



Managing Your Mitzvos

Preparing For Shabbos



The following notes reflect the laws and customs that were covered during a class given by Rabbi Yossi Michalowicz on Monday Nov. 7th. During the class there was a lot of time spent on explaining why these laws and customs are necessary in order to maximize our ability to enjoy the Shabbos. Although you may find some of this information a little beyond what you are presently capable of doing, it is beneficial to know what the laws are, and try to slowly incorporate some of these aspects into your Jewish observance. If you have any questions, please feel free to either contact the Rabbi or borrow a copy of a tape of the class from our library in the Routes Jewish Centre.

Preparing For Shabbos:

1. It is a Mitzvah to make as many preparations for Shabbos as possible by yourself. [even if you have the availability of take-out food and many housekeepers].
2. Parents should see to it that on Friday, each child should do a household chore in honour of Shabbos.
3. You should eagerly make preparations for Shabbos and scurry about excitedly, like a person who is told that a queen or a bride and her entourage are coming to lodge in his/her house.
4. Before you buy things for Shabbos, or when you prepare something for Shabbos, you should say, "I'm buying or doing this in honour of Shabbos."
5. Take a few moments to mentally prepare yourself for Shabbos. Be mindful that you are about to be the host of the King of all kings. With a proper mental attitude, you honour Hashem.

Preparing the Shabbos Food:

1. We should honour the Shabbos in the best possible manner with the most delectable food and drink.
2. The way we prepare the special Shabbos dishes – from shopping to baking to tasting the food – is a clear indication of how we honour Shabbos.
3. Women should make Challah in honour of the Shabbos. They should remember to do the Mitzvah of separating "Challah" from the dough.
4. It is a custom to place the Challahs on the Shabbos table as soon as they come out of the oven, in honour of Shabbos.
5. It is best to do your shopping during the week as close to Shabbos as is practical and possible. The ingredients that can be prepared quickly should be bought on Friday, but the ingredients for dishes that take a long time to prepare should be bought on Thursday, so there is enough time to get them ready. [If it is not possible to buy the items even on Thursday, one may purchase them earlier in the week.]
6. One should not spare expense when making purchases for Shabbos. One should make sure to serve fish, meat, wine, or other sweet beverages that he does not drink during the week, at each of the Shabbos meals.
7. It is preferable to get up early on Friday morning to make preparations for the Shabbos meals. [If it is not possible to do it then, one can prepare at a different time.]
8. It is a Mitzvah to sample and taste the dishes that are prepared for Shabbos.
9. 2 ½ Halachik hours before Shabbos, one should refrain from eating a regular meal, so that you will have an appetite for the Friday night meal. One may eat a snack after that time.

Wearing Shabbos Clothing:

1. One should wash and launder clothes on Thursday, and not wait until Friday, so there will be enough time to prepare the Shabbos meals. [If it is not possible to do it on Thursday, do it when you can].
2. Immediately after bathing in honour of Shabbos, one should get dressed in special Shabbos clothes, as you respectfully await the arrival of the Shabbos.
3. Women should follow this custom, and light the Shabbos candles while in their special Shabbos clothes and shoes, in honour of Shabbos. Women should take care to wear dressy shoes for Shabbos, and avoid wearing slippers.
4. One should examine his/her clothes before Shabbos, to see whether there is anything in them, so that he will not come to carry on Shabbos. [This law applies in a city with no Eruv].
5. One should put on his Shabbos clothes shortly before the onset of Shabbos. One should not put on Shabbos clothing only on Shabbos morning.

Final Shabbos Preparations:

1. Just as you are rewarded for making all the preparations for Shabbos, so you are rewarded for finishing them in time, so when Shabbos arrives – everything is ready.
2. It is important to avoid strife and argument, despite the pressure of the approaching Shabbos. Be careful not to trigger any argument or fight in the last minutes before Shabbos. Instead, seek to smooth things over and make peace in your home,
3. It is customary to buy flowers in honour of Shabbos.
4. It is a custom to sharpen the knives on Friday. [when required]
5. It is a custom to spread a white tablecloth over all tables in the house – even the kitchen table.
6. One should set the table on Friday.
7. On Erev Shabbos, you should tidy the house, the lights should be on, and the beds should be made.
8. It is a Mitzvah to cut one's nails every Friday – not on Thursday. The nails should not be cut in a straight order. The nails should be thrown away in a safe place. Afterwards, you should wash your hands one time.
9. It is a Mitzvah to get a haircut on Erev Shabbos, if needed.
10. It is customary for men to go to the Mikveh after Halachik midday. The closer to Shabbos one goes to the Mikveh, the better. There are different customs about how many times one should immerse, ranging from 2-14 times.
11. It is a Mitzvah for both men and women to take a warm bath or shower on Erev Shabbos. When bathing, one should have in mind that he is fulfilling the Mitzvah of the sages, and that the only reason he is bathing is in honour of the Shabbos.
12. If at all possible, one should take a nap on Friday to ensure that one is rested at the Friday night meal. This is considered a key preparation for the Shabbos. The Sanzer Rav told people to sleep for two hours. Even if you cannot fall asleep on Friday afternoon, you should at least lie down for half an hour with your eyes closed.
13. **Make sure that all the food you plan to eat for dinner is on the stove / in the oven, etc. before Shabbos begins. All boxes, bags, containers, bottles should be opened before Shabbos. All lights and timer switches should be on before Shabbos. All lights and electrical devices that you want off for Shabbos should be turned off before Shabbos, especially the refrigerator light and the alarm system.**
14. The Baal Shem Tov says that as Shabbos arrives, a person should act as if he is no longer alive in this world – that is, he should cast off all worldly concerns. This is the ideal way of preparing for Shabbos.

Beginning Shabbos Early:

1. It is praiseworthy for a person to add several minutes before sunset from the weekday to the Shabbos. i.e. accept the holiness before the last possible minute of sunset.
2. On Friday afternoon, from 2 ½ Halachik hours before sunset, the Sages prohibited working in a workshop or doing business that is not needed for Shabbos.
3. One should spend some time doing Teshuva before Shabbos begins.
4. In most cases, if a husband brings the Shabbos earlier in Shul [such as in the summertime], the wife may still make Shabbos reparations until the regular lighting time. Similarly, when the wife kindles the Shabbos lights, the husband does not have to accept Shabbos at that moment.
5. **From all the laws and customs we have learned so far, if it is at all possible, it would be optimal for women to not go to work at all on Fridays and for a man to not work after Halachik midday; thereby leaving sufficient time to prepare for and be prepared for the Shabbos properly. This is a key element for a “Fantastic Friday Night” experience.**

