

In Hilchos Shabbos

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Is Early Shabbos
a Family Affair?

A summary of the weekly shiur by Rabbi Shmuel Stein at the Miami Beach Community Kollel / Reviewed by Rabbi Yitzchok Reichman / To receive a copy send an email to InHilchosShabbos@gmail.com

During the summer months, it is common for people to begin making “early Shabbos.”¹ Generally, when accepting early Shabbos, the husband or father goes to shul and takes in Shabbos long before sunset, while the rest of his family remains at home. Does one’s early acceptance of Shabbos obligate the rest of his family to accept Shabbos early as well, or can the rest of his family continue to perform *melacha* until Shabbos actually begins? The Debretziner Rav² writes, “Many members of my community have asked me this question, as well as many *rabbanim* from different communities. It is a very difficult question that requires a great amount of thought and insight.” In the following paragraphs we will discuss some of the *halachos* of early Shabbos that are relevant to determining whether the husband’s or father’s early acceptance of Shabbos also obligates his wife and family to accept Shabbos early.

Accepting Shabbos Early

Generally, Shabbos begins automatically on Friday afternoon at *shkiya* (sunset).³ However, one may accept Shabbos earlier by verbally (or even mentally⁴) accepting Shabbos upon himself before it actually begins.

The earliest time that one may accept Shabbos is from *plag hamincha*⁵ (1¼ seasonal hours [*sha’os zemanios*] before *shkiya*⁶). One may not accept Shabbos before this time. The *Mishna Berura*⁷ writes that if someone accepts early Shabbos before *plag hamincha*, his early acceptance is invalid.

The *Mishna Berura*⁸ further writes that a woman must be careful to light the Shabbos candles *after* *plag hamincha* arrives, since lighting them before *plag hamincha* does not fulfill the *mitzva* of lighting Shabbos candles. This *halacha* is particularly important to keep in mind when a family makes early Shabbos, as Rav Yisroel Belsky⁹ warns, “A woman must be careful to light the Shabbos candles *after* *plag hamincha*, otherwise the candle lighting that she performed and the *beracha* that she recited are invalid, and she must relight the candles and recite a new *beracha* after *plag hamincha*.”

Situations where One Is Forced to Accept Shabbos Early

Although, as we mentioned, there is generally no obligation to accept Shabbos early, there are a couple of instances where one is forced to accept Shabbos early, regardless of whether he wishes to take it in or not:

- 1) Candle lighting
- 2) Reciting *Bo’i v’shalom*
- 3) Communal acceptance of early Shabbos

Candle lighting

The Rema¹⁰ writes that the custom is that a woman accepts Shabbos automatically with the lighting of the Shabbos candles. The woman’s acceptance of Shabbos is effective even if she did not have intention to accept Shabbos when she lit the candles.¹¹

Does the rest of the family need to accept Shabbos at candle lighting?

The Rema¹² rules that although the woman who lights the candles automatically accepts Shabbos by lighting them, the rest of the family is not bound by the candle lighting of a wife or mother. Therefore, they may continue to perform *melacha* until Shabbos actually arrives (at sunset).

Reciting *Bo’i v’shalom*

When one recites the *Lecha Dodi* prayer during *Kabbalas Shabbos*, when he reaches the final stanza of *Bo’i v’shalom* and says “*Bo’i Kalah*” – Come in the Shabbos Queen, he automatically accepts Shabbos,¹³ even if he had no intention of accepting Shabbos with this recitation.¹⁴ The *Arizal*¹⁵ writes that the main acceptance of Shabbos occurs when one recites the stanza of *Bo’i v’shalom*; the custom is therefore to stand while reciting *Bo’i v’shalom* since we accept the Shabbos at that point.¹⁶

Does the rest of the family need to accept Shabbos when the husband or father recites *Bo’i v’shalom*?

The question now arises whether the rest of the family is obligated to accept Shabbos when the husband or father who is making early Shabbos recites the stanza of *Bo’i v’shalom* in shul. Is the rest of the family “dragged” into early Shabbos with his early acceptance of Shabbos? In order to properly understand what this issue hinges on, let us quickly review the *halachos* of a community that accepts Shabbos early, “dragging” everyone in that community into accepting early Shabbos. After discussing these *halachos* we will apply them to a husband or father who accepts Shabbos early.

