL CONCEPTS

WHAT REMOVES TUM'A

Minimum Amount of Water To Remove Tum'a

The minimum amount of water to remove tum'a (ritual impurity) is 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml, or 1 revi'it) total, for both hands.

NOTE By starting with at least one revi'it per hand when washing, we avoid problems of transferring tum'a to other people or utensils. If you start with only one revi'it and pour enough to cover each hand from that single revi'it, you will remove the tum'a from your hands, but the water that remains on your hands will still be *tamei*. If you then touch a washing cup, the *tamei* water will remain on the cup and be transferred to the person who touches it next. It is recommended to use at least one revi'it per hand to avoid such problems.

Tum'a and Snow

Snow removes tum'a but requires 480 *se'ah* of snow. This is easily achieved by plunging your hands into a field or yard full of snow!

WHAT DOES NOT REMOVE TUM'A

Tum'a and Moist Towelette

A moist towelette (baby wipe, alcohol wipes, etc.) does not remove tum'a.

Tum'a and Dirt, Ashes, Sand

“Washing” hands with dirt, ashes, or sand does not remove tum'a.

TUM'A: REMOVAL: HOW TO WASH HANDS

HANDWASHING FOR TUM'A: GENERAL CONCEPTS

Tum'a and Drying Hands before Handwashing

To wash hands from tum'a or all other purposes, you do not need to dry your hands first--except before washing for bread, and then ONLY if the person who washed hands before you:

- Did not use a revi'it of water (per hand) to wash his/her hands, AND
- Only poured once on each hand.

In sum, you almost never need to dry your hands before washing them!

However, if the person before you had *tum'a* on his or her hands and poured only once, the tum'a will be transferred from his/her hands to the cup.

Tum'a and From What To Pour

When washing your hands using the One-Time Method, in all cases except when washing for bread, here is what to use:

- Best: Cup that holds at least a revi'it of water.
- Next Best: Wash hands from a spigot within 12" of the ground, turning the spigot off and on between hands.
- Third Choice: If the spigot is more than 12" above the ground, simply hold your hands under a regular faucet in the flow of water so that your hands get wet all over. No need to turn the water on and off.

NOTE This is a *b'di'avad* case.

- Fourth Choice: If there is no water, say whatever blessings you need to say anyway (for example, asher yatzar) rather than not saying the blessing at all. You will still have the tum'a on your hands (but you should rub your hands on cloth or clothing first).

NOTE This does NOT apply to washing before eating bread or to any cases where you must wash using the Three-Times Method. Removing *tum'a* in these cases requires a cup.

NOTE If you need to wash your hands after using the toilet, there is no need to go 18 minutes to find the water, (unlike the requirement for washing for bread).

Minimum Amount of Hand Coverage

When washing to remove tum'a, the ideal is to pour water over your hand up to your wrist; the minimum is to pour up to the knuckles adjacent to the palms of your hands.

EXCEPTIONS On Yom Kippur and Tish'a B'Av, wash only up to your knuckles (but if you accidentally pour water further up on your hand, it is not a problem).

Tum'a and Which Hand To Wash First

To remove tum'a from hands, it is preferable to wash the right hand first.

NOTE If you washed the left first, it is OK and you do not need to rewash the left hand.

Tum'a and Pouring Backhanded

To wash hands from tum'a, there is no problem with pouring water backhanded.

Tum'a and Hot Water

You may wash your hands with hot water for any ritual purpose except for mayim achronim.

Tum'a and Where To Wash

You may wash your hands inside a bathroom for any purpose, even before eating bread.

NOTE You may not say any blessings while inside the bathroom.

HANDWASHING: ONE-TIME METHOD

ONE-TIME METHOD: WHEN TO WASH

When To Use the One-Time Handwashing Method

Use the One-Time Method to wash hands from *tum'a*:

Before...

- Eating bread.
- Prayer services.

After...

- Cutting fingernails or toenails.
- Getting a haircut or shaving.
- Giving blood.
- Urinating or defecating.
- Scratching the hair on your head.
- Touching leather shoes (not after touching synthetic or cloth shoes).
- Touching normally covered parts of your body.
- Touching a pet.

ONE-TIME METHOD: HOW TO WASH

How To Wash Hands the One-Time Method

To wash hands the One-Time Method:

- Fill the washing cup with at least 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of water.
- Pour enough water (may be as little as 1.3 fl. oz.--39 ml, or 1/6 cup) from the washing cup to completely cover your entire first hand (either hand may be first but it is proper to wash your right hand first).
- Pour enough water to completely cover the second hand.

NOTE You do not need to pour any more than that or to break up the revi'it into two pours.

Drying Hands after Washing for Bread

When washing your hands before eating bread, the ideal procedure is to wash, say the blessing al netilat yadayim, and then dry your hands (since the drying is part of the washing procedure). Many people have the custom of pouring water onto each hand twice but only before eating bread.

NOTE If you washed your hands, dried them, and then said the blessing al netilat yadayim, b'di'avad you are covered. But if you washed your hands and dried them but did not yet say the blessing al netilat yadayim, you should touch a normally covered part of your body, wash your hands again, say al netilat yadayim, and go on to say ha'motzi on bread.

HANDWASHING: THREE-TIMES METHOD

THREE-TIMES METHOD: WHEN TO WASH

When To Use the Three-Times Method

Use the Three-Times Method to wash hands from tum'a after...

- Sleeping 30 minutes or more,
- Intercourse,
- Touching a dead person,
- Being in a building with a dead person,
- Being in a funeral procession,
- Visiting a cemetery.

These are the only times we wash the three-times way.

THREE-TIMES METHOD: HOW TO WASH

How To Wash Hands Using the Three-Times Method

To wash hands the Three-Times Method:

- Fill the washing cup with at least 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of water for the first pair of pours.
- Pour enough water (may be as little as 1.3 fl. oz.--39 ml, or 1/6 cup) from the washing cup to completely cover your entire first hand (either hand may be first, but it is proper to wash your right hand first).
- Pour enough water to completely cover the second hand.
- Repeat the pouring twice more, alternating hands, until each hand has been completely covered a total of three times.

NOTE There is no minimum required volume for the subsequent pours, and you may refill the cup in order to have enough water to cover each hand for all three pairs of pours.

TUM'A: REMOVAL: WASHING CUP

Tum'a: Washing Cup Spout

If a washing utensil has a spout that is lower than the rim, pour only from the spout. If the spout is higher than the rim, pour off of the side or back, opposite the lowest edge level.

REASON The principle is that water may only be poured from the lowest level that can hold water.

Tum'a: Squeeze Bottle as Washing Cup

You may wash your hands for any *halachic* purpose using a squeeze bottle.

TUM'A: REMOVAL: WASHING WATER

Tum'a: Evaporated Washing Water

Washing water does not have any residual tum'a once it has evaporated.

Tum'a: Reusing Washing Water

You may re-use washing water for other purposes (ex., to irrigate plants) EXCEPT for water used after waking from sleep and the other three-time handwashing categories (which have higher levels of tum'a).

Tum'a: Praying if No Water for Handwashing

If there is no water to wash hands, even after sleeping, you still say blessings and prayers. You should say asher yatzar even if you can't wash, but do not say al netilat yadayim in shacharit!

NOTE Even if you do not have water with which to wash your hands, you should wipe them off on a towel or some substance that can rub off any physical impurities that you may have gotten on them while sleeping.

TUM'A: REMOVAL: TOVELING (TEVILA)

TUM'A: REMOVAL: MIKVA

MIKVA IN NATURE

MIKVA IN NATURE: GENERAL CONCEPTS

Mikva in Nature: Rabbinic Guidance

Rabbinic guidance is recommended when using a river, lake, or spring as a mikva due to:

- Problems of mud, dirt, or sand, and
- Difficulty in checking if the person is fully underwater,
- It might not be a kosher mikva.

NOTE This section applies to the immersion of both utensils and people, since the same principles apply.

Mikva in Nature: Source of Water

Spring water, whether moving or stationary, is a kosher mikva.

Rain water is only a kosher mikva once it is stationary (just sitting in a pool, not flowing anywhere).

In neither case may the water enter a constructed mikva through a "kli," which includes being carried in a bucket or via pipes with bends and other places for water to collect. In the case of a pipe that may not be a kli, consult a rabbi.

Mikva in Nature: Measurements

A kosher mikva in nature:

- Must be 40 se'ah (about 192 gallons);
- Has no minimum depth;
- May be murky or muddy (but must be such that a cow would drink it); and
- May not drop in level more than 2 inches (3.1 cm) within 24 hours.

LAKE AS MIKVA

Lakes or Ponds as Mikva

A lake or pond may be a kosher mikva if it is:

- Fed from ground water (percolates through the soil); or
- Primarily fed from a spring; or
- Primarily fed from rain.

NOTE The rain must run into the lake or pond directly. If the water enters, or drains out, via pipes, it is not a kosher mikva. However, if the lake or pond gets rain from run-off from streets through pipes, it might be a kosher mikva. Consult a rabbi.

NOTE A lake or pond that drains out through a river or stream may not be a kosher mikva. Consult a rabbi.

NOTE A lake or pond into which a river or stream empties, might be a kosher mikva. Consult a rabbi.

NOTE A lake or pond with a river running into it and then out of it is considered a river. For immersing in a river, see [Rivers as Kosher Mikva](#).

OCEAN AS MIKVA

Oceans as Mikva

All oceans and seas are kosher mikvas, but other salty water (defined as water that a cow would not drink) is not kosher for immersion.

NOTE A rabbi should be consulted before using an ocean for immersion since there are other issues involved.

RAINWATER AS MIKVA

Rainwater as Mikva

Rainwater only purifies when it is stationary.

RIVER AS MIKVA

Rivers as Kosher Mikva

Rivers are only kosher mikvas when spring-fed. A river is a kosher mikva if it exists year round (not like a wadi, which is frequently dry and only flows after rainfall).

Hot Springs as Mikva

Here are requirements for a hot spring as a mikva:

1. The temperature may not be above 98° F.
2. If the spring and immersing area are separate, any pipes used to bring water into the immersing area from the spring must be at least 3" in diameter. Consult a rabbi.
3. The mikva area must contain at least 40 seah of the spring water.
4. The mikva area must be hewn of rock or poured concrete, etc., but may not be prefabricated in one piece, like a hot tub.
5. The water may not reach the mikva area via a pump.

SPRING AS MIKVA

Spring as Mikva

Springs are always kosher mikvas as long as the volume in the place of immersion is at least 40 se'ah (192 gallons).

TUM'A: REMOVAL: TOVELING: PERSON

Impurity that Mikva Does Not Remove

Normally covered parts of the body always have some type of impurity, even after immersion, and a mikva does not remove that impurity.

TUM'A: REMOVAL: TOVELING: UTENSILS

INTRODUCTION TO TOVELING: UTENSILS

Introduction to Tovelung: Utensils

Tevila is the Hebrew word for immersion. You must tovel (immerse in a mikva or other halachically purifying water) new utensils made of metal or other materials that require tevila unless you know that they were:

- Made by a Jew,
- Sold by a Jew, and
- Not owned by a non-Jew in between.

Toveling: Utensils: How To Tovel

To tovel a utensil, you may go to any kosher natural mikva (see section on natural mikvas) or to a mikvat keilim (a small mikva for utensils, often attached to the outside of a regular mikva building). To tovel several items, some of which require a blessing and some on which there is doubt whether a blessing is necessary, say the blessing over the item that requires the blessing and have in mind that the blessing will cover all the rest of your items.

Remember to remove all stickers, rust, etc., before you begin. Nail polish remover may help with stubborn stickers. Say the blessing al tevilat keilim and then let the item free fall through the water. Unlike with hagala, during which the item may be immersed in sections, when you tovel a utensil, the entire item must be in contact with the water at the same time, even if only for an instant.

Toveling: Utensils: What Gets Toveled?

NOTE The main halacha applies to metal utensils that will be used repeatedly.

Say the blessing al tevilat keilim on metal or glass items--including Pyrex, Duralex, and Corelle--that come in contact with food. Items that require toveling include:

- Bowls
- Cups
- Forks
- Knives
- Pans
- Plates
- Pots
- Spoons
- Storage containers (only if they are brought to the table).

The below chart is copied with permission from the Star-K (www.star-k.org):

<u>Utensil</u>	<u>Tevila</u> <u>Guideline</u>	<u>Utensil</u>	<u>Tevila</u> <u>Guideline</u>
Aluminum Pans, Disposable <i>if intended to be used more than once</i>	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u>	Meat Tenderizer Hammer, Metal	No <u>Tevila</u>
Aluminum Pans, Disposable <i>to be used only once</i>	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>	Melamine	No <u>Tevila</u>
<u>Blech</u>	No <u>Tevila</u>	Metal Cutlery	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u>
Blender with metal blade on bottom	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u>	Metal Flour and Sugar Storage Canisters	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>
Bone	No <u>Tevila</u>	Metal Pots Coated with Teflon, Enamel or Plastic	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>
Brush, Pastry	No <u>Tevila</u>	Metal Spoon Specifically for Medicine	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>
Brush for Grill, Metal	No <u>Tevila</u>	Microwave Turntable, Glass	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>
Can Opener	No <u>Tevila</u>	Mixer Beaters	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>
Cans, Reusable Empty <i>if opened by a Yehudi</i>	No <u>Tevila</u>	Paper	No <u>Tevila</u>
China, Bone	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>	Peeler, Vegetable	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u>

China, Glazed	<u>Tevila w/o Brocha</u>	<u>No Tevila</u>
Colander, Metal	<u>Tevila with Brocha</u>	<u>Enamel</u>
Cookie Cutters, Metal	<u>No Tevila</u>	<u>Enamel</u> <u>Cooling</u>
Cookie Sheets, Metal	<u>Tevila with Brocha</u>	<u>No Tevila</u> <u>Oven</u>
Cork Screw	<u>No Tevila</u>	<u>No Tevila</u> <u>Pins</u> <u>Metal</u> <u>or</u> <u>Wood</u>
Corningware	<u>Tevila w/o Brocha</u>	<u>Sandwich with Brocha</u> <u>Maker</u>
Crockpot Ceramic Insert	<u>Tevila w/o Brocha</u>	<u>No Tevila</u>
Crockpot Glass Lid	<u>Tevila w/o Brocha</u>	<u>No Tevila</u> <u>Racks,</u> <u>Stainless</u> <u>Steel</u>
Crockpot Outside Metal Shell	<u>No Tevila</u>	<u>Spatula with Brocha</u> <u>Metal</u>
Dish Rack, Metal	<u>No Tevila</u>	<u>Stoneware</u> <u>or</u> <u>Enamel</u>
Dishes, Ceramic	<u>Tevila w/o Brocha</u>	<u>Non-</u> <u>Glazed</u>
Earthenware, Non-Glazed <i>Dull Finish, e.g. Flower Pot</i>	<u>No Tevila</u>	<u>No Tevila</u> <u>Utensils,</u> <u>Glass</u> <u>not</u> <u>brought</u> <u>to</u> <u>the</u> <u>table</u>
George Foreman Grill	<u>Tevila w/o Brocha</u>	<u>No Tevila</u>
Glass <i>(including Pyrex, Duralex & Corelle)</i>	<u>Tevila with Brocha</u>	<u>Tevila with Brocha</u> <u>Kettle,</u> <u>Corelle</u>
Grater, Metal <i>used for foods that are ready to eat, eg, apples, onions</i>	<u>Tevila with Brocha</u>	<u>Toaster w/o Brocha</u> <u>which</u> <u>will</u> <u>not</u> <u>break</u>
Grater, Metal <i>used only for foods that need further cooking, eg potatoes</i>	<u>Tevila w/o Brocha</u>	<u>Toaster with Brocha</u> <u>Oven</u> <u>rack</u> <u>&</u> <u>tray</u> <u>only</u>
Hamburger Maker	<u>Tevila with Brocha</u>	<u>No Tevila</u> <u>Metal</u>

Hot Air Popcorn Maker, Metal	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u>	<u>Waffle</u> with <u>Brocha</u>
Hot Water Urn, Metal	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u>	Iron
Knife, Arts & Crafts	No <u>Tevila</u>	<u>Waffle</u>
Knife Sharpener	No <u>Tevila</u>	Tray
		Wood <u>Tevila</u>
		<u>Waffle</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>
		Cask
		with
		Metal
		Straps
Meat Thermometer	No <u>Tevila</u>	

TOVELING: UTENSILS: PARTS

Toveling: Utensils: Stickers

Before immersing a food utensil in a mikva, remove anything attached to its surfaces.

SITUATION A sticker or something similar is found on a plate or other utensil after tevila.

WHAT TO DO

- If the sticker is less than half of the surface area and does not bother you by being there, the tevila is valid.
- If the sticker interferes with your use of the utensil or if you just want it removed, it must be removed and the tevila must be repeated.

Toveling: Utensils: Electrical Cord or Heater

A utensil that requires immersion in a mikva should be immersed even if the utensil is connected to an electrical cord or heater, unless by immersing it you will ruin the entire appliance.

Toveling: Lid

You must tovel a cooking-utensil lid bought from a non-Jew before you use the lid.

Toveling a Disposable Aluminum Pan

If a disposable aluminum pan will be used once, tovel it without a blessing. If a disposable aluminum pan will be used more than once, tovel it with a blessing (al tevilat keilim). Even if you will line it with a double layer of foil, still tovel it.

TOVELING: UTENSILS: MIXED MATERIALS

Toveling: Mixed Materials

When toveling a utensil that is partly made of metal (which requires tevila) and partly made of plastic, wood, or another material that does not require tevila, you must dip all parts of the utensil into the mikva, even the parts that would not require tevila on their own.

TOVELING: UTENSILS: KASHER OR TOVEL FIRST?

Toveling: Utensils: Kasher or Tovel First?

If you have a non-kosher food utensil, kasher it before you immerse it in a mikva (tevila).

TOVELING: UTENSILS: JEWS AND NON-JEWS

Giving a Toveled Utensil to another Jew

If you *toveled* a utensil and gave it to another Jew, the Jew does not have to tovel it again.

Giving a Toveled Utensil to a Non-Jew for Repair

If you give a utensil to a non-Jew for repair or to have a new part added, consult a rabbi.

Toveling: Utensils: Borrowing Back Un-Toveled Utensils from Non-Jew

Do not use utensils bought from a non-Jew or made by non-Jew until you tovel them. Instead, you may give them to a non-Jew and borrow them back, but you may only do this for 24 hours.

WEDDINGS AND MARRIAGE

INTRODUCTION TO WEDDINGS AND MARRIAGE

Introduction to Weddings and Marriage

The purpose of the rabbi at a wedding is to ensure that the extremely detailed wedding halachot, as set out by the Shulchan Aruch, are followed correctly. If not, the wedding might not be kosher.

A Jewish marriage includes: a written document (ketuba); a financial transaction (ring) in front of two kosher witnesses; and physical intimacy.

Witnesses

- The witnesses must be shomer Shabbat Jewish men.
- The bride and groom should confirm verbally that these are the two (and the only two) witnesses that they want.

Ring

- The groom must confirm that he acquired and owns the ring.
- The groom must say Harei at mekudeshet li ... to the bride and place the ring on her (index) finger.

Ketuba

- The ketuba must be kosher.
- Before the chuppa, someone (anyone, including women) must fill in (no safrut is required for this): the Hebrew names of the bride and groom; the date the wedding is taking place; the wedding location (city, etc.); and that a kinyan was made.
- The ketuba must be signed by two kosher witnesses.

PRE-DATING

Cosmetic Surgery

Cosmetic surgery to help get married is permitted.

DATING

Giving Information about Potential Mate

You must tell whatever you know that is relevant about a potential date that someone is considering marrying.

NOTE Since it is for a purpose, there is no issue of lashon ha'ra.

Dating only People You May Marry

You should date only people whom you may marry.

EXAMPLES

- A convert must have had a kosher conversion.
- A cohen may not date divorcees, converts, or a woman both of whose parents converted before she was born.
- The person must not be a mamzeir or child of mamzeirim (offspring of a forbidden union).

NOTE A mamzeir is permitted to marry another mamzeir.

Checking Jewish Lineage

If there may be any question about the Jewish lineage of a bride-to-be or bridegroom, his or her female antecedents should be confirmed as having been Jewish (born of a Jewess OR halachically converted) back to when a shomeret Shabbat woman has been positively identified (or back as far as possible). As a practical matter, three or four generations may be as far back as most Jews can be traced.

Also, make sure that if there was any divorce, that the divorce was kosher, with a *get*.

Checking on Whether the Couple May Marry

The mesader kidushin (organizer of the wedding ceremony) should research whether the couple is permitted to marry. This should be done well in advance of the wedding date.

PRE-WEDDING

Not Seeing Each Other

Some people have a custom for a groom and bride not to see each other for the seven days leading up to their wedding.

Bride and Groom Fast

The bride and groom must not eat or drink any food from 72 minutes before sunrise on the day of their wedding, even if their wedding takes place after sunset on the following Jewish calendar day.

Bride to the Mikva

The bride must go to the mikva before she may have relations with her husband.

Groom to the Mikva

The groom should immerse himself in a mikva on his wedding day. He may immerse in the ocean, but should not be alone while immersing.

Offspring at Parent's Re-Marriage

A child should not attend the wedding of a parent, such as if the parent gets married after divorce, after the death of first spouse, or if never married--or halachically married--before his/her child was born.

WEDDING

WEDDING: HOW MANY MEN

Jewish Wedding: Minimum Number of Men

The minimum number of men at the kidushin part of a wedding is two Jewish males, at least 13 years old (needed as witnesses), plus the groom.

WEDDING: WITNESSES

Jewish Wedding: Witnesses: Four Pairs

A Jewish wedding requires four pairs of witnesses, but the same witnesses may be used for all four parts: tanayim; ketuba; kiddushin; yichud. Each witness must be:

- A shomer-Shabbat, adult male,
- Not related to the bride or groom,
- Not related to each other, and
- Known to be an honest person.

NOTE There is no requirement to have only people who were born into shomer-Shabbat families as witnesses.

NOTE For more on relatives as witnesses, see [Witnesses: Relatives in Jewish Courts](#).

WEDDING: TANAYIM

Tanayim and Acquisition

Tanayim are written; an acquisition (kinyan) is made; and the tanayim are read. The mothers of the bride and groom break a china plate.

WEDDING: KETUBA

Who May Write the Ketuba

The ketuba may be written by anyone, whether male or female, Jew or non-Jew.

Ketuba Process

The ketuba is written before the wedding but is not finished until just before the signing, when one or a few last words are filled in. The ketuba is signed by two kosher witnesses after tanayim.

NOTE The ketuba is read later, under the chuppa.

Meaning of the Ketuba

The ketuba at a wedding is required and the husband obligates himself through the ketuba to support his wife. The ketuba may be the world's oldest document for women's rights!

Financial Responsibility of Husband

The husband, not the wife, has the responsibility of financially supporting the family. This is the halacha and NOT an opinion! That the husband must support his family is explicitly stated in every ketuba.

Safekeeping a Ketuba

A woman must keep her ketuba under her control, but it does not need to be with her or even be in her home. It may be kept with her parents or anywhere else safe. It should not be displayed in public. If she has definitely lost her ketuba (she cannot find it in any place where it should have been), she may not live with her husband unless she has another ketuba written.

WEDDING: UNDER THE CANOPY (CHUPPA)

Bride's Jewelry

A bride may wear other jewelry in addition her wedding ring under the chuppa. It is only a custom of some people not to do so.

Bridegroom's Kittel

A bridegroom is not required to wear a kittel under the chuppa, although many people have that custom.

WEDDING: STEPS OF MESADER KIDUSHIN

The First Blessings

The mesader kidushin (organizer of the wedding ceremony) makes sure that all procedures are done properly. He says the blessing on the cup of wine and fulfills that requirement for both the bride and groom. He says the second blessing and fulfills it for the groom. In both cases, the bride and groom must have the intention that the mesader kidushin is saying those blessings on their behalf. The groom and bride drink some of the wine.

Confirming the Witnesses

The mesader kidushin asks the witnesses if they are related to either the bride or groom or each other. He then asks the bride and groom if they want these and only these witnesses to be their witnesses.

Checking the Ring

The mesader kidushin then takes the ring and asks the groom "Is this your ring? If so, how did you acquire it?" It must have been acquired in accordance with Jewish law. He shows the ring to the witnesses and asks if it is worth at least a pruta. If they say yes, the groom takes the ring and says "Harei at mekudeshet li..." and places the ring on the bride's index finger of her primary hand. The witnesses must hear the groom say "Harei at mekudeshet li..." and must see him place the ring on her hand. The wife should not take the ring off of her index finger until after they leave the chuppa. The couple is now married!

Importance of Ring

The wedding ring given by the groom to his bride is important since it represents his "acquisition" of his bride; after giving the ring, they are married.

Modifying the Ring

The wedding ring may be modified after the wedding, such as for size.

WEDDING: LAST FIVE BLESSINGS

Saying the Blessings

The next set of blessings is said by one or more people. The couple must intend to fulfill their requirements by hearing the blessing on the wine. The groom and bride drink some of the wine.

WEDDING: BREAKING THE GLASS

Break the Glass

A glass is broken in commemoration of the destruction of the Temple.

WEDDING: YICHUD ROOM

Yichud Room

The couple goes to the yichud room. The witnesses must make sure that no one else is inside and that there is only one entrance/exit. The couple is locked in for five minutes. They must eat some food while inside.

WEDDING: FESTIVE MEAL

Timing of Wedding Meal

If both people have been married before, *l'chatchila* the wedding (chuppa) may not start during the day and the meal at night. You must start the meal before sunset or else start the wedding after sunset.

WEDDING CUSTOMS (THESE ARE NOT HALACHOT!)

Wedding Customs: Couple Separates for Seven Days

The couple does not see each other for seven days before the wedding. They may speak on the phone.

Wedding Customs: The Aufruf

On the Shabbat before the wedding, the groom has an aufruf at which he receives an aliya.

Wedding Customs: What the Bride Buys

The bride buys for the groom:

- Talit and kittel,
- Watch, and
- Set of the Talmud.

She also pays for the wedding except for what the groom pays for (see below).

Wedding Customs: What the Groom Buys

The custom is for the groom to pay for the band, photos, video, flowers, liquor, and wine.

NOTE In Eretz Yisrael, it is customary for the bride and groom to split the wedding expenses.

Wedding Customs: Prenuptial Agreement

A prenuptial agreement is permitted but it must state that the ketuba gets settled separately.

Wedding Customs: Groom to Mikva

The groom goes to mikva on the wedding day.

Wedding Customs: Wedding Shomer

The groom and bride each have a guardian (*shomer/shomeret*) with them from daybreak of the wedding day (some grooms have a *shomer* from the aufruf) until they are married.

Wedding Customs: Tanayim

Tanayim are written before the main ceremony and two guests are honored as witnesses. The tanayim are read out loud.

Wedding Customs: Accompanying the Bride and Groom

There are various customs about who accompanies the bride and groom but none are *halachically* required.

Wedding Customs: Chuppa

The chuppa should be under the open sky (via a skylight) or outdoors where practical.

Wedding Customs: Bride Circles Groom

The bride walks seven times around the groom counterclockwise, as seen from above, and stands on the right side of the groom.

Wedding Customs: Baruch HaBa

Someone sings baruch ha'ba... for the groom and brucha ha'ba'ah for the bride.

Wedding Customs: Drinking the Wine

The mesader kidushin does not drink the cup of wine but the bride and groom normally do.

Wedding Customs: Wedding Ring

It is not traditional for the bride to give a ring to the groom, and it is forbidden for the bride to give a ring to the groom at the chuppa.

Wedding Customs: Reading of the Ketuba

After the blessings on the wine have been said and the wine has been drunk, the ketuba is read. This separates the two sets of blessings.

Wedding Customs: Second Cup of Wine

The second cup of wine is given to the groom by the father of the bride and to the bride by the mother of the groom.

SHEVA BRACHOT

Introduction to Sheva Brachot

At the end of the wedding meal, the seven blessings (*sheva brachot*) are said in *birkat ha'mazon*. The final blessing is on wine. This is the only required festive meal after the wedding. Any festive meal on the subsequent six days is optional but, when held, all the blessings are required.

Sheva Brachot: Celebration Period

If the bride and/or groom had never been married before, there are seven days of celebration (don't go to work, no *tachanun*). If both bride and groom were married before, there is one day of *sheva brachot* (in *birkat ha'mazon*) at the meal eaten after the *chuppa*, but three days of celebration (don't go to work, no *tachanun*).

NOTE Neither husband nor wife should go to work; however, if the husband gives his wife permission, she may work.

How Many Present at Sheva Brachot

To be able to say the special blessings after a festive *sheva brachot* meal, there must be present at least:

- 10 Jewish males at least 13 years old, and
- One person (male or female) who was not present at the wedding or at any meals since then with the bride and groom.

Sheva Brachot: Order of Blessings

The order of blessings is the same every time *sheva brachot* are said--except under the *chuppa*, when the first blessing is *borei pri ha'gafen*.

NOTE At all other times, *borei pri ha'gafen* is the final blessing.

NOTE If the blessings are said out of order, it is OK.

Sheva Brachot: What To Eat in order To Bless

A *man* saying any of the seven blessings does not need to have eaten bread at that meal, but he must have eaten enough food (anything except water or salt) to say an after-blessing.

Sheva Brachot: When to Bless

At any meal with bread that was made to honor the bride and groom during the first week of marriage, say the introductory lines each time (*dvei haser...*; the leader says the leader's lines and everyone else says their lines), even if you have two or more such meals in one day.

Sheva Brachot: Who Drinks

1. Under the *chuppa*, the groom and bride drink the wine.
2. At the meals, the *sheva brachot* leader plus the bride and groom drink, and anyone else who wants to drink may do so.

Sheva Brachot: Over Which Cups To Bless

- *Birkat ha'mazon* is made on one cup of wine at *sheva brachot*.
- The first six *sheva brachot* blessings are made on the second cup.

- Borei pri ha'gafen is made on the first cup.

Sheva Brachot: Mixing the Cups

After the blessings have been said:

- Pour some wine from the two cups into a third cup.
- Pour some wine back into the first two cups.
- The bride, groom, and person who made the blessing each drink from a different cup.

NOTE Each cup will contain some wine from each of the original two cups on which the blessings had been made.

FIRST WEEK OF MARRIAGE

Making the Bride Happy

The groom is commanded to make his bride happy for seven days. He may not go to work (unless she wants him to do so). He must be with her and do whatever she wants, even if it goes against his judgment of what is reasonable.

Being Together

Neither the husband nor the wife should be alone for the first seven days after their marriage. If they are apart, they should each be accompanied by someone else. This is a custom and not a halacha.

NOTE There is no requirement for bride and groom to be together all of the time during the seven days after their wedding if they don't want to be together.

FIRST YEAR OF MARRIAGE

Making the Bride Happy for First Year

The husband is required during the first year of marriage to make his wife happy. He should go where she wants, do what she wants, etc., within reason. After the first year of marriage, the couple should work out their differences via compromise from the husband and from the wife.

FAMILY FINANCES

Wife's Assets Brought into Marriage

Property that the wife brings into the marriage can remain hers if she chooses, or she can say her husband may use the item but he will owe her for that amount. It is best to give it into the marriage and she will be owed that same value regardless of passage of time. At the wedding, a gift to the bride will be the bride's; a gift to the bridegroom will be the bridegroom's.

Wife's Earned Assets

A woman who works does not have to give her husband the money. If a woman wants to keep her earnings for herself, she must tell her husband that he should not provide her with food. He is then exempt from feeding her, but he must still provide her with shelter, clothing, medical expenses, jewelry, and makeup (and certain other needs).

POST-MENOPAUSE

Beds after Menopause

A married couple does not need to have separate beds once the wife has passed menopause, but it may still be possible for the wife to become nida, in which case they would have to sleep separately.

DIVORCE

Spouse You Decide To Divorce

You may not have intercourse with a spouse whom you have decided to divorce.

Receiving the Ketuba

At a Jewish divorce, the *ketuba* is given back to the man or destroyed after he has paid the money he owes to his now-ex-wife, as written in the ketuba.

WOMEN (AND GIRLS)

WOMEN: ATTIRE

Women's Dress Code

For women's dress code, see individual listings under ATTIRE:

Introduction to Attire

Attire: Blessings/Torah/Prayer

Attire: Women: Tzni'ut

Attire: Married Women: Head Covering (Kisui Rosh)

WOMEN: BET DIN

Women as Members of Bet Din

Women may not be members of a bet din.

WOMEN: BLESSINGS

WOMEN: BIRKAT HAMAZON

Women: Repeating Birkat HaMazon

For women and repeating birkat ha'mazon, see [Birkat HaMazon: When To Repeat If Forgot Additions](#).

Women: Mezuman

For women's mezuman, see [Birkat HaMazon: Women's Mezuman and Minyan](#).

WOMEN: HAGOMEL

Women: HaGomel

For women and ha'gomel blessing, see [Women and HaGomel](#).

WOMEN: KADDISH

Women: Kaddish

For women and kaddish, see [Kaddish: Who Should Say: Women](#) .

WOMEN: KIDDUSH LEVANA

Women: Kiddush Levana

For women and kiddush levana, see [Kiddush Levana: Women](#).

WOMEN: SAYING BLESSING FOR OTHERS

Women: Saying a Blessing for Someone Else

For women and saying a blessing for someone else, see [Blessings: Saying for Someone Else](#).

WOMEN: SHEHECHEYANU

SheHecheyanu: General Rules

For general rules of [she'hecheyanu](#), see [SheHecheyanu](#).

SheHecheyanu by Women

For items over which especially women say [she'hecheyanu](#), see [Items on Which Women Say SheHecheyanu](#).

WOMEN: HOLIDAYS

WOMEN: JEWISH FESTIVALS: GENERAL RULES

WOMEN: STARTING JEWISH FESTIVALS

Women: Starting Jewish Festivals

For when women start [Jewish festivals](#), or more on women's lighting [Jewish festival](#) candles, see:

[Jewish Festivals: When Women Start: Candle-Lighting or Sunset](#)

[Jewish Festivals: Candles: When To Light](#)

[Jewish Festivals: Candles: Lighting before Blessing](#)

[Jewish Festivals: Mincha Before](#)

WOMEN: JEWISH FESTIVAL KIDDUSH

Women: Who May Make Kiddush

For women's obligation to say or hear [Jewish festival](#) morning [kiddush](#), see [Jewish Festivals: Kiddush: Who May Make](#).

Women: Minimum Prayer before Jewish Festival Kiddush

For women and minimum prayer before eating prior to [Jewish festival kiddush](#), see [Women and Minimum Prayer before Jewish Festival Kiddush](#).

WOMEN: MAKEUP ON JEWISH FESTIVALS

Women: Makeup on Jewish Festivals

For women and applying makeup on [Jewish Festivals](#), see [Jewish Festivals: Makeup](#).

WOMEN: JEWISH FESTIVAL HAVDALA

Women: Jewish Festival Havdala

For women and saying/hearing [Jewish festival havdala](#), see [Baruch HaMavdil Bein Kodesh L'Chol To Do Melacha](#).

WOMEN: PASSOVER

Women: Drinking Wine at Seder

For women and drinking wine at [seder](#), see [Everyone Must Drink at Seder](#).

Women: Leaning at Seder

For women and leaning at the [seder](#), see [Leaning to the Left](#).

WOMEN: ROSH HASHANA

Women: Hearing Shofar

For women and hearing shofar, see [Rosh Hashana: How Many Shofar Blasts To Hear](#).

Women: Blowing Shofar

For women and blowing shofar, see [Woman Blowing Shofar](#).

WOMEN: SUKKOT

Women: Lulav

For Women and Lulav, see [Lulav: Who Should Bless: Women](#).

Women: Sukka

For Women and Sukka, see [Women: Eating Outside the Sukka](#).

WOMEN: YOM KIPPUR

Women: When the Yom Kippur Fast Starts

For women and when the Yom Kippur fast starts, see [Yom Kippur: When To Start](#).

WOMEN: CHOL HAMOED

Women: Cutting Nails on Chol HaMoed

For women and cutting nails on chol ha'moed, see [Chol HaMoed: Cutting Nails](#).

WOMEN: RABBINIC HOLIDAYS

WOMEN: CHANUKA

Women: Chanuka

For women and obligation to light Chanuka candles, see:

[Chanuka: Candles: Obligation for Women To Light](#)

[Chanuka: Candles: Wife May Light for Husband](#)

WOMEN: COMMANDMENTS (MITZVOT)

WOMEN: TIME-BASED POSITIVE COMMANDMENTS (MITZVOT)

WOMEN: TIME-BASED POSITIVE COMMANDMENTS (MITZVOT): EXEMPTIONS

Women: Exemption from Time-Dependent Positive Commandments

Women and girls are generally exempt from time-dependent positive commandments (mitzvot), but they may perform these voluntary mitzvot and if they do, they do say the relevant blessings:

- [Lulav](#)
- [Sukka](#)
- Saying the full [shema](#).

Women and girls may NOT do these time-dependent positive commandments (mitzvot):

- [Kiddush levana](#)

- [Tefilin](#)
- [Tzitzit](#).

WOMEN: TIME-BASED POSITIVE COMMANDMENTS (MITZVOT): OBLIGATIONS

Women: Time-Based Positive Mitzva Obligations

Although women and girls are generally exempt from time-dependent positive commandments ([mitzvot](#)), they may do some [mitzvot](#) for which they are not obligated and it is considered to be virtuous behavior for which they will get a reward. They may say the blessings before each [mitzva](#).

1. These are voluntary [mitzvot](#) that women may do:

- [Lulav](#)
- [Sukka](#)
- Saying the full [shema](#).

2. Women and girls MAY NOT wear [tefilin](#).

3. Women traditionally do not:

- Say [tachanun](#).
- Wear [talit](#) or [tzitzit](#) ([talit katan](#)).
- Study [gemara](#).
- Say [kiddush levana](#) or [birkat ha'chama](#).

But these are not forbidden.

Women: Time-Based Positive Commandments/Mitzvot: Obligations

In addition to prayer obligations (see [Women: Minimal Prayer](#)), women and girls 12 years old and up are required to keep these time-dependent positive commandments, among others:

- Candle-lighting for [Chanuka](#) (see [Chanuka: Candles: Who Should Light](#))
- Candle-lighting for [Shabbat](#), [Jewish festivals](#), [Rosh Hashana](#), and [Yom Kippur](#).
- [Havdala](#) (say or hear) after [Shabbat](#), [Jewish festivals](#), [Rosh Hashana](#), and [Yom Kippur](#).
- [Kiddush](#) (say or hear) on the first night (or first two nights outside [Eretz Yisrael](#)) of every [Jewish festival](#), and also the next morning.
- [Passover](#) (all commandments, including eating [matza](#) at the [Passover seder](#)).

NOTE Because she must eat [matza](#), she must therefore say [birkat ha'mazon](#) afterward (so if a woman omits [ya'ale v'yavo](#) in [birkat ha'mazon](#) at the [seder](#), she must repeat [birkat ha'mazon](#)!).

- [Megila](#) on [Purim](#).
- [Shabbat](#) (For why women must keep time-dependent, positive commandments on [Shabbat](#), see [Introduction to Shabbat](#))
- [Shofar](#) on [Rosh Hashana](#).

NOTE Jewish women universally accepted upon themselves to hear [shofar](#) on [Rosh Hashana](#), but they only need to hear 30 blasts.

- Hearing the reading of Parashat [Zachor](#).

Women: Mayim Achronim

See [Birkat HaMazon: Mayim Achronim](#).

WOMEN: MOURNING

WOMEN: KRI'A

Women: Kri'a

For women and [kri'a](#), see [Women and Kri'a](#).

WOMEN: PUBLIC CONSOLATION (NICHUM AVEILIM)

Women: Public Consolation (Nichum Aveilim)

For women and public consolation ([nichum aveilim](#)), see [Women and Public Consolation after Kabbalat Shabbat](#).

WOMEN: SHOVELING

Women: Shoveling

For women and shoveling at the funeral, see [Who Shovels](#).

WOMEN: SHROUDS

Women: Shrouds

For women and shrouds, see [Shrouds, Hat, Robe](#).

WOMEN: NON-INTIMATE CONTACT AND YICHUD

Women: Non-Intimate Contact/Yichud

For women and non-intimate contact, see [Contact \(Negia\)](#).

For women and being alone with men, see [Yichud](#).

WOMEN: PRAYER

WOMEN: BOWING

Women: Bowing

For women and bowing, see [Bowing: Women](#).

WOMEN: KADDISH

Woman: Kaddish

See [Kaddish: Who Should Say: Women](#).

WOMEN: YA'ALEH V'YAVO

Women: Ya'aleh V'Yavo

If a girl age 12 or up or a woman forgets to say [ya'aleh v'yavo](#) for the [Jewish festival](#) or [Rosh Chodesh amida](#), she must repeat the prayer. She does not repeat [ya'aleh v'yavo](#) in any [birkat ha'mazon](#) except the two [seder](#) nights.

WOMEN: MINIMUM TO PRAY

Women: Minimum to Pray

The minimum amount of prayer that women and girls 12 years old and up must say varies according to several opinions:

- Opinion that [RMH](#) approves of:

- [Birchot ha'shachar](#) (from [al netilat yadain](#)--to [u'maflee la'asot](#))
- [Birchot haTorah](#) (from [la'asok b'divrei Torah](#)--to [notein haTorah](#))
- [Yevarechecha/Eilu divarim she'ein/Eilu divarim she'adam](#)
- [Elohai neshama](#)
- [Asher natan 'sechvi... gomel chasadim tovim l'amo Yisrael](#)
- [Shema](#) (first line of [shema](#) plus [Baruch shem kevod malchuto l'olam va'ed](#))
- If they choose to say the morning [amida](#), they should precede it with [emet, v'yatziv](#) until [ga'al yisrael](#).

- [Ramban](#): Women should say at least the [amida](#) of [shacharit](#) and of [mincha](#).
- Another opinion: Women must say some prayer every day (but it may be any type of prayer, not only the fixed prayer services).
- Another opinion: Women do not need to say the [amida](#) and [emet v'yatziv](#) on [Shabbat](#) and [Jewish festivals](#) (that is, whenever we are not asking for anything).
- Women who have small children who require the mother's constant attention should not say any prayers except for [birchot ha'shachar](#) and [birchot haTorah](#).

For more on women and the [shema](#), see [Women and Shema in Shacharit](#).

WOMEN: ROOM DIVIDER/MECHITZA

Women: Room Divider/Mechitza

For women and room divider/[mechitza](#), see [Where To Pray: Distracting People/Mechitza](#).

WOMEN: SAVING A LIFE (PIKUACH NEFESH)

Women: Saving a Life (Pikuach Nefesh): Driving to Hospital To Give Birth

See [Saving a Life \(Pikuach Nefesh\)](#).

WOMEN: SHABBAT

Women: When Shabbat Starts for Women

For when [Shabbat](#) starts for women, see [Women Start Shabbat: Candle-Lighting or Sunset](#).

Women: When To Light Shabbat Candles

For delaying [Shabbat](#) candle lighting until sunset, see [Shabbat: Candles: When To Light](#).

Women: How Many Shabbat Candles To Light

For how many [Shabbat](#) candles wives should light, see [Shabbat Candles: How Many To Light](#).

Women: Where To Light Shabbat Candles

For where women should light [Shabbat](#) candles, see [Shabbat: Candles: Where To Light](#).

Women: Who Lights Shabbat Candles

For priority order of family members to light [Shabbat](#) candles, see [Shabbat: Candles: Who Lights](#).

Women: How To Bless over Shabbat Candles

For questions about the [Shabbat](#) candle lighting blessing, see [Shabbat: Candles: How To Do Blessing: Women](#).

Women: When To Make Kiddush after Candle Lighting

For when women can make kiddush after Friday night candle lighting, see Shabbat: Candles: When To Light.

Women: Making Kiddush

For women's obligation to make or hear Shabbat kiddush, see Shabbat: Kiddush: Who May Make.

Women: Minimum Prayer before Saying Shabbat Kiddush

For women's minimum obligation to pray before saying Shabbat morning kiddush and eating, see Women and Minimum Prayer before Saying Shabbat Kiddush.

Women: Shabbat and Makeup

For women and makeup on Shabbat, see Shabbat: Makeup.

WOMEN: SHAVING

Women: Shaving

For women and shaving, see

Women and Razor Blades

When Haircuts and Shaving Are Forbidden

WOMEN: SINGING

Women: Singing with Men or When Men Present

Rabbi Heinemann's view is that women should not sing zmirot, Hallel, songs in the Hagada, and other prayers with men or when men are present, but he notes that there are other major opinions that say it is permitted.

Women: Humming

A girl or woman may hum in the presence of men and this does not violate the prohibition against singing in front of men (kol isha).

WOMEN: SOFER

Women: Sofer

For Women and Sofer, see Sofer: Woman.

WOMEN: STANDING FOR ELDERLY

Women: Standing for Elderly

For women and standing for the elderly, see Standing for the Elderly.

WOMEN: STUDY

WHAT TO TEACH GIRLS

What To Teach Girls

Girls should be taught all halachot relevant to girls and women, including blessings, and should be taught whatever will increase their awe of Hashem (yir'at shamayim).

WOMEN: TORAH SCROLL

Women Reading from Torah Scroll

Women may read from the Torah scroll when no men are around. They may say only the first blessing over the Torah and only if they forgot to say that blessing in the morning. They may not say the second blessing.

Women Dancing with Torah Scroll

Women should not dance with a Torah scroll.

WOMEN: WHAT TO STUDY

Minimum Torah Study for Women

For women and minimum requirements for Torah study, see [Introduction to Torah Study](#).

Women: Torah or Tehillim

If a woman can either study Torah or say Tehilim (Psalms; recited as prayers), the priority is for her to study any halachot that she needs to observe before saying Tehilim or other prayers.

NOTE However, for the purposes of prayer, saying Tehilim is more important than “saying” (or reading) other parts of Tanach.

Women: Studying Talmud

Women are not prohibited from learning Talmud, but men should not teach them.

NOTE Since women are not required to study Talmud, they do not make a siyum if they complete studying any part.

Women: Blessings over Torah

Women are required to say the blessings over the Torah (birchot haTorah) before studying Torah or before praying.

WOMEN: WITNESSES

Women: Witnesses

For women and witnesses, see [Witnesses: Women in Jewish Courts](#).

MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

ABORTION

Abortion

Abortion is normally not permitted, except:

- To save the mother's life, or
- Sometimes when necessary for the health of the mother (but that can also be her mental health-- consult a rabbi), or
- When a fetus cannot be born alive.

Even Down's syndrome and other developmental or genetic problems may not be enough to justify abortion, but an expert rabbi should be consulted since this is a very complicated area.

ANGELS

Asking Angels for Help

You may ask angels to intercede, as is done in Shalom Aleichem, in which people ask the angels to ask God for the help that they want. But you may not ask angels to help you directly.

BAR MITZVA

Bar Mitzva and Adar 2 Birthday

If a boy born in Adar 2 will be bar mitzva in a year with only one Adar, his bar mitzva is in Adar, not in Nisan. If a boy born in Adar 1 will be 13 years old in a year with two Adars, his bar mitzva will be in Adar 2.

BEDROOM LIGHT

Bedroom Light

A bedroom should have enough light to see a person if you sleep alone. Any detectable light is sufficient.

BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

Owning Business that Violates Torah Law

Owning a business that has any violations of Torah laws is forbidden.

EXAMPLES A Jew may NOT:

- Own a non-kosher restaurant that sells food containing meat and milk that have been cooked together.
- Own or operate a business that is open on Shabbat or Jewish festivals.

NOTE You may sell your business to a non-Jew for Shabbat and Jewish festivals, but consult a rabbi for details.

Stockholder in Business that Violates Torah Law

You may be a minority owner or shareholder in a business that violates Torah law, but not if the majority of the business is owned by Jews (even if they are not shomer Shabbat Jews). Consult a rabbi for details and exceptions.

CHALLA SEPARATION

When To Separate Challa (Hafrashat Challa)

You must separate a small portion of dough for the cohanim/priests whenever you make bread, rolls, or pizza of the Five Grains in certain quantities. This separated portion is called "challa."

NOTE Since there is no Temple at present, we burn the portion of dough.

The requirement to separate challa applies to dough baked at home or commercially (such as a pizza shop), whether for eating on weekdays or for Shabbat/Jewish festivals. For more details, see Challa.

CHAZAKA/THREE TIMES

CHAZAKA/THREE TIMES

Any action that is done three times consecutively is assumed to be a promise (neder)/permanent habit unless you determine ahead of time that it should not be (you do not need to say so out loud, just think it).

NOTE The principle that doing something three times is considered a neder only applies to a good custom ("minhag tov") or to a mitzva.

CONTRACEPTION

Contraception

Contraception is generally not permitted for men (contraceptives, vasectomy, etc.); for women, consult a rabbi.

CONVERTS

Non-Jew Must Violate Shabbat

A non-Jew is not permitted to observe Shabbat completely. He or she must do at least one violation. This is relevant for people who are in the process of converting to Judaism.

Minor Child Convert: Status

A minor child who has converted to Judaism is considered to be Jewish even though he or she is permitted to decline to stay Jewish once reaching 12 (for girls) or 13 (for boys) years old. He or she may handle uncooked wine once he/she has converted.

Minor Child: How To Convert

A minor child is converted to Judaism the same way as an adult: immersion into a mikva and, for a boy, circumcision (which must be done before immersion in a mikva).

NOTE A child may not be converted against the will of the child's parent or guardian.

Bet Din

A bet din (religious Jewish men constituting a court of Jewish law) is needed for a conversion at the mikva and also for a brit mila for the purpose of conversion.

DAY

Beginning of Jewish Day

For all practical purposes, the Jewish day always starts at or near sunset (Yom Kippur starts slightly before sunset).

Halachic Day

A *halachic* "day" is usually from sunset of one day to nightfall of the subsequent day regarding: cutting nails; kaddish, etc.

DOORMAT

Shalom Doormat

You should not own nor step on a doormat that says "*Shalom*."

REASON This is one of God's names.

FORBIDDEN TO BENEFIT FROM (ASUR B'HANA'A)

What Jews May Not Benefit From

Jews are forbidden from benefiting (asur b'hana'a) in any way from:

- Bechor (first-born male) of a Jewish-owned goat, sheep, or cow
- Chametz on *Passover*
- Idols
- Kilei ha'kerem
- Mixtures of milk cooked with meat
- Orla
- Yayin nesech and possibly stam yeinam.

FORGETFULNESS

End of Bread Loaf and Forgetfulness

Eating the end of a loaf of bread is permissible and does not promote forgetfulness.

Using Clothing as Pillow and Forgetfulness

You may use clothing as a pillow even though it may cause forgetfulness.

GOOD ADVICE

Throwing Out Bread

Bread should never be thrown into trash or garbage. If you have leftover bread (or matza), crumble it and wash it down the sink. This is not a halacha, it is considered to be good advice. You may also put it next to your compost pile or on top of paper on top of your compost pile.

GRAMMAR/PRONUNCIATION

GRAMMAR

VaYanuchu Vah

Say *va'yanuchu* “*vah*” in the Shabbat amida for all three prayer services plus musaf. Some prayer books have “*vah*” (in her) at night, “*voh*” (in him) for Saturday morning, and “*vam*” (in them) for Saturday afternoon.

PRONUNCIATION

Elo-ah

Pronounce God's name (spelled *aleph, lamed, vav, heh*) as *Elo-ah*, not *Elo-ha*.

HaMagbi-ah

The person who lifts up the Torah after it is read is called ha'magbi-ah, not *ha'magbi-hah*.

Hodo

When returning the Torah to the ark in the synagogue, the word is *hodo* (His glory), not *ho-DOO* (praise Him).

Yissaschar/Yissachar

When reading the Torah, do not pronounce the name *Yissachar* as it is spelled (*Yissaschar*).

NOTE Some people do read it as spelled but only the first time it appears in the Torah—that is, when he was born.

HAIRCUTS/SHAVING

Shaving the Five Corners of the Beard

Men are forbidden from shaving the five corners of their beards with a razor blade, but since there are many opinions of what constitutes the five corners, razors may not be used at all when shaving.

NOTE A razor is defined as a blade that can cut without having an opposing surface against which to cut.

Women and Razor Blades

Women may shave any parts of their bodies using razor blades.

When Haircuts and Shaving Are Forbidden

Here are the times when men and women are forbidden to get haircuts and men are forbidden to shave, including their necks (from most severe restrictions to least):

Most Severe Restrictions

- Mourner for parents (no shaving for the first 30 days and no haircut until three months after his or her previous haircut).

NOTE If mourning for other relatives, you may get a haircut after 30 days.

- From Saturday night before Tish'a B'Av until the evening after Tish'a B'Av.
- Chol ha'moed.

Next Most-Severe Restrictions

Shiv'asar B'Tamuz (17th of Tamuz) until the evening after the Shabbat preceding Tish'a B'Av.

Least-Severe Restrictions

During 33 of the 49 days of counting the *omer* (*sefirat ha'omer*); that is, either from the second day of *Passover* until *Lag Ba'Omer* (33rd day of the *omer*) OR from *Rosh Chodesh Iyar* until the day before *Shavuot*, according to your custom.

NOTE Conditions that may allow leniency are if you might lose your job or otherwise lose a large sum of money.

Rabbis and Beards

It is traditional for *rabbis* to grow beards but it is not required.

Cutting Boys' Hair at Age Three

Cutting boys' hair at three years old is a custom (mainly originated through Chasidim) that some people have and is not a *halacha*.

IDOLATRY

Saying the Names of Gods of Other Religions

You may not speak the names of the gods of other religions, in any language that is commonly used in the country in which you are currently.

NOTE This only applies to gods that are still being worshiped at the present time (so this would exclude ancient Greek and Roman gods unless people are still praying to them in your country!).

IMAGES

Photographs of Sun or Moon

You may not take a photograph of the sun or the moon by itself and for the purpose of having an image of it, but you are not forbidden from having them in a photograph of another subject.

Photographs, Diagrams, and Worship Symbols

You may print photographs or diagrams of gods, items used for worship, or symbols used in those religions, as long as the gods are no longer worshiped (Egyptian gods, the ankh, etc.)

JEWISH EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION TO JEWISH EDUCATION

Introduction to Education

Jewish parents are required to give their children a Jewish education. Historically, most children learned what to do by observing their parents in their homes. Now, much Jewish education takes place in schools.

JEWISH EDUCATION: GIL CHINUCH

What Is Gil Chinuch

Age of Jewish education (*gil chinuch*) is when a child is old enough to understand the concept behind whatever *halacha* or observance is being taught (and not just what to say or what to do).

When Is Gil Chinuch

The age of Jewish education (*gil chinuch*) is more or less 6 years old but may vary with the intelligence, personality, and maturity of the child and with the particular *halachic* principle involved.

Who Determines Gil Chinuch

Whoever is teaching is permitted to judge what the child might understand. *RMH* does not approve of teaching children before they can understand. The only exception is that as soon as children start to speak, they should be taught the first sentence of the *shema* and "*Torah tziva lanu Moshe...*".

JEWISH OUTLOOK

Personal Statement of Why Something Happened

Someone's statement of why they merited something is just their opinion and may not be the true reason.

JEWISH SPIRITUALITY

Definition of Jewish Spirituality

"Jewish Spirituality" means an awareness of God's presence.

LAND OF ISRAEL (ERETZ YISRAEL)

Mitzva To Live in Eretz Yisrael

It is a mitzva to live in Eretz Yisrael but it is not required.

Non-Jews Living in Eretz Yisrael

Non-Jews are not prohibited from living in Eretz Yisrael as long they do not pray to idols.

Non-Jews Owning Land in Eretz Yisrael

A non-Jew may own land in Eretz Yisrael. A Jew may not take the land away from the non-Jew, but a Jew may purchase land in Eretz Yisrael from a non-Jew.

Jew Selling Land in Eretz Yisrael to a Non-Jew

A Jew may not sell land in Eretz Yisrael to a non-Jew, under normal conditions.

Leaving Eretz Yisrael

If you live permanently in Eretz Yisrael, you may leave permanently in order to:

- Get married;
- Earn a living; or
- Study Torah.

You may leave for vacations or for short-term trips for enjoyment.

MARI'T AYIN

Mari't Ayin General Rules

See Appearing To Not Uphold the Torah (Mar'it Ayin).

Eating Kosher at a Non-Kosher Event

You may eat a kosher catered meal at an otherwise non-kosher event as long as:

- Your food is obviously different from the non-kosher food, and
- You have kosher dishes and utensils to use.

Your food must be separate from the non-kosher food.

REASON

To avoid mar'it ayin--the appearance of doing something improper.

Riding with Non-Jewish Driver on Shabbat

See Shabbat: Riding with Non-Jewish Driver.

MEAL CELEBRATING COMMANDMENT (SE'UDAT MITZVA)

Purpose of Se'udat Mitzva

The purpose of a se'udat mitzva is to honor the mitzva.

MEDIA

TV Shows, Movies, and Three Cardinal Sins

If you want to watch TV or movies (ask a rabbi whether it is permissible at all), you may not watch TV shows or movies that portray any of the three cardinal sins:

- Murder;
- Idol worship;
- Giloy arayot

NOTE This applies only to genuine murders, idol worship, and forbidden relationships: not to acting.

MEKUBAL

Whom To Ask for Advice

You may ask a mekubal (someone well-versed in the spiritual world) or a Torah scholar for advice. The mekubal must be known as a genuine mekubal.

NAMES

Jewish or Secular Name

Whatever name(s) a person is called by is his or her name for purposes of Jewish law, even if it is a secular name. So, even if you have a Hebrew name but you are commonly called by your English (or other language) name, your English name is what is used for halachic purposes such as marriage or divorce. If you are commonly called by both your Hebrew and English names, they are both valid, but the Hebrew name takes precedence.

NON-JEWISH HOLIDAYS

Taking Off Work on Other Holidays

You may take off from work on national holidays and even on non-Jewish holidays, as long as you don't celebrate the non-Jewish religious holidays.

NON-JEWISH PRAYER PLACES

INTRODUCTION TO NON-JEWISH PRAYER PLACES

Introduction to Non-Jewish Prayer Places

It is forbidden to enter into places of idol worship, such as a Buddhist or other temple of eastern religions.

ENTERING A CHURCH

Entering Church Not Dedicated to Prayer

You may enter parts of a church (meeting room, social hall, cemetery, etc.) or monastery as long as they are not dedicated for prayer.

Entering Church Sanctuary No Longer Used for Prayer

You may enter a church sanctuary that is no longer used for prayer.

Entering Dual-Use Church

If a church is used only infrequently for prayer services, a Jew may enter the church at other times but not during prayer services.

EXAMPLE You may enter the Sistine Chapel, in Vatican City.

REASON The Sistine Chapel was built as a church and even though it is sometimes used as a church, it is primarily an art museum.

Standing in Church Doorway

You may stand in the doorway of a church as long as:

- The doorway is at least 7 feet away from the sanctuary, and
- You do not enter a sanctuary used for prayer services.

Standing in Church Shadow

You may stand in the shadow of a church.

Deriving Benefit from Church Sanctuary

You may not derive any benefit from a church sanctuary.

Buying from Church or Salvation Army

You may buy goods from a church, Salvation army, etc.

ENTERING A MOSQUE

Entering a Mosque

You may enter a mosque.

PRAYING IN NON-DENOMINATIONAL CHAPEL

Praying in a Non-Denominational Chapel

A room that is set aside for prayer by any religion, such as those at airports, may be used by Jews for prayer as long as there are no symbols of any religion inside the room, such as a cross or statues.

ORGAN DONOR

Care in Donating Organ

Organ donation is, in principle, a good thing to do, but some internal organs might be removed when a person is only legally (but not halachically or clinically) dead, so great care must be used!

Owner of Organs of Dead Body

A dead body belongs to the heirs, such as regarding organ donation after death.

PETS

Forbidden Pets

No animals are forbidden as pets except animals that are dangerous and pigs (which were a special prohibition).

Pets as Waste of Money

Having a pet is not considered wasting money since you get enjoyment, protection, or other value from it.

Reason To Not Own Pets

You may own pets but it is not customary unless they are needed for protection since you might violate a Torah prohibition of eating before you have fed them.

When You May Eat Before Your Pet Eats

You must be very careful to feed your animals every day before you eat (otherwise you are violating a Torah commandment). If your animal only eats late in the day, you may eat before that.

Pet Food If Forbidden by Torah

You may not feed your pet anything that Torah law says you may not benefit from, such as food containing meat and milk that have been cooked together.

Pet Medicine on Shabbat and Jewish Festivals

Pets may be given medicine on Shabbat and Jewish festivals.

PRECEDENCE: RIGHT SIDE

When Right Side Takes Precedence

In general, the right side is given priority in our actions. This is considered to be proper behavior and not just good advice; however, it is a custom, not a halacha.

EXAMPLES

- A talmid chacham walks on the right of another person. (If there are two or more other people, the talmid chacham walks in the middle of the others);
- Put on your right shirtsleeve, sock, or shoe first (but tie your left shoe before your right shoe);
- Hold the lulav in your right hand;
- Wash your right hand first.

NOTE In all cases, if you reversed these, or if it your custom to reverse them, there is no problem.

NOTE Left-handed men must put tefilin on their right arm. For other practices, left-handed people should consult a rabbi.

PROHIBITED RELATIONSHIPS (GILOY ARAYOT)

Prohibited Relationships (Giloy Arayot)

Giloy arayot does not refer just to adulterous relationships. It applies to any of the prohibited relationships listed in Leviticus/Vayikra 18:6-23.

PURPOSELESS DESTRUCTION (BAL TASHCHIT)

PURPOSELESS DESTRUCTION (Bal Tashchit)

Bal Tashchit May Override Custom

You may not destroy things in the world for no purpose. You may not waste anything (bal tashchit) that has a use, but you may use it for a purpose. Bal tashchit overrides customs and suggestions of what are good behaviors or actions.

EXAMPLE If you kept food under your bed when you slept, although there is a problem with ru'ach ra'a, you should eat the food, give the food to a non-Jew, or somehow use the food, but not throw it away.

Killing Creatures that Harm

You may kill any animal, bird, or other living creature that bothers, injures, or endangers people or destroys property (as long as it is legal by the laws of the local country or area). This includes animals that eat your

food or produce.

REDEMPTION OF FIRST-BORN SON (PIDYON HABEIN)

INTRODUCTION TO PIDYON HABEIN

Introduction to Pidyon HaBein

A Jewish mother's first-born male child must be "redeemed" by giving money to a cohen if the below criteria apply. Pidyon ha'bein is a mitzva for the father of the boy. Anyone may do the actual redemption (including a woman) as long as the father appoints him or her as his emissary to do so.

NOTE If the father has not done the pidyon, the boy redeems himself when he reaches 13 years old.

THREE CRITERIA FOR PIDYON HABEIN

Three Criteria for Pidyon HaBein

There are three criteria for Pidyon HaBein:

1. First child born of a mother must be male.

NOTE If a woman miscarries a fetus that has already developed limbs, any male child born after that is not considered a first-born male (bechor) and no pidyon is done.

2. Boy must not have been born by caesarean section.

NOTE A boy who was born normally after his brother was born via caesarean section is NOT a bechor.

3. Mother may not be the daughter of a cohen or levi (priestly family or assistants) and the father may not be a cohen or levi.

HOW TO DO PIDYON HABEIN

How To Do Pidyon HaBein

To do Pidyon Ha'Bein:

- Pidyon ha'bein is done at least 30 days after the boy was born.
- The boy's father gives six genuine American silver dollars to any cohen. If there is no father, consult a rabbi.
- The boy's father says the blessing al pidyon ha'bein and she'hecheyanu.

NOTE If the boy redeems himself, consult a rabbi about the blessing.

REMEMBERING AMALEIK

Remembering Amaleik

All Jews, both men and women, must fulfill the commandment to remember what Amaleik did to the Israelites. The paragraph about that episode, called Parashat Zachor (found in Parashat Ki Teitzei: Deuteronomy/Devarim 25:17-19) is read on the Shabbat morning before Purim as a law established by Chazal (takana). The commandment is fulfilled whenever that episode in the Torah is read, even privately and at home, but there is special value in hearing it read in a synagogue on that Shabbat preceding Purim.

SAYING "GOD BLESS YOU"

Sneezing Sayings

It is customary to say "God bless you" in English (or the equivalent in other languages) when someone sneezes.

SENDING AWAY MOTHER BIRD (SHILU'ACH HAKEIN)

Declaration of Ownerlessness for Shilu'ach HaKein

For shilu'ach ha'kein, the bird, eggs, and nest must be wild or declared ownerless (hefkeir) with three adult, Jewish, male witnesses.

Shilu'ach HaKein for Female Birds

Shilu'ach ha'kein only applies to the female birds of kosher species (so, with doves, this mitzva may only be done at night because the male doves do the nesting during the daytime).

SPIRITUAL EXCISION (KAREIT)

Positive Commandments and Kareit

The only positive commandments punished by spiritual excision (kareit) are not doing a brit mila and not bringing the *Passover* offering.

USING GOD'S NAME IN VAIN

INTRODUCTION TO USING GOD'S NAME IN VAIN

Introduction to Using God's Name in Vain

You may use God's correct names and not the defective version (Hashem, Adoshem, Elokim...) whenever you are teaching, even if you are only quoting a partial pasuk. This is the halacha, even though many people have the custom of using only the defective versions.

USING GOD'S NAME IN VAIN: SPEAKING

Blessings and Using God's Name in Vain

You may not use God's name unless there is a positive purpose. Anyone may say any of God's names anytime when studying Torah, even a girl or woman who is reading the Torah with cantillation/trop where she might need to repeat God's name or other words in a line/pasuk and thereby not say the entire pasuk as it is written.

It is permissible to use God's name (and not an altered name such as "Keil" or "Elokim") in these cases:

- When reciting a sentence or phrase from the Torah.
- For any type of teaching of Torah, blessings, and prayers to children up to bar/bat mitzva age.
- In Shabbat songs/zmirot.

NOTE When singing zmirot on Shabbat, you should use God's correct name, since zmirot are a form of prayer.

USING GOD'S NAME IN VAIN: WRITING

Spelling God's Name Defectively

You may write God's name in any language. But you may not physically erase or throw it away, so write it defectively (for example, "G-d") to avoid future problems.

Erasing God's Name: Physical Media

You may not erase a name of God that is written in chalk or other concrete but non-permanent substance (and certainly not if written in a permanent substance).

However, you can ask a non-Jew to erase it using a non-conventional method (shinu'i); for example, he may pour water above the name so that when the water runs across the letters, they will be dissolved.

Erasing God's Name: Photo or Photocopy

You may not throw away even a photo or photocopy of one of God's names; it must be put into sheimot. You should be especially careful with children's school papers and homework!

Erasing God's Name: Electronic Media

You may delete any non-permanent form of God's names, such as in e-mails, but you may not destroy printed versions, including printed versions of www.practicalhalacha.com, with God's names.

TATTOOS

Tattoos and Cemeteries

Tattoos are not permissible. However, if someone has a tattoo, it will not preclude him or her from being buried in a Jewish cemetery.

TEMPLE (ZEICHER L'CHURBAN)

Leaving Part of House Unfinished

It is no longer customary to leave part of a house unfinished (as a remembrance of the Jerusalem Temple's destruction) and it is not necessary to wreck part of a completed house.

Tearing (Kri'a) on Seeing Temple Ruins

You must tear four vertical inches at the neck of your shirt (and jacket, too, if you wear one) when seeing the ruins of the Temple in Jerusalem for the first time in more than 30 days. You do not need to be close by; do kri'a even if you see the mosques that are on top of the Temple mount.

NOTE A woman should not tear her garment if it would result in her being immodestly exposed in public.
Don't tear your garment on Shabbat, Jewish festivals, chol ha'moed, Rosh Hashana, and Yom Kippur.
Do tear even on the afternoons before Shabbat and Jewish festivals.

TORAH STUDY

Introduction to Torah Study

Studying Torah is a basic requirement for all Jews and such study is considered to be a prestigious commandment (Torah study is as important as doing all the other mitzvot: talmud Torah k'negged kulam). Setting time for Torah study (k'viat zman l'Torah) means that we show how important Torah study is by setting a specific time each day and a specific duration for such study.

But all commandments that you must do (mitzvot aseh) take precedence over studying Torah. That is, you may NOT ignore the need to do another positive commandment because you are studying!

Minimum Required Torah Study

The minimum requirements for Jews to learn:

- Men: All parts of the Torah plus whatever halacha is relevant for them.

NOTE The most important subjects for men to study are whatever is practical for them in their lives

- Women: All halachot relevant for them, and hashkafa.

Studying Torah

All Jews must study Torah “lishma” (studying for the sake of understanding the Torah, just because we are commanded to do so). If you are studying in order to teach, to get honor, or any other reason, it is not lishma.

Reading Weekly Torah Portion

Read the weekly Torah portion (parasha) twice each week and Targum (or commentary) once each week.

Learning Gemara

If you can memorize the gemara you are learning, you do not need to use the printed book.

Torah at Meals

Some Torah should be discussed at every meal.

Torah, Prayers, and Bad Smell

Do not say blessings or prayers or study holy subjects (limudei kodesh) if there is a bad smell.

Siyum

A siyum can be held anytime a book of Torah or Talmud or any other holy book (sefer kodesh) has been studied for a long time; three months or longer is a good guideline. Simply reading through a book does not qualify; you must study it and understand it.

NOTE Originally, the intent was for a volume (masechta) of Talmud or a division (sefer) of the Mishna.

TRAITS (MIDOT)

Gadol

A person may reach the “gadol” level through persistence in study or through brilliance but usually it requires both.

TWINING FINGERS

Twining Fingers with Spouse

You may intertwine your fingers with those of your spouse, even though there is a custom not to intertwine the fingers of both of your own hands.

WALKING BETWEEN PEOPLE

Walking between Standing People

It is not recommended for a man to walk between two standing women or for a woman to walk between two standing men, but either gender may walk along with two or more people of the opposite gender if all are walking.

NOTE If anyone is holding a book or any intervening object, there is no problem with walking between the other people.

MEASUREMENTS & QUANTITIES

PRAYER TIMES

Introduction to Prayer Times/Zmanim

To calculate prayer times (zmanim), divide the total hours of daylight (from sunrise to sunset) by 12. This gives the local “hour” length, called halachic hour (sha'a zmanit).

Individual Prayer Times

Plag HaMincha: 1 1/4 halachic hours before sunset until sunset.

NOTE Plag ha'mincha is usually calculated from sunrise to sunset. If necessary, an alternative calculation may be used from dawn to dark, which results in plag ha'mincha's being somewhat later.

Mincha Gedola: 1/2 hour after halachic midday until 2 1/2 halachic hours before sunset.

Mincha Ketana: 2 1/2 halachic hours before sunset until sunset.

Tzeit HaKochavim: 36 to 72 minutes after sunset, depending on the opinion, purpose, and geographical location.

LENGTH/OBJECTS

Length/Objects

1 Tefach = 4 fingers' width = 3 1/2" (8 cm) to 4" (10 cm)

Lavud = 3 Tefachim = 10 1/2" (27 cm) to 12" (30 cm)

1 Ama = 6 Tefachim = 21 1/4" (54 cm) to 24 1/2" (63 cm) (depending on the application)

10 Tefachim = 40" (1 m) (for Shabbat border)

DISTANCE

Distance

1 Mil = 0.7 miles (1.2 km) = 2000 amot

4 Milin = 1 parsa

1 Parsa = 4 mil = 2.8 miles (4.5 km)

Dalet Amot (4 cubits) = about 7 feet—minimum, 7 feet, 1 inch" (2.2 m); maximum, 8 feet (2.4 m)—but an entire dwelling may be considered your personal (halachic) dalet amot.

VOLUME/SOLID

Volume/Solid

K'Zayit

K'zayit is variously defined as being the volume of 1/3, 1/2, or 1 whole egg; 0.6 - 1.9 fl. oz. (18-56 ml), depending on the application.

NOTE For d'oraita requirements such as seder, we are stringent (machmir) and use the larger amount of 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml). For d'rabanan rules, we are more lenient and use only 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup).

- K'zayit for Seder Matza and Afikoman: 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of matza.
- K'zayit for Bracha Achrona and Birkat HaMazon: 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of solid food.

Beitza, K'Beitza

Beitza, K'Beitza = 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml); an egg size by definition.

NOTE For an etrog, which must be at least 1 egg volume, today we use a minimum of 2 egg volumes.

VOLUME/LIQUID

Volume/Liquid

1 Revi'it = Usually 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml); but 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) for:

- Any food requiring bracha achrona.
- The four cups of wine at the seder.
- Kiddush for Shabbat and Jewish festival nights.

1 Log = Volume of 6 eggs = 4 Revi'ot (a revi'it is 1/4 of a log)

1 Kab = 4 Login

1 Se'ah = 6 Kabin

40 Se'ah = Volume equivalent to 3 cubes, 24 1/2" (61 cm) on each side; minimum requirement for mikva = about 192 gallons/750 liters

1 fl. oz. = 1.77 cu. inch (about the size of a golf ball)

MONETARY VALUE

Monetary Value

Shava Pruta: Value of a pruta coin; value of 1/2 a barley grain's volume in silver.

NOTE Shava pruta signifies the smallest usable amount of money. Since not much can be bought for 1 cent (or less!), a dime is about the value we should use as a minimum.