

TOSEFES SHABBOS: HOW AND WHEN

by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

The majority of poskim maintain that the mitzvah of *mosifin mi-chol al ha-kodesh*, starting Shabbos early in order to incorporate a small part of the weekday into Shabbos, is a positive commandment *min ha-Torah*[1]. Although this seems to be a relatively easy mitzvah to perform—a mitzvah which most people assume that they perform routinely and correctly—this is not necessarily the case. In order to know if we are, indeed, performing this mitzvah correctly let's review the basics:

Question: How much time should be added as *tosefes Shabbos*?

Discussion: The Rishonim do not specify a particular amount of time as the minimum addition required to fulfill this mitzvah. Latter-day poskim suggest various amounts of time, ranging from a minimum of two[2], four[3], and five[4] minutes, up to twelve[5] or even fifteen[6] minutes. One who is particular to fulfill the mitzvah according to the views of all poskim is to be commended[7]. *Tosefes Shabbos* is equally incumbent upon men and women.[8]

One may be *mekabel Shabbos* as early as *pelag ha-Minchah*, which is an halachic (*zemaniyos*) hour and a quarter before sunset, but not earlier. Any *kabbalas Shabbos* made before *pelag ha-Minchah*, including lighting candles, is null and void and must be repeated[9].

Question: What is the procedure for being *mekabel tosefes Shabbos*?

Discussion: In order of halachic preference, there are four possible methods of fulfilling the mitzvah of *tosefes Shabbos*. One can do so: 1.By reciting a blessing or a prayer that sanctifies the Shabbos[10] such as *Kiddush*, davening the Shabbos *Ma'ariv*, answering *Borechu*, reciting *Mizmor shir l'yom ha-Shabbos* or *Bo'i b'shalom*. Women can fulfill the mitzvah by lighting candles and reciting the appropriate blessing[11].

2.By stating that he is *mekabel Shabbos* for the sake of the mitzvah of *tosefes Shabbos*[12].

3.By thinking in his mind that he is being *mekabel Shabbos*—even without actually expressing it in words[13].

4.By refraining from doing forbidden Shabbos Labors—even without actually expressing or even thinking in his mind that he is accepting the Shabbos—it is considered as if one added some time on to the Shabbos day and one fulfills the mitzvah[14].

Question: When, exactly, should *tosefes Shabbos* take place?

Discussion: L'chatchilah, tosefes Shabbos should take place before sunset, for according to our custom, Shabbos begins at sunset. Thus, in order to perform the mitzvah of adding on to the Shabbos, one must be mekabel Shabbos before sunset. After sunset, one is not adding to the Shabbos since it is already Shabbos—regardless of his kabbalah.

L'chatchilah, too, tosefes Shabbos should take place after davening the Friday Minchah. This is because once Shabbos has been ushered in, the weekday Minchah service may no longer be davened[15].

Ideally, therefore, Minchah on Friday afternoon should be scheduled to begin approximately twenty to twenty-five minutes before sunset. This will allow the congregation to daven Minchah and recite Mizmor shir or at least Bo'i b'shalom before sunset. This is the custom in many yeshivos and some shuls and the preferred manner to fulfill this mitzvah[16].

B'diavad, if the minyan started late and will not be able to be mekabel Shabbos before sunset, an individual may be mekabel Shabbos upon himself after finishing the silent Shemoneh Esrei. He may still answer the Minchah Kedushah etc., although it is already Shabbos for him[17]. This solution, however, will not help the Sheliach Tzibbur who must repeat the Shemoneh Esrei.

Question: Many, if not the majority of shuls, begin davening Minchah right before sunset, and do not recite Mizmor shir before sunset. Some shuls even go so far as to begin davening Minchah after sunset. How do these congregations fulfill the Biblical mitzvah of tosefes Shabbos?

Discussion: There are a number of possible approaches that could explain how these congregations fulfill the mitzvah of tosefes Shabbos:

1.As mentioned earlier, some poskim maintain that tosefes Shabbos need not be explicit—either verbally or silently—at all; simply refraining from forbidden work before sunset is sufficient. Thus the congregations who daven Minchah late are fulfilling the mitzvah of tosefes Shabbos simply by refraining from doing forbidden work before sunset. [Davening Minchah after this type of tosefes Shabbos will not be considered a "contradiction" to Shabbos, since there was no specific Kabbolas Shabbos that officially welcomed the Shabbos[18].]

2.Some poskim are of the opinion that one may fulfill the mitzvah of tosefes Shabbos even after sunset. This is because in halachic terms, the "day of Shabbos" does not begin until tzeis ha-chohavim, when three stars are visible. Since until that time it is still Halachically considered as Friday, one can still fulfill the mitzvah of "adding" on to the "day of Shabbos" by verbally accepting Shabbos any time before tzeis ha-cohavim[19].