Communal acceptance of early Shabbos

The *Shulchan Aruch*¹⁷ writes that if the majority of the community accepts early Shabbos, the remainder of the community must accept it as well. The minority is “dragged” into Shabbos along with the rest of the community because we do not want different groups in the same community starting Shabbos at different times.¹⁸ Therefore, we obligate the minority of people to accept Shabbos together with everyone else.

1 Refer to last week’s discussion on “Early Shabbos” regarding the halachos and concerns with making early Shabbos. 2 *Be’er Moshe* 2:15 3 See *Mishna Berura* 261:20. See *Shylos v’teshuvos Mahari Steif siman 1* where he writes that the custom in America is to light 18 minutes before *shkiya*, following the opinions that Shabbos begins at *shkiya*. See *Igros Moshe O.C. Vol. 1:96* 4 *Shmiras Shabbos K’hilchosa* 46:2. See *Mishna Berura* 261:21 5 *Shulchan Aruch* 263:4 6 See *Mishna Berura* 263:19. The hour and a quarter is calculated using “*sha’os z’manios*” (seasonal hours), and not standard hours. *Sha’os z’manios* is calculated by dividing each day into twelve “seasonal” hours. For example if a summer day has 13 hours each seasonal hour is 1.08 hours. If a winter day has 11 hours each seasonal hour is .91 hours. 7 *Mishna Berura* 263:18 8 *Biur Halacha* 263:4 *d’h m’bod yom* 9 *Shulchan Ha’Levi* pg. 63 note 10 *Rema* 263:10. The *Mishna Berura* (263:42) adds that when a man lights the Shabbos candles he does not automatically accept Shabbos with the lighting of the candles. Still, the *Mishna Berura* writes that it is commendable that when a man lights the Shabbos candles he specify that he does not wish to accept Shabbos with his candle lighting. Sephardim generally do not follow this ruling of the Rema, and accordingly a Sephardic woman does not automatically accept Shabbos with the lighting of the Shabbos candles. Nevertheless, it is recommendable that she make a *tenai* (stipulation) stating that she does not wish to accept Shabbos with the lighting of the Shabbos candles. She only needs to make this *tenai* one time, as she can have in mind for this stipulation to be effective for her entire life. [*Yalkut Yosef* Shabbos Vol. 1 pg. 179,180] 11 See *Rema* *ibid*. Only if the woman specifies with a *tenai* (stipulation) that she does not wish to accept Shabbos with her candle lighting does she avoid accepting Shabbos. However, if no stipulation was made she automatically accepts Shabbos when lighting the Shabbos candles. However, the See *Mishna Berura* (263:44) writes that a woman should not make a *tenai* when lighting the Shabbos candles unless there is a particular need to do so, since some *poskim* rule that a woman making a *tenai* when lighting Shabbos candles is ineffective. For further elaboration refer to chapter on Candle Lighting. 12 *Rema* 263:10 13 The *Shulchan Aruch* (261:4) writes that one accepts Shabbos when reciting the stanza of “*Mizmor shir Iyom ha’Shabbos*.” However, the *Mishna Berura* (261:31) cites the *sefer Derech Chachma* that rules that nowadays we accept Shabbos when reciting the stanza of “*Boei V’Sshalom*”, when we say the words “*Boei Kalah – Come in, Shabbos Queen*.” See *Nishmas Shabbos* Vol. 1:246 where he cites many *poskim* that say that one automatically accepts Shabbos when reciting *Boei V’Sshalom*, see also 39 *melachos* pg. 161 14 By stating that “Shabbos [should come in]”, it is as if one accepted Shabbos (*Mishna Berura* 261:31). See *Shulchan Aruch* 263:11 that one may not even make a *tenai* saying that he does not wish to accept Shabbos early when reciting *Boei V’Sshalom*. Unlike when Shabbos is accepted early by lighting the Shabbos candles, which can be avoided by making a *tenai*, accepting Shabbos by reciting *Boei V’Sshalom* cannot be circumvented by stipulating a *tenai* (*Mishna Berura* 263:50). As a side note, some have the custom when greeting a friend on Friday afternoon (after *plag hamincha*) to be careful not to say “*Gut Shabbos*” rather to say “*Gutten erev Shabbos*”. Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach [*Shulchan Shlomo* 263: note 5] base this custom on the ruling of Rabbi Akiva Eiger [*ha’agos on the Shulchan Aruch* 271 (*d’h v’chain mash’mah*)] who rules that “someone who mentions Shabbos by saying “*Good Shabbos*” (accepts Shabbos on himself).” Accordingly, some are careful not to say “*Gut Shabbos*” on Friday afternoon in order to avoid accepting Shabbos at that time. However, Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky (*Kovetz Halachos Shabbos* Vol. 1 pg. 159) explains that this cannot be the reason as it is obvious that greeting a friend by saying “*Gut Shabbos*” will not bring about a Shabbos acceptance if one has no intention of accepting Shabbos with the greeting. Rather, the reasoning behind this custom is in order to add honor to Shabbos. By being careful not to say “*Gut Shabbos*” on Friday he is creating a distinction between the way he greets people on Shabbos and the way he greets them before Shabbos. By reserving the special greeting of “*Gut Shabbos*” specifically for Shabbos he honors Shabbos. 15 cited in *Nishmas Shabbos* Vol. 1:246 16 As explained by commentators cited in *Nishmas Shabbos* Vol. 1:246 17 *Mishna Berura* 263:12 18 *Ravyah* Vol. 1, *siman* 199 (cited by *sefer Shvus Yitzchak* 8:18)

For example, it is common during the summer months for people go to a “bungalow colony.” In many instances, the communal shul in the bungalow colony accepts Shabbos early. In such situations, the entire bungalow colony must accept early Shabbos, and consequently refrain from performing *melacha* when the *minyán* reaches *Bo’i v’shalom*.¹⁹ Since the majority of the community accepted Shabbos when reciting *Bo’i v’shalom*, the rest of the community must accept Shabbos at that time and refrain from performing *melacha* as well. Accordingly, the women in the bungalow colony must make sure they light the Shabbos candles and finish performing *melacha* before the *minyán* reaches *Bo’i v’shalom*.²⁰

Someone traveling to a bungalow colony on Friday afternoon

Someone traveling to a bungalow colony on Friday afternoon only becomes dragged into Shabbos along with the rest of the community when he arrives at the bungalow colony. So long as he has not yet arrived at the colony he is not considered part of the community and may drive his car and perform any *melacha* even after the communal *minyán* of the bungalow colony has recited *Bo’i v’shalom*.²¹ However, once he enters the bungalow colony he becomes part of the community and is dragged into Shabbos.²² This would seemingly create an issue for someone arriving late to the colony since he would not be allowed to drive his car into the colony once the *minyán* has accepted Shabbos. Accordingly, once the *minyán* has recited *Bo’i v’shalom* he may not perform any *melacha* once he reaches the colony. Nevertheless, Rav Yisroel Belsky²³ rules that someone who arrives late to a bungalow colony may drive his car into the parking lot and park his car. Rav Belsky²⁴ explains that although the entire community is obligated to accept early Shabbos, it is obvious that the community reserves a place at the entrance of the bungalow colony for people who arrive after Shabbos has been accepted in order for them to park their car. If this area would not be left reserved for latecomers, the colony could not function properly. Therefore, someone who arrives late at the colony may park his car in this “reserved area” [the parking lot]. However, he must leave all *muktza* items in the car, since once he leaves the “reserved area” and enters the colony, he may no longer perform any prohibited activities.

Being careful to arrive on time for Shabbos: It must be noted, that when traveling to a bungalow colony on Friday afternoon one must carefully plan his trip so that he arrives on time for Shabbos. As Rav Yisroel Belsky²⁵ warns:

“Anyone traveling on *erev* Shabbos must plan his trip in a way that he can reach his destination before the community accepts Shabbos. The *Mishna Berura*²⁶ writes “Many *poskim* have written that one should not travel on *erev* Shabbos close to nightfall as this can easily lead to *chilul Shabbos*.” One should be careful to arrive at his destination an hour before the community accepts Shabbos so that he will be waiting for Shabbos to arrive, this way he can fulfill what the Torah writes²⁷ “The Jewish people should *anticipate* the [arrival of] Shabbos”.

A Community with More Than One *Minyan*

The *Mishna Berura*²⁸ writes that although the minority of the community must follow the majority that accepts Shabbos early, this is true only if there is only one shul in the community. If there is more than one shul in the community, one shul cannot obligate another shul to accept Shabbos early — even if the shul that *davens* early comprises the majority of the community. The *Mishna Berura* explains that since there are two separate shuls, we consider each a separate and independent community, and neither one is bound by the other’s acceptance of early Shabbos.

Therefore, in a community with many Friday night *minyanim*, even if the majority of the shuls in the community accept Shabbos early, the other shuls in the community are not “dragged” into accepting Shabbos early. Since these *minyanim* have their own shul, each is considered a separate and independent community, and do not have to accept Shabbos with the rest of the community.²⁹

According to many *poskim*,³⁰ even if a community has only one shul, if the shul has more than one *minyán*, each *minyán* is considered a separate and independent community. Therefore, the members of the other *minyanim* are not “dragged” into accepting early Shabbos together with the early *minyán*.

A Husband’s or Father’s Acceptance of Early Shabbos

Let us now return to our original question: If a husband or father *davens* early and accepts early Shabbos, does that obligate the rest of his family to also accept Shabbos early?

Many *poskim*³¹ compare the head of a household’s early Shabbos acceptance to a community’s early Shabbos acceptance; just as a communal acceptance of Shabbos obligates the rest of the community into accepting early Shabbos, so does the head of the household who accepts early Shabbos “drag” the rest of his household into accepting early Shabbos as well. His entire family must begin Shabbos with his early acceptance of Shabbos. Accordingly, when one makes early Shabbos, his wife must make sure she lights the Shabbos candles before her husband recites *Bo’i v’shalom* at shul.³²

However, Rav Moshe Feinstein³³ and many other *poskim*³⁴ rule that when the head of a household accepts Shabbos early, he cannot obligate the rest of his family into accepting early Shabbos. Only a *community* has the power to force the minority to follow the majority and make early Shabbos, not an individual.³⁵ Accordingly, the rest of his family may continue to perform *melacha* until Shabbos actually begins (at sunset).³⁶

Rav Yisroel Belsky³⁷ and other *poskim*³⁸ write that although one’s family is not obligated by the husband’s or father’s early Shabbos acceptance, they should ensure that they have finished performing any necessary *melachos*, lit the Shabbos candles, and accepted Shabbos by the time he returns home from shul. It would be inappropriate for the head of the household to return home from shul after accepting Shabbos to find his family members still performing *melacha*

The intention of this summary is to discuss common practical *shaylos*. One should consult a Rav concerning *p’sak halacha*.

¹⁹ Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach (Shulchan Shlomo 263: note 19), Shevet Ha’Levi 9:56, *Shulchan ha’Levi* pg. 64, Nishmas Shabbos Vol. 1 pg. 413. However, Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky (Kovetz Halachos Shabbos Vol. 1 pg. 170) rules that a bungalow colony does not have a status of a “community” since people only live there for a few months in the year, and therefore the communal acceptance does not drag all the residence of the colony into accepting Shabbos. ²⁰ See *Aruch Ha’Shulchan* 263:22 where he writes that once there is a communal acceptance of Shabbos, at that point it would be prohibited for a woman to light the Shabbos candles. ²¹ *Shulchan ha’Levi* pg. 65 ²² *Shulchan Ha’Levi* pg. 65 ²³ *Shulchan Ha’Levi* pg. 65 ²⁴ *Shulchan Ha’Levi* pg. 65 ²⁵ *Mishna Berura* 249:3 ²⁶ *Shemos* 31:16. The verse states “*v’shamiru b’nei yisroel es ha’habbos*” The Ohr HaChaim (there) explains that the word *shamar* can also mean wait or anticipate as in *v’aviv shamar es ha’davar* (Yakov waited to see the fulfillment of the dreams of Yosef). The Torah is teaching that one should wait and anticipate for Shabbos to arrive. ²⁷ *Mishna Berura* 263:51. The *poskim* discuss whether someone who is a member of a particular *shul* must follow the early acceptance of his *shul* even if he is not *davening* in his *shul* on that particular Friday night. Perhaps since he is a member of this “community” he must always follow their early acceptance of Shabbos even though he is not present when they accept Shabbos. The *Machtzis ha’Shekel* 263 *sif katan* 24 seems to rule that a member is always obligated to follow the early Shabbos acceptance of his shul. [See however Rabbi Ribiat, *sefer* 39 *Melachos* pg. 163 note 753]. The *Shulchan Aruch ha’Rav* [263:19] rules that one does not need to follow the acceptance of his shul when he *davens* in a different *minyán* on Friday night. [See *Shraga ha’Meir* 4:39:1 who discusses this issue, and proves that the *Aruch ha’Shulchan* 263:22 follows the opinion of the *Shulchan Aruch ha’Rav*.] See also *Shulchan ha’Levi* pg. 63. However, Rav Elyashiv (*Hilchos Shabbos b’Shabbos* 1:3:15) rules that only if his *shul* is the only *minyán* in the community that *davens* his *nusach* (e.g. *Ashkenaz, Sephard*) would he be automatically included in their early Shabbos acceptance. If there are other *minyanim* that *daven* the same *nusach* he is not bound to “his” *shul* since he always has the option to *daven* somewhere else, and is therefore not automatically included in their early Shabbos acceptance. Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky (Kovetz Halachos Shabbos Vol. 1 pg. 169) rules that if he *davens* by himself (*b’yichidus*) then he is automatically dragged into Shabbos together with his *shul*’s early Shabbos acceptance. But if he *davens* in a different *minyán* he is considered a guest in their *minyán* and follows their acceptance of Shabbos. ²⁹ The *Mishna Berura* writes that a (Friday night) *minyán* in one’s home is not considered a second *minyán* even if they *daven* there on a consistent basis, as a *minyán* in one’s home cannot be considered a separate “community”. See also Kovetz Halachos Shabbos Vol. 1 pg. 168 and Nishmas Shabbos Vol. 1 pg. 405, 406 ³⁰ Rav Elyashiv (quoted in *sefer Shevus Yitzchok Ner Shabbos* 18:4: note 40), Shmiras Shabbos K’hilchaso (46:7), Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky (Kovetz Halachos Shabbos Vol. 1 pg. 170). However the *Minchas Yitzchok* (1:24) rules that even in such a situation where one *shul* has two *minyanim* the smaller *minyán* must follow the larger one. Therefore, if the majority of people *daven* in the early *minyán*, the rest of the community would have to follow the majority of people, and accept early Shabbos. See also Nishmas Shabbos Vol. 1 pg. 407 ³¹ *Shevet ha’Levi* 7:35 *Shraga ha’Meir* 4:39:2 (he proves that this is also the opinion of the *Pri M’gadim* 263:1 and the *Aruch ha’Shulchan* 263:22), Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky (Kovetz Halachos Shabbos Vol. 1 pg. 171) ³² See *Aruch Ha’Shulchan* 263:22 where he writes that the early Shabbos acceptance of the community would prohibit a wife from lighting the Shabbos candles. ³³ *Igros Moshe* O.C. Vol.3:38. Rav Moshe writes that if a husband accepts Shabbos for the purpose of fulfilling the *mitzva* of *Tosefes Shabbos*, then the husband’s early Shabbos acceptance would be considered a “*minhag*” which the rest of his family would need to follow. However, this is usually not the case, as most people who accept Shabbos early in the summer do so in order to allow for an earlier meal schedule and not [solely] for the purpose of adding extra *Tosefes Shabbos* (39 *Melachos* pg. 163). ³⁴ *Shaylos v’teshuvos Mahari Steif* (42), *Teshuvos V’hanhagos* 3:85, *Shulchan ha’Levi* pg. 63, 39 *Melachos* pg. 163, *The Radiance of Shabbos* pg. 17, see also Nishmas Shabbos (Vol. 1 pg. 398,399) where he cites different opinions on this matter and proves that this is also seems to be the opinion of the *Shulchan Aruch Ha’Rav*. [The *Be’er Moshe* 2:15 writes that although the *halacha* follows the opinion that a woman is not obligated by her husband’s early Shabbos acceptance, it is nevertheless commendable that she try to accept Shabbos before her husband accepts Shabbos in *shul*.] ³⁵ See *Be’er Moshe* [2:15] and *Teshuvos V’hanhagos* [3:85] ³⁶ However, Rav Moshe adds that it is commendable that when a husband accepts Shabbos early in *shul*, that his wife not perform a *melacha* after that time specifically for the needs of her husband. Rav Moshe cites the verse “One’s helper should not perform *melacha* for his owner.” *The Gemara* (Yevamos 48) that teaches us that although one’s helper may not be obligated to accept Shabbos along with the early Shabbos acceptance of his owner, it is still prohibited for the helper to perform *melacha* on behalf of his owner. Similarly a wife – who has certain obligations to her husband – should not perform a *melacha* specifically for her husband after he has already accepted Shabbos. However, she may perform any *melacha* which is not intended specifically for her husband. ³⁷ *Shulchan Ha’Levi* pg. 64 ³⁸ *Teshuvos V’hanhagos* 3:85