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PREPARE FOR SHAVUOT

The Mitzvah of Eruv Tavshilin

BACKGROUND

Since Shavuot falls on Friday this year, there is a mitzvah to perform *eiruv tavshilin* on Thursday (Erev Yom Tov). Although one is permitted to cook on Yom Tov using a pre-existing flame, preparing on Yom Tov for after Yom Tov is generally prohibited rabbinically due to *hachana* (preparing for a later time). Chazal therefore instituted *eiruv tavshilin* to be performed before Yom Tov, which permits preparing food on Friday Yom Tov for Shabbat. Let's explain a bit more how this works:

According to the Gemara (Pesachim 46b), cooking on Yom Tov (Friday) for Shabbat is fundamentally permitted on a biblical level for one of two reasons:

1. Shabbat and Yom Tov are considered one continuum of sanctity, and it is therefore permitted to cook on one for the other (Rashi's understanding of the Gemara).
2. Since unexpected guests may arrive on Yom Tov, any food cooked on Yom Tov could theoretically still be needed for Yom Tov itself.

Nevertheless, Chazal prohibited cooking on Yom Tov for Shabbat without an *eiruv tavshilin* for one of two reasons (Beitzah 15b):

1. One might use all of one's food for Yom Tov and neglect the needs of Shabbat. Chazal therefore instituted *eiruv tavshilin* before Yom Tov in order to begin and remember the preparations for Shabbat.

2. If cooking on Yom Tov for Shabbat were entirely unrestricted, one might mistakenly come to cook on Yom Tov for a weekday, which is prohibited by the Torah. *Eiruv tavshilin* therefore serves as a reminder that preparing on Yom Tov for another day is generally forbidden and is permitted here only because the preparations began before Yom Tov (see commentaries to the Gemara for other variations of these explanations).

WHAT DOES EIRUV TAVSHILIN PERMIT AND FOR WHOM

An *eiruv tavshilin* permits all forms of food preparation (*ochel nefesh*) allowed on Yom Tov to be performed for the sake of Shabbat as well. Thus, cooking, reheating food in a manner prohibited on Shabbat, sorting, grinding, lighting candles from a pre-existing flame, and washing dishes with hot water are all permitted for the needs of Shabbat. *Eiruv tavshilin* also permits activities done for Shabbat that do not involve *melachah*, such as cleaning or changing clothing (Piskei Teshuvot 527).

Even one who does not plan to cook on Yom Tov for Shabbat should perform