

TORAH Tidbits Guide to EARLY SHABBAT



In many communities, people "take Shabbat early" during the summer months when nightfall is relatively late and they would prefer to eat their Friday night meal at a more civilized hour, and to have a bit more after-supper time to learn Torah, go over the sedra, read, go for a walk, play with the children, etc. There are some halachic points to clarify about the topic of "taking Shabbat early".

BACKGROUND The first mishna in chapter 4 of Brachot contains a dispute between the Tana Kama and R' Yehuda as to when the deadline for Mincha is. The T"K says that one may daven Mincha until sunset. R' Yehuda says that one may daven Mincha only until Plag Mincha. [i.e. 1¼ "halachic" hours before sunset. A halachic hour is a twelfth part of the day, calculated from sunrise to sunset. (There is another way of reckoning the day - namely, dawn to stars out; we will stick to the sunrise-to-sunset day.)] By extension, the Talmud teaches that the deadline for Mincha for each opinion is also the earliest time for Maariv, and some other nighttime mitzvot. The Gemara presents us with an atypical resolution of this dispute - D'AVAD K'MAR AVAD, U'D'AVAD K'MAR AVAD - he who acts according to the one opinion, acts correctly, and he who acts according to the other opinion, acts correctly. It's ALMOST (but not quite) take-your-pick.

Halachically, none of the nighttime mitzvot may be performed before Plag Mincha. Consequently, one may not "take Shabbat" before PLAG MINCHA. One may not light Shabbat candles (or Chanuka candles) before PLAG, nor say Kabbalat Shabbat & Maariv, nor make Kiddush. But one MAY light candles, take Shabbat, daven Maariv, make Kiddush and begin the first Shabbat Seuda after PLAG - even though the sun is still in the sky.

SHMA Davening Maariv and reciting the "nighttime Sh'ma" have been conveniently and meaningfully combined by our Sages, but each of those two mitzvot has its own rules of timing. Although one may daven Maariv from PLAG (according to R' Yehuda), most authorities say that one does not fulfill his obligation to say the nighttime Sh'ma if it is said before sunset. (Stars-out is the proper beginning-time for Shma.) Therefore, those who daven early (after Plag but before sunset) will say the Sh'ma and its brachot as part of Maariv, but they must repeat the Sh'ma (all three parshiyot) after stars-out. In other words, when one davens Maariv before dark (after Plag, of course), he says the full Sh'ma twice; once, with its brachot, as part of the davening, and a second time to fulfill the mitzva of reciting Sh'ma at night.

Some object to taking Shabbat early because Sh'ma in its Maariv setting is not said at its proper time. Although one will repeat it later, this is not ideal. Furthermore, it becomes too easy to forget to repeat the Sh'ma after dark.

On the other hand - not that this is a reason for davening early - when Sh'ma is repeated for the sake of the mitzva (and not just something said as part of the davening), one has the opportunity to focus on it "for the sake of the mitzva" more than we tend to do when it is part of davening. Again, this is not to suggest that this is a preferred procedure; what is preferred is that when saying the Sh'ma in Maariv, after dark, one still be able to focus on the mitzva, even though it is also "just part of the davening".

This Guide and announcements at the end of "early minyan" are your reminders to say the Shma (and count the Omer) at the proper time. Try to remind each other in your family and at your Shabbat table, so that no one will forget these important mitzvot. Taking Shabbat early can be a positive experience, but not if it results in neglect of a Torah mitzva or two.

Another Problem Since davening Mincha after Plag is fine according to T"K but NOT according to R' Yehuda, and davening Maariv before sunset is okay according to R' Yehuda but not according to T"K, it is not proper to daven both Mincha & Maariv between Plag and sunset - neither opinion is followed in that case.

Therefore, it is best to schedule an early minyan to begin Mincha about 15 minutes before PLAG. This way, Mincha can be said before PLAG followed by Kabbalat Shabbat and Maariv, after PLAG. This would be consistent with R' Yehuda's opinion. To begin an "early Friday" mincha after Plag is problematic, to say the least, and makes "taking Shabbat early" less than ideal.

CANDLES Women must be reminded to light after PLAG, never before. Women should daven Mincha on their own (this is preferable year-round), light after PLAG, then go to shul (if they do) for Kabbalat Shabbat. This can be a problematic situation for some families.

KIDDUSH Shuls that schedule their early minyan's Mincha after PLAG, not only enter into the contradictory situation mentioned above ("satisfying" neither the T"K nor R' Yehuda), but also can run into another problem (depending upon timing). Once it gets "close" to dark, one should not begin a meal (nor say Kiddush) before saying Shma. In other words, if one has not made Kiddush by sunset (maybe even 5-10 minutes before that), then he must (should?) wait until dark, say the Sh'ma, and THEN make Kiddush (thereby really defeating the purpose of "taking Shabbat early"). The idea is to say Kiddush well enough before sunset so that one does not even enter the time-range of Sh'ma. If people are "sloppy" about this issue, they make taking Shabbat early less ideal. This is another point of objection by those who speak unfavorably about the whole idea of early Shabbat.

A minyan that starts Mincha a half hour before Jerusalem candle lighting time will get people home for a "problem-free" Kiddush, if the people don't linger too much after shul. (They still have the Mincha-Maariv after Plag problem.)

Technically, if one begins his meal "with halachic permission", he need not stop for Sh'ma or the Omer (they can be said/counted after the meal). However, it is **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED** that when the proper time arrives, families should interrupt their meals for Sh'ma and the Omer. This helps prevent forgetting later on, and also has a positive educational value for family and guests, teaching a high level of care and concern for Sh'ma and S'firat HaOmer.

Another point to keep in mind... When people say Kiddush and begin their first Shabbat meal before dark, it is important that the meal - and the eating of some challah (at least a KAZAYIT) - should continue after nightfall.

More Problems Some object to splitting a community by having two minyanim on Friday night. Others point out potential problems if a whole community takes Shabbat early and some individual members don't, specifically, lighting candles and doing other "melachot" after the community accepted Shabbat. Ask your Rav.

Early Shabbat should be an enhancement of Shabbat and a fulfillment of Tosefet Shabbat - but without being careless about Sh'ma, davening, and/or the counting of the Omer.

This handy pull-out will hopefully make things easier for you. Bring it to your Shabbat table and use it for Kiddush, the Sh'ma and then for counting the Omer (during Omer season, that is). Sit for Sh'ma; stand for counting the Omer.

POINT in FAVOR The Aruch HaShulchan (R' Yechiel Michel HaLevi Epstein z"l) introduces another factor into the equation which adds another positive spin to taking Shabbat early. He points out that we daven Maariv corresponding to the HEKTEIR CHALAVIM V'EIVARIM, the slow simmering of fats and certain parts of the day's korbanot on the Mizbei'ach all night. That's why we may daven Maariv all night long. But on Friday, the burning had to be done before Shabbat, i.e. earlier than the rest of the week. By davening Maariv earlier on Friday evening, we nicely match the corresponding service of the Beit HaMikdash. (It's not a perfect match because we're beginning Shabbat at that point, and the Hekteir Chalavim v'Eivarim was specifically before Shabbat. Also, to be consistent, we'd have to daven Maariv early on Friday throughout the year, which we don't. But it's a nice point anyway.)

Taking Shabbat early can enhance one's Oneg Shabbat, as mentioned earlier, by allowing for dinner to be at a more "civilized" hour, and being able to have young children join the rest of the family at the table. It can be an enhancement of Shalom Bayit for various reasons. But it should not involve compromising the standards of davening and other halachic matters.

It is recommended that people go over this Guide to Early Shabbat at the Friday night table on the first "early Shabbat" of the season (or maybe a couple of times), so that everyone hears what's involved and can discuss some of the issues.

FRIDAY TIMES

Correct for Jerusalem

The chart to the right covers the period from Shabbat HaGadol until Rosh HaShana.

Here is the key to understanding the different times in the chart:

PLAG • Mincha before this time, if at all possible. Candle lighting, etc. **MUST** be after this time. (PLAG time was rounded to the next minute. It is recommended to "pad" this time with 1-2 minutes on either side.)

REG • Regular candle lighting time (Jerusalem). This is 40 min. before the sunset calculated for an elevation of 825m.

NST • Near Sh'ma Time. Kiddush should (preferably) be said before this time. This time is 30 minutes after regular candle lighting time, which is 10 minutes before the later sunset time and 5 minutes or so before the earlier sunset (calculated as if Jerusalem were at sea level).

SHMA • Recommended to say Shma at this time or soon after. (Then count the Omer.) 25 minutes after the later sunset. (This is earlier than Shabbat-out time, but usable for Stars-Out for Sh'ma.)

P • Chapter of Pirkei Avot for that Shabbat.

Many communities wait until after Pesach to do early Shabbat (even though Summer Time starts before). Although Shabbat Shuva is the last Shabbat (this season) on Summer time, this chart ends with the previous Shabbat, because RH is THU-FRI and no one (hardly) will take that Shabbat early. These times are correct for Jerusalem. (Adjust slightly for your locale.)

Friday	PLAG	REG	NST	SHMA	P	ליל שבת
Mar 30	5:39	6:21	6:51	7:26	-	זו
April 6	5:43	6:26	6:56	7:31	-	שוזוה' מי'ע
April 13	5:46	6:31	7:01	7:36	1	עמיני' ע
April 20	5:49	6:35	7:05	7:40	2	תז' מוצ' ע
April 27	5:53	6:40	7:10	7:45	3	אזז' קד' ע
May 4	5:57	6:45	7:15	7:50	4	עמור ע
May 11	6:01	6:50	7:20	7:55	5	בהרבז' ע
May 18	6:04	6:55	7:25	8:00	6	במדבר ע
May 25	6:08	7:00	7:30	8:05	1	זשא
June 1	6:12	7:04	7:34	8:09	2	בהעלתך
June 8	6:15	7:08	7:38	8:13	3	שלוז
June 15	6:17	7:11	7:41	8:16	4	קרוז
June 22	6:19	7:13	7:43	8:18	5	זקת
June 29	6:20	7:13	7:43	8:18	6	בלק
July 6	6:20	7:13	7:43	8:18	1	פזוזס
July 13	6:19	7:11	7:41	8:16	2	מוט' - מס'
July 20	6:17	7:08	7:38	8:13	3	דברים
July 27	6:14	7:04	7:34	8:09	4	ואתזוזן
Aug 3	6:09	6:59	7:29	8:04	5	עקב
Aug 10	6:04	6:53	7:23	7:58	6	ראה
Aug 17	5:58	6:45	7:15	7:50	1	שפט'ים
Aug 24	5:52	6:38	7:08	7:43	2	כי תצא
Aug 31	5:45	6:29	6:59	7:34	34	כי תבוא
Sep 7	5:37	6:20	6:50	7:25	56	זש' וילך

When the proper time arrives (see chart on previous page), say the Sh'ma (next page) with KAVANA to fulfill the mitzva of KRI'AT SHMA BIZMANAH (Sh'ma at its proper time). Also, have KAVANA to restate your belief in G-d and His Unity, to accept upon yourself the "Yoke of Heaven" and the "Yoke of Mitzvot" (second passage). For the last pasuk (of the third passage), have KAVANA to remember Y'tzi'at Mitzrayim (the Exodus) "all the days of your life" (including nights).

קריאת שמע

The saying of SHMA is a mitzva from the Torah and we should seize the first opportunity after dark to say it, even if we are in the middle of our Shabbat meal. Since it is not now being said in the davening, [1] there is no need to say אמת at the end, since in the context of davening, EMET is the first word of the bracha that follows the SH'MA, which we attach to the end of Sh'ma; and [2] we can (should?) say לשם מצות קריאת שמע בזמנה (for the sake of saying Sh'ma on time) before we begin, to focus our KAVANA.

Re KEIL MELECH NE'EMAN before the Sh'ma. several sources indicate that this three-word intro to Sh'ma is to "round out" the number of words in the full Sh'ma to 248. (This includes BARUCH SHEIM... but not EMET). 248 is the traditional number of parts in the body. "He who says the 248 words of the Sh'ma the way they are supposed to be said, HaShem will preserve his 248 parts, as it says in Mishlei (4:4), ...SH'MOR MITZVOTAI VECHYEI, keep My mitzvot and live. G-d says: you keep My 248, and I'll keep your 248. (When davening with a minyan, the chazan's repeating aloud HASHEM ELOKEICHEM EMET brings the word-total to 248 and therefore we do not add KEIL MELECH NE'EMAN to the beginning of the Sh'ma.)

Women are technically exempt from the requirement of reciting Sh'ma, but they may (should?) voluntarily say this important 3-parsha recitation. Among other reasons, SH'MA fulfills "remembering the Exodus", which women are obligated.

The Sh'ma is presented in Torah font and with TROP for those who prefer reading it that way. Even if you don't read the Sh'ma with TROP, the TROP helps by indicating pauses and which syllable of each word gets accented.

And between Pesach and Shavuot, don't forget to count the Omer see page 7

KIDDUSH: The final page of this pull-out does not relate only to Early Shabbat. We have printed a nice Friday night Kiddush for you, to make this 8-pager (as we call it) even more useful at the Friday night table.

אל מלך נאמן

שְׁמַע | יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' | א' לַהֲיִינוּ ה' | אָנֹכִי : בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד .
וְאֵהֱבֵת אֶת ה' | א' לַהֲיִי בְּכָל-לְבָבִי וּבְכָל-נַפְשִׁי וּבְכָל-מְאֹדִי :
וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר | אָנֹכִי מֵצִוְיָה הַיּוֹם עַל-לְבָבִי : וְשִׁנְנִתָּם
לְבִיָּה וּדְבַרְתָּ בָּם בְּשִׁבְתֶּךָ בְּבֵיתֶךָ וּבְלַכְתֶּךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבֶךָ
וּבְקוּמֶךָ : וְקִשְׁרָתָם לְאוֹת | עַל-יַדְּךָ וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפוֹת בֵּין | עֵינֶיךָ : וְכִתְבֵתָם |
עַל-מְזוּזוֹת בֵּיתֶךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ :

וְהָיָה אִם-שְׁמַעַתְּ שְׁמִיעוּ אֶל-מִצְוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר | אָנֹכִי מֵצִוְיָה | אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם
לְאֵהֱבֵה אֶת-ה' | א' לַהֲיִיכֶם וְלַעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכָל-לְבָבְכֶם וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁכֶם :
וְנִתַּנְתִּי מִטֹּר-אַרְצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ יוֹרֵה וּמְלַקֹּשׁ וְאֶסְפַּת דְּגָנֶךָ וְתִירְשֶׁךָ
וְיִצְהַרְךָ : וְנִתַּנְתִּי | עֵשֶׂב | בְּשִׂדְךָ לְבַהֲמֹתֶךָ וְאֶכְלֵת וְשִׁבַּעְתָּ : הַשְׂמֵרוֹ
לְכֶם פֶּן-יִפְתָּה לְבָבְכֶם וְסָרְתֶם וְעַבַדְתֶּם | אֱלֹהִים אֲזֹרִים
וְהִשְׁתַּנּוּוּיְתֶם לָהֶם : וְזָרָה | אִתְּךָ | בְּכֶם וְעָזַר | אֶת-הַשָּׂמַיִם וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה
מִטֹּר וְהֶאֱדַמְתָּ לֹא תִתֵּן אֶת-יְבוּלָהּ וְאֶבְדֶתָם | מִהֲרָה מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ |
הַטְּבֵה | אֲשֶׁר | ה' נִתֵּן לְכֶם : וְשִׁמַּתָּם | אֶת-דְּבָרֵי | אֱלֹהֵי עַל-לְבָבְכֶם
וְעַל-נַפְשְׁכֶם וְקִשְׁרָתָם | אֶתְם לְאוֹת | עַל-יַדְּכֶם וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפוֹת בֵּין |
עֵינֵיכֶם : וְלִמְדֶתָם | אֶתְם | אֶת-בְּנֵיכֶם לְדַבֵּר בָּם בְּשִׁבְתֶּךָ בְּבֵיתֶךָ
וּבְלַכְתֶּךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבֶךָ וּבְקוּמֶךָ : וְכִתְבֵתָם | עַל-מְזוּזוֹת בֵּיתֶךָ
וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ : לְמַעַן | יִרְבּוּ | יְמֵיכֶם וְיָמֵי בְנֵיכֶם | עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נָשִׁבַע |
ה' לְאֲבֹתֵיכֶם לָתֵת לָהֶם פִּימֵי הַשָּׂמַיִם | עַל-הָאָרֶץ :

וַיֹּאמֶר | ה' | אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר : הִבֵּר | אֶל-בְּנֵי | יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם
וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִית עַל-כַּנְפֵי בְגָדֵיהֶם לְדַרְתָּם וְנִתְּנוּ | עַל-צִיצִית הַכַּנֹּף
פְּתִיל תְּכֵלֵת : וְהָיָה לְכֶם לְצִיצִית וּרְאִיתֶם | אֹתוֹ וַיִּזְכַּרְתֶּם |
אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹת | ה' וְעִשִׂיתֶם | אֶתְם וְלֹא תִתְּוּרוּ | אֲזֹרֵי | לְבָבְכֶם וְאֲזֹרֵי
עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר-אֶתֶם זָנִים | אֲזֹרֵיהֶם : לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ וְעִשִׂיתֶם | אֶת-כָּל-
מִצְוֹתַי וְהִייתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים לֹא-לַהֲיִיכֶם : אֲנִי | ה' | אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי |
אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְהִיּוֹת לְכֶם לֹא-לַהֲיִי אֲנִי | ה' | א' לַהֲיִיכֶם : ^{ממ}

On Friday nights from Pesach & Shavuot, remember to count the Omer after saying the Sh'ma. Sh'ma goes first because it is TADIR (more frequent) and because it is a D'ORAITA (fulfillment of a Torah mitzva), whereas Counting the Omer is less frequent and its status as D'ORAITA or D'RABANAN in our time (without the Beit HaMikdash and the Omer & Two Loaves offerings) is disputed.



Count the Omer with KAVANA, standing...

לשם יחוד קודשא בריך הוא ושכינתיה ברחילו ורחימו. ליחד שם י"ה כו"ה ביחודא שלים בשם כל ישראל

הנני מוכן ומזומן לקיים מצות עשה של ספירת העומר. כמו שכתוב בתורה:

וּסְפַרְתֶּם לָכֶם מִמְנוּזַת הַשִּׁבְעָת מִיּוֹם הַבְּיָאָכֶם אֶת-עֹמֶר

הַתְּנוּפֵה לַעֲבֹד שִׁבְעַת יָמֵי תְּמִימֵי תְּהֵי יְיָ: עַד מִמְנוּזַת הַשִּׁבְעָת

הַשִּׁבְעִית תִּסְפְּרוּ יָמֵי זְמַנְשֵׁי יוֹם וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם מִנְזוּחַ יְזַדְשֵׁה לָהּ:

וַיְהִי נֹעַם אֲדֹנָי אֵלֵינוּ עֲלֵינוּ. וּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדֵינוּ כֹּנְנָה עֲלֵינוּ. וּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדֵינוּ כֹּנְנָה:

BEFORE the bracha, know the count

(Count even if you are no longer saying a bracha)

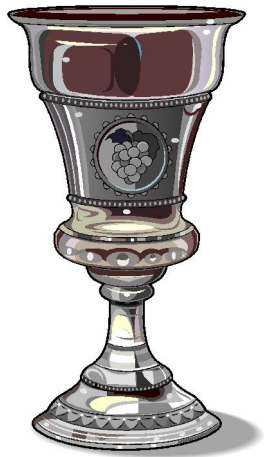
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל סְפִירַת הָעוֹמֶר:

שבת זווה"ב	היום ארבעה ימים לעומר	נצח שבחסד	April 6
שמיני	היום אחד עשר יום שהם שבוע אחד וארבעה ימים לעומר	נצח שבגבורה	April 13
תזריע- בזרע	היום שמונה עשר יום שהם שני שבועות וארבעה ימים לעומר	נצח שבפארת	April 20
איזרי- קדשים	היום חמשה ועשרים יום שהם שלשה שבועות וארבעה ימים לעומר	נצח שבנצח	April 27
אמר	היום שנים ושלשים יום שהם ארבעה שבועות וארבעה ימים לעומר	נצח שבהוד	May 4
בהר- בזקתי	היום תשעה ושלשים יום שהם חמשה שבועות וארבעה ימים לעומר	נצח שבסוד	May 11
במדבר	היום ששה וארבעים יום שהם ששה שבועות וארבעה ימים לעומר	נצח שבמלכות	May 18

הרחמן הוא יחזיר לנו עבודת בית המקדש למקומה, במהרה בימינו, אמן סלה.

For the post-counting passages, use your TT Omer Chart or your favorite Siddur



קידוש ליל שבת

[וּיִרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהָיָה-טוֹב מְאֹד...]

וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי:

וַיִּכְלוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צְבָאָם:

וַיִּכַּל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:

וַיְבָרֵךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ
כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ
אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

סְבִירי מְרַנֵּן וּרְבִנֵּן וּרְבוֹתִי:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגָּפֶן:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וּרְצָה בָּנוּ. וְשָׁבַת קִדְּשׁוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן
הַנִּחְלָנוּ. זְכוּר לְמַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית. כִּי הוּא יוֹם תְּחִלָּה
לְמִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ זֵכֶר לְיִצְיַאת מִצְרַיִם. כִּי בָנוּ בְּחִרְתָּ
וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים וְשָׁבַת קִדְּשָׁךְ בְּאַהֲבָה
וּבְרָצוֹן הַנִּחְלָתָנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'. מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשְּׁבִיט: