

PREPARING FOR SHABBOS PROPERLY

by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

Shulchan Aruch cites challah-baking for Shabbos and Yom Tov as a mitzvah[1] and a worthy practice "that should not be abandoned." [2] Indeed, it is a time-honored custom for women to bake challah loaves for Shabbos and Yom Tov, both because it enhances kavod Shabbos and kavod Yom Tov[3] and because it is an opportunity for them - by fulfilling the mitzvah of hafrashas challah - to set aright Chavah's sin on the first erev Shabbos of Creation[4]. For this reason, it is halachically preferable that a woman be the one who separates the challah rather than a man[5].

But in order to fulfill the mitzvah of hafrashas challah and recite the blessing over the mitzvah, the batter must contain at least sixteen cups (over four pounds) of flour[6]. [A batter which contains less than ten cups (approximately two-and-a-half to three pounds) of flour is completely exempt from challah separation, while a batter which contains more than ten cups but fewer than sixteen cups of flour(7) requires separation of challah, but no blessing is recited.]

The poskim debate whether hafrashas challah is required for a batter that contains sixteen or more cups of flour, but the batter is divided into two (or more) parts - half is baked immediately and the other half is frozen, to be baked at a later time. Many women prefer this arrangement since it allows them to prepare a large enough quantity of dough to allow for hafrashas challah, while still being able to bake fresh challah every erev Shabbos for their household. This arrangement, however, is controversial: Some poskim are of the opinion that hafrashas challah is performed only if the entire batter [of 16 cups] is baked at one time, but if part of the dough is frozen for baking at a later date, then the entire dough is exempt from hafrashas challah altogether[8]. Many other poskim, though, disagree and permit hafrashas challah from a divided dough, as long as the entire dough is going to be baked by one person and not divided among several people[9]. Due to this dispute, Rav S.Z. Auerbach ruled that challah should be taken but the blessing not be recited[10].

Question: Nowadays when almost every home has a washing machine and dryer, does Ezra's takanah of not doing laundry on Friday still apply?

Discussion: Contemporary poskim debate whether or not Ezra's takanah of not doing laundry on Friday is applicable nowadays as well, since doing laundry today is not nearly as time consuming or strenuous as it was in earlier times. Some argue that regardless of the change in circumstances, the idea behind the takanah was to reserve the precious hours of erev Shabbos for the immediate Shabbos needs that cannot be attended to earlier in the week. Since laundry can be done earlier in the week[11], no laundry should be done on Friday. According to this opinion, even if the laundry is

being done by a non-Jewish maid, it should still not be done on Friday[12]. Most other poskim, however, argue that it all depends on the time factor, and if one can find the time to do laundry while also properly preparing for Shabbos, he may do so even l'chatchilah[13]. Practically speaking, while it is preferable and praiseworthy to do the laundry before Friday[14] (especially in the short winter months), it is not a must. Certainly, one who failed to do his laundry before Friday for whatever reason is permitted to do laundry on Friday[15].

Implied in Ezra's takanah against doing laundry in Friday is the understanding that one should wear freshly laundered clothing in honor of Shabbos. Thus Mishnah Berurah rules that one should not wear the same garment a number of Shabbosos in a row without laundering it, so as to not violate Ezra's takanah. Obviously, Mishnah Berurah is referring to garments such as a shirt or undergarments which become soiled or sweaty when worn. Suits or pants which can be worn repeatedly without becoming dirty are not required to be cleaned on a weekly basis.

Question: Is one allowed to schedule non-emergency surgery for the latter part of the week, since one might need to desecrate the Shabbos during the post-operative period?

Discussion: While this issue is not raised explicitly in Shulchan Aruch, some contemporary poskim base their ruling on this question on the principle established in O.C. 248 concerning embarking on a sea voyage before Shabbos: In the olden times, it was permitted to embark upon a sea voyage in the beginning of the week, even though it was likely that by the time Shabbos arrived one would find himself in a "dangerous" (pikuach nefesh) situation and be forced to desecrate the Shabbos in order to save his life[16]. From Wednesday[17] onward, however, it was forbidden to set sail. This is because the three days before Shabbos are associated with the coming Shabbos; during those days one must avoid any situation that could cause him to desecrate the coming Shabbos. Setting sail within these days is, therefore, like setting oneself up for Shabbos desecration. If, however, one was travelling for the purpose of performing a mitzvah, such as visiting Eretz Yisrael, it was permitted to begin travelling even at the end of the week, even if in all likelihood a pikuach nefesh situation would arise and chillul Shabbos would result from it.

Based on this Halachah, some poskim infer that from Wednesday onward, one should not engage in any activity that will result in a situation of pikuach nefesh and will require chillul Shabbos to save one's life. Whenever possible, therefore, a non-emergency procedure that could possibly result in chillul Shabbos during the recuperation or post-operative period should not be scheduled from Wednesday until Friday of any given week. Still, if the doctor most skilled at the procedure is available only at the end of the week, or if the patient is in pain and does not wish to delay the procedure, it is permitted to schedule the procedure even at the end of the week[18].

In the event that, contrary to Halachah, one underwent a procedure at the end of the week and now finds himself in a state of pikuach nefesh, he is treated like any other person whose life is in danger and may do whatever is necessary to save his life[19].

Even if the procedure in question will not necessarily cause chillul Shabbos during the recuperation period, it is still recommended to schedule all elective surgeries and procedures for the beginning of the week whenever possible. This is based on the view of the Rif and Rambam, quoted by Shulchan Aruch, that one may not deliberately place himself in circumstances where he will be in pain on Shabbos and thereby diminish his oneg Shabbos. So if, for example, one has the option of scheduling non-emergency oral surgery for the beginning of the week, it is recommended that he do so^[20].

1.Rama O.C. 529:1.

2.Rama O.C. 242:1 and Be'ur Halachah (s.v. ve'hu).

3.Rama O.C. 242:1; 529:1.

4.Mishnah Berurah 242:6.

5.Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 38:8. See another reason in Bartenura, Shabbos 2:6. 6.Ruling of Rav T.P. Frank (quoted in Siddur Korban Minchah, pg. 40), which is followed by many women. Some poskim maintain that a blessing should not be recited unless five pounds of flour are used; Rav Y.E. Henkin (Eidus l'Yisrael 40), while others rule that a blessing is recited even over less than 16 cups (Yalkut Yosef, Hilchos Challah).

7.Water and other ingredients are not included in the minimum amount.

8.See Pischei Teshuvah, Y.D. 326:2, quoting Beis Efrayim and Maadnei Melech.

9.See Pischei Teshuvah, Y.D. 326:2, quoting Levush, Bach and Derishah. This is also the opinion of Be'ur ha-Gra, Y.D. 326:7. See also Chazon Ish, Y.D. 198:2-3 for yet a third opinion in this dispute.

10.Quoted in Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 42, note 45 and Leket ha-Omer 7, note 9. Note, however, that Shevet ha-Levi 4:145 disagrees and permits reciting the blessing in this case as well.

11.Some poskim recommend that laundry be done specifically on Thursday, since that makes it clear that the laundry is being done for the sake of Shabbos. Many other poskim, however, are not particular about this; See Shemiras Shabbos k'Hilchasah 42, note 13, quoting Rav S.Z. Auerbach and Chazon Ovadyah, Shabbos, vol. 1, pg. 23.

12.Chut Shani 3:1. See also Piskei Teshuvos, vol. 3, pg. 255.

13.Rav Y.S. Elyashiv (quoted in Avnei Yashfei 1:49); Ohr l'Tziyon 2:16-1; Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 42, note 13; Chazon Ovadyah, Shabbos, vol. 1, pg. 24; Shevet ha-Kehasi 2:104-4.

14.Rav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 42, note 13)

15.Ben Ish Chai (Lech Lecha 8).

16. According to Shulchan Aruch, this is permitted even when a pikuach nefesh situation will certainly occur. Mishnah Berurah and Aruch ha-Shulchan rule, however, that even in the beginning of the week it is only permitted to travel when it is likely that a pikuach nefesh situation will arise, but not when it is certain that this would be the case.

17. Tuesday night is considered like Wednesday. Note that some poskim rule that this prohibition begins on Thursday (Wednesday night).

18. Emes L'yaakov, O.C. 331:1; Yalkut Yosef 248:10; Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 32:33; Orchos Shabbos 20:69.

19. Igros Moshe, O.C. 1:127; Shulchan Shelomo 248:4.

20. Orchos Shabbos 20:70.

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