3.Some poskim are of the opinion that it is permitted to daven Minchah on Friday afternoon even after an individual was mekabel Shabbos. Although Shulchan Aruch rules that once Kabbalas Shabbos has been recited in shul, Friday's Minchah may no longer be davened (and if an individual came late to shul and answered Borechu or said Mizmor shir with the congregation, he may no

longer daven Minchah)[20], this applies only to a congregational Kabbolas Shabbos. A private Kabbolas Shabbos, such as a woman lighting candles in her home or an individual man accepting the Shabbos privately, does not preclude his (or her) davening the Friday Minchah afterwards[21].

Question: May one recite Kiddush before davening Ma'ariv?

Discussion: This question may arise during the summer months, when some people want to daven Ma'ariv after nightfall, yet they also want to eat earlier, before nightfall, with their family. A possible solution would be to accept the Shabbos at the earliest possible time [after pelag ha-Minchah[22]], eat the meal with the family, and then daven Ma'ariv with a later minyan. Is this permitted?

The Mishnah Berurah[23] rules that there is no objection to reciting Kiddush before Ma'ariv, provided that the meal begins at least half an hour before nightfall. After that time, it is prohibited to begin a major meal before reciting Kerias Shema and davening Ma'ariv. According to the Arizal's Kabbalah, however, it is not proper to recite Kiddush before Ma'ariv. It is considered as if one is performing the mitzvah in the wrong sequence[24]. Additionally, the Gaon of Vilna[25] maintains that reciting Kiddush before Ma'ariv is improper not only for Kabbalistic reasons but on halachic grounds as well.

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1. Beur Halachah, O.C. 261:2, s.v. yesh omrim.
 2. Eretz Tzvi 70; Igros Moshe, O.C. 1:96.
 3. Avnei Nezer 4:98.
 4. Minchas Elazar 1:23; Teshuvos Maharshag 38.
 5. Siddur Ya'avetz.
 6. Mishnah Berurah 261:22 and Beur Halachah, s.v. eizeh, based on Chayei Adam 5:2, maintains that tosefes Shabbos together with bein ha-shemashos (which is about 14 minutes long) is half-an-hour long.
 7. Mishnah Berurah 261:23.
 8. See Kaf ha-Chayim 261:16.
 9. Mishnah Berurah 261:25.
 10. The concept that tosefes Shabbos should be accepted only through a blessing or a prayer and not through a simple statement is mentioned by several Rishonim; see Ritva to Berachos 27a, Shabbos 23b and 35a, Eiruvim 40b and Rosh Hashanah 9a. See also Chidushei ha-Ran, Shabbos 35a, quoting Ra'ah.
 11. Men who light candles are not automatically mekabel Shabbos; Mishnah Berurah 263:42.
 12. Mishnah Berurah 261:21 (as understood by Shoneh Halachos 261:3; Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah

- 46:2; Az Nidberu 1:1). [Possibly, just saying "Gut Shabbos" is sufficient, if by saying so one means to actually usher in the Shabbos and not merely to express a greeting; see Rav Akiva Eiger, O.C. 271:1.]
13. Bach and Gra, quoted in Mishnah Berurah 553:2. Tehilah l'David 263:10, however, opines that this is invalid.
14. See Aruch ha-Shulchan 261:2; Eretz Tzvi 60; Yabia Omer 7:34; Shevet ha-Levi 10:50. See Imrei Shalom 4:18.
15. Mishnah Berurah 263:43.
16. Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 46:5.
17. Tzitz Eliezer 10:15; Yabia Omer 6:21.
18. See Avnei Yashfei 1:56, quoting Rav Y.S. Elyashiv.
19. See Chazon Ovadyah, Shabbos, vol. 1, pg. 264.
20. O.C. 263:15.
21. See Beiur Halachah 261:4, s.v. ein; Eretz Tzvi 60; Mishmeres Shalom 26:2 quoting the Minsker Gadol; Minchas Yitzchak 9:20; Tzitz Eliezer 13:42; Bris Olam, pg. 13. Preferably, one should specifically stipulate at the time of tosefes Shabbos that he is planning to daven Minchah afterwards; see Chazon Ovadyah, Shabbos, vol. 1, pg. 266.
22. Pelag ha-Minchah is one and a quarter halachic hours before sunset; see The Daily Halachah Discussion on 26 Nissan.
23. 271:11 quoting the Magen Avraham.
24. Kaf ha-Chayim 271:22; 272:3.
25. Ma'asei Rav 117. See Peulas Sachir, ibid.

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