

סימן רסא

- 1) When is שקיעה? When is השמשות? When is צאת? When does your wife need to light candles?

The **גמרא שבת (לד)** (1) teaches that שקיעה begins from the moment the sun sets and the **גמרא שבת (לה)** (2) teaches that צאת הכוכבים is from when three medium-sized stars are visible. The time in the interim, from שקיעה until צאת, is called "בין השמשות". It is a ספק whether בין השמשות is considered day or night, and we are מחמיר when Shabbos begins to consider it night, and at the completion of Shabbos to consider it day. Today, women light candles between 18-40 minutes before the ball of the sun sets under the horizon. In the next set of answers, we will elaborate on when שקיעה begins, how long בין השמשות lasts, and from where the custom to light 18, 20, or 40 minutes before שקיעה.

- 2) What is **THE** מחלוקת between רבינו תם and the גאונים/גר"א?

As mentioned in the previous answer, שקיעה is when the sun sets, צאת הכוכבים is when three medium-sized stars are visible, while the time in the interim is called בין השמשות. There is a contradiction in the גמרא as to the length of בין השמשות. The **גמרא שבת (לד)** (2) says that בין השמשות lasts $\frac{3}{4}$ of a מיל (we'll assume a מיל is 18 minutes, thus, בין השמשות lasts 13.5 minutes), however, the **גמרא פסחים (צד)** (3) teaches that בין השמשות is 4 מיל, or 72 minutes. Which one is it? רבינו תם reconciles the contradiction by saying that there are two "שקיעות", the first is when the ball of the sun drops below the horizon, and the second is when the remaining light in the sky fades. After the first שקיעה when the sun sets and drops below the horizon, it is still daytime for another 3 and $\frac{1}{4}$ מיל (58.5 minutes). This is followed by the second שקיעה, when the light left from brightness of the sun begins to fade and בין השמשות begins, lasting $\frac{3}{4}$ of a מיל (13.5 minutes), after which is nighttime (צאת הכוכבים). The **גר"א/גאונים** answer the contradiction by saying that there is only one שקיעה, the moment that the ball of the sun sets. At this point, בין השמשות begins, lasting $\frac{3}{4}$ of a מיל (13.5 minutes) and then three medium-sized stars can be visible (and when the גמרא פסחים said that it takes 4 מיל for צאת הכוכבים it was referring to all the stars in the sky, even in the West where the sun sets). The גר"א points out that the 3 medium-sized stars can only be visible on a clear night during the month of ניסן or תשרי.

The **S"א** in רס"א-ב (and so it seems from the silence of the *Rama*) *passkim* like ר"ת. However, the **משנ"ב** סקכ"ג and the **ביה"ל ד"ה** מתחילת and many *posskim* say to be מחמיר like the גאונים that Shabbos begins as soon as the sun sets.

The S”A in ב' סעיף writes that there is a מצוה of תוספת שבת – accepting שבת a bit earlier. According to ר”ת (and the S”A) that would mean that one should accept Shabbos any time during the 58.5 minutes after the sun sets, and for the גאונים/גר”א that would mean to accept Shabbos a bit before the sun sets. However, the משנ”ב סקכ”ג writes that it is best to accept Shabbos 20 minutes before sunset. The reason for this is because of the opinion of the יראים who writes that the moment the sun sets, it is *halachically* night, and $\frac{3}{4}$ of a מיל before that is the beginning of בין השמשות. Additionally, there is an opinion that a מיל is 24 minutes. Therefore, בין השמשות begins $\frac{3}{4}$ of a מיל before the sun sets or 18 minutes before the sun sets, and in order to fulfill תוספת שבת you should accept Shabbos 2 minutes before that. **Rav Moshe** (6) writes that only women accept Shabbos at this point when lighting their candles, but men continue to do מלאכה until a couple of minutes before sunset.

3) Your wife already lit candles; can you still do מלאכה? You Can? Until when?

In Yerushalayim, the מנהג is to light candles 40 minutes before the sun sets, and in America and other places the מנהג is to light candles 20 (or 18 minutes) before the sun sets. **Rav Moshe** (6) and **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach** (7) write that only the women accepted this מנהג, but men may continue to do מלאכה until a couple of minutes before שקיעה, but not all the way to שקיעה, because there is a מצוה of תוספת שבת.

4) Let’s play a game: Identify the following numbers and determine whether they are dealing with the minutes before or after Shabbos: 72? 18? 40? 20? 50? 96? 9? 13.5? Are we making up numbers?

- A. 72 minutes- the minutes from שקיעה until צאת according to ר”ת
- B. 18 minutes- $\frac{3}{4}$ of a מיל (according to the calculation that a מיל is 24 minutes); 18 minutes before the sun sets is when בין השמשות begins according to the יראים.
- C. 40 minutes- the time before שקיעה in Yerushalyim when women have the custom to light Shabbos candles.
- D. 20 minutes- the amount of time before Shabbos that you should light candles in order to fulfill the opinion of the יראים (letter B above) and adding 2 minutes for תוספת שבת [this opinion is brought in the משנ”ב סקכ”ג and in **Rav Moshe** (6)]
- E. 13.5 minutes- $\frac{3}{4}$ of a מיל (18 minutes) according to the גאונים/גר”א. It is considered night and three stars can be visible after 13.5 minutes have passed from sunset (during the days of תשרי and ניסן).
- F. 50 minutes- the 4 מיל between שקיעה and צאת in America according to **Rav Moshe** (11)
- G. 9 minutes- $\frac{3}{4}$ of a מיל, or the time of בין השמשות according to Rav Moshe. The גאונים/גר”א will hold that בין השמשות is the first 9 minutes after sunset, and ר”ת will hold that בין השמשות is the last 9 minutes before צאת הכוכבים.
- H. 96 minutes- 4 מיל between שקיעה and צאת if you hold that a מיל is 24 minutes. There are some who wait 96 minutes after שקיעה before making הבדלה on מוצאי because they are מהמיר like ר”ת and hold that a מיל is 24 minutes.

- 5) A woman forgets to do a הפסק טהרה and she only realizes after שקיעה. Can she still do a הפסק טהרה 9 minutes after שקיעה? Does it make a difference where she lives?

Rav Moshe (12) writes that she can still do a הפסק טהרה for up to 9 minutes in America because of a ספק ספיקא. Maybe the הלכה is like ר"ת (and it is still day), and even if we hold that the הלכה is like the גאונים/גר"א, and now it is בין השמשות, בין השמשות itself is a ספק whether it is day or night, and it might still be day. However, **Rav Moshe** (13) adds that if you only *passkin* like the גאונים/גר"א, then you cannot use ר"ת as a ס"ס. Yet, Rav Moshe concludes that most wait until the צאת הכוכבים of ר"ת which is ~50 minutes after שקיעה in America. Thus, you can still use the ס"ס for up until 9 minutes. Rav Wozner in **שבט הלוי** (14) argues on Rav Moshe and says that in ארץ ישראל no one relies on this ס"ס, because everyone accepted the פסק of the גאונים/גר"א and you cannot use the opinion of ר"ת in the ס"ס even if you are מחמיר like him in on מוצאי שבת. You should ask your LOR before *passkining* such a severe question.

- 6) You are driving home from work late on *erev*-Shabbos and according to Waze you will return home a few minutes after שקיעה. Should you park the car or can you continue driving?

If you are in America, according to Rav Moshe it would seem that you have ~9min after שקיעה to use the ס"ס mentioned above. However, it seems that Rav Moshe was only מיקל to use the ס"ס for a הפסק טהרה or a ברית but not for driving on *erev*-Shabbos, especially because **Rav Moshe** (11) writes that the מנהג in America is to be מחמיר both like the גאונים/גר"א and ר"ת. The **ספר נשמת שבת** (15) writes that since the custom has become to be מחמיר like the גאונים/גר"א at the onset of שבת, you must exit your car before sunset. (However, everyone would agree that if you are in a dangerous neighborhood and there is a צאת ספק סכנת נפשות you should continue driving even past צאת.)

- 7) Your 13-year-old son has just returned from playing with his friends on Shabbos afternoon. "I'm starving and so thirsty!" You offer him a plate of food and drink, but your *frum* friend jumps up "wait! It's after שקיעה! You can't eat anymore!" Can you give your son the food?

The **משנ"ב** (רצט-סק"א) writes that even though we are מחמיר at the onset of Shabbos like the גאונים, here we will allow your son (or you) to eat סעודה שלישית (or to eat a fourth meal if he is hungry) even after שקיעה. The reason for this has nothing to do with the ס"ס mentioned above, but rather as the **עשה דרבנן** explains that the עשה of eating and enjoying oneself on Shabbos overrides the rabbinic "לא תעשה" of not eating before הבדלה. The **משנ"ב** adds that you are only allowed to eat until 30 minutes before צאת (in the place of the **משנ"ב**) because from 30 minutes before צאת and onwards it is forbidden in any case to eat because of the חיוב to recite שמע קריאת. However, in ארץ ישראל most *passkin* do not allow to eat after שקיעה.

- 8) You are in a taxi returning home on *erev-Shabbos*, and according to Waze you'll arrive a few minutes after שקיעה. Should you get out of the car or can you stay inside until you've reached your final destination?

The S”A in *רס"א-א' passkins* that you can ask a non-Jew to do מלאכה for you during בין השמשות if it is a מצוה/שבת/לצורך or will cause you distress. The משנ"ב סקי"ג explains that בין השמשות גוזר during the time of בין השמשות. Therefore, if you are in a cab and will only arrive at your final destination during בין השמשות you can tell the non-Jewish driver to continue driving. However, once the time of צאת הכוכבים approaches, you need to get out of the car (unless it's נפשות סכנת).

- 9) You applied for a big business loan and are expecting an answer on Friday. The phone rings, it's the bank calling, but you already were מקבל שבת and it is now בין השמשות. Can you overtly ask a non-Jew to answer the phone?

The S”A in *רס"א-א' passkins* that אמירה לעכו"ם is permitted during בין השמשות even for something that you are "טרוד ונחפז עליה" – “causes you distress”. The משנ"ב סקט"ז writes that if what is bothering you is "לצורך חול" – “for the weekday”, you should not ask a non-Jew to do it for you unless there will be הפסד מרובה or it is לצורך גדול. In the above question, answering the phone does not seem to be considered "צורך גדול", and it is best to wait until after Shabbos. However, each case needs to be judged independently.

- 10) Because you learned about תוספת שבת last week, you decide to accept Shabbos a few minutes earlier this week. However, after accepting Shabbos, you realize you have not *davened mincha* yet. Can you still *daven*? What if you realize your *plata* is not plugged in, can you retract your קבלת שבת?

רבי עקיבא איגר (20) quotes a מחלוקת whether תוספת שבת is a נדר and can be retracted or is as if you are expanding the קדושה of Shabbos to Friday and cannot be retracted. The *אורהות שבת* (21) *passkins* that one cannot retract his קבלת שבת and is not allowed to plug in the *plata* even if it is well before שקיעה.

With regards to *davening mincha*, the שש"כ (18) writes that once you accept Shabbos you can no longer *daven mincha*. Therefore, it is best to *daven* in a *minyan* that finishes before שקיעה in order that you can fulfill the obligation of תוספת שבת at the conclusion of *mincha* but before שקיעה. However, if you didn't *daven mincha* early, and the *minyan* in your local shul will only finish after שקיעה, it is best to *daven* ביחידות and then accept Shabbos before שקיעה. The reason for this is because תוספת שבת is a דאורייתא and תפילה

דרבנן *בציבור* is a *minyan* will begin *חזרת הש"ץ* before *שקיעה*, you should accept Shabbos after you have completed your silent *עמידה*. **Rav Sternbuch** (19) argues and says that even if you verbally accepted Shabbos early you can still daven *mincha*, unless you accepted Shabbos through an action (example, lighting candles). The *ארחות שבת* (21) above also writes that you can retract your acceptance of Shabbos in order to *daven mincha* though not for any other reason (see notes for details).

11) Early Shabbos-Should you do it?

It seems from the S”A in *רסז-ב* and from the *Rama* in *רס"א-ב* that you can accept Shabbos as early as *פלג המנחה*. The *גמרא* relates stories of *אמוראים* who accepted Shabbos early, and the *תרומות הדשן* (23) writes that he heard when learning in Yeshiva of great *rabbeim* who accepted Shabbos early. However, **RSZA** (24) writes that the custom of “early Shabbos” that is mentioned in the S”A is only if the entire city is accepting Shabbos early. But if some of the city is accepting Shabbos on time, it is best to accept Shabbos with them and not to do “early-Shabbos”. **RSZA** concludes that “*אין איסור בדבר*”. **Rav Elyashiv** (25) was also against doing “early Shabbos” but for a different reason. He held that since we *passkin* like the *רבנן* during the week (and *daven mincha* until *שקיעה*) we cannot start *davening ma’ariv* after *פלג*, even on Friday. Therefore, it is better to accept Shabbos with the early *minyan*, have a meal with your family, and then go daven *ma’ariv* on time with the *ציבור*. In contrast, there are many *posskim* who write that doing “early Shabbos” is acceptable (see notes).

12) If you do early Shabbos, do you need to daven *mincha* before *פלג*?

The *משנ"ב* (רס"ז-סק"ג) writes that if you are doing “early-Shabbos” by accepting Shabbos after *פלג* and before *שקיעה*, you need to make sure to daven *mincha* before *פלג*. For if not, it is a “*תרתני דסתרי*” – “you are contradicting yourself” by not following either the *ר"י* or *רבנן*. However, if there is only one *minyan* in town that does not daven *mincha* before *פלג*, there may be room to be lenient and daven with them.

13) You plan on doing “early Shabbos” but you are running late. When you enter shul, they have already finished *mincha* so you quickly daven *ביחידות*. But after finishing *שמונה עשרה*, you notice that you began and finished *mincha* after *פלג*. Can you still *daven maariv* with the early *minyan*?

The *מגן אברהם* (סימן רל"ג סק"ז) writes that one can *daven* both *mincha* and *maariv* in between *פלג* and *שקיעה* if you are *davening* both with a *minyan*. The reason for this *קולא* is because it is hard to gather a *minyan* twice. However, if in your community there is also a “late Shabbos” *minyan* and you davened *mincha* after *פלג*, you are not allowed to daven



maariv with the “early Shabbos” *minyan*. This is also evident from the (רלג סקי"א) **משנ"ב** and the (סימן רס"ז) **ביה"ל ד"ה** ובפלג (who is מחמיר even with a *minyan*).

14) You decide to do “early Shabbos” - can your wife still do מלאכה? She can? Until when?

When making “early Shabbos”, the earliest time you can accept Shabbos is during or after פלג המנחה, but not before. There is a מחלוקת regarding the status of the wife when the husband is מקבל שבת early. **Rav Moshe** (26) is of the opinion that if the couple is making “early Shabbos” for reasons of convenience (for example, the summer time) the wife cannot do מלאכה for him from the moment he is מקבל שבת, but she can do any מלאכה for herself. However, if he has a מנהג to always accept Shabbos early (even in the winter), she needs to fully accept Shabbos when he does (and she cannot do מלאכה even for herself). The **שבט הלוי** (27) argues and says that the wife always follows the husband’s שבת קבלת שבת and at the moment he accepts Shabbos, the candles need to be lit already. The **שבט הלוי** continues that it does not make a difference why the couple is making “early Shabbos,” and even if they are doing it just for convenience, she still needs to be מקבלת שבת when he does. **Rav Sternbuch** (28) argues on both Rav Moshe and the **שבט הלוי** and *passkins* that the wife can continue to do מלאכה (even for the husband) even after he was מקבל שבת. However, she should make sure that when her husband returns home from shul the candles are lit. (This is based on the S”A 'רס"ב-א' that when entering home from shul, the table should be set לכבוד שבת). **Rav Ovadya** (29) also *passkins* that the woman never follows the man, and she can continue to do מלאכה even after he accepted Shabbos.

15) True story: A man broke his leg but still wanted to go to shul. He had a great idea -- “I’ll do early Shabbos, but my wife will not accept Shabbos early and drive me to and back from shul!” Is this allowed?

According to **Rav Moshe** (26) and the **שבט הלוי** (27), she may not drive him home after he accepted Shabbos, either because she may not do מלאכה for him once he accepted Shabbos (Rav Moshe) or because she needs to fully accept Shabbos when he does (שבט הלוי). However, **Rav Sternbuch** (28) *passkins* that she can continue to do מלאכה even after he accepted Shabbos as long as the house is ready and candles are lit when he comes home. Therefore, it is possible that Rav Sternbuch would allow her to drive him home if she runs in ahead of him and lights candles (or if she lights תנאי). However, there might be an issue of זילזול שבת by being driven when you already accepted Shabbos. In such a situation, it is best to ask your Rav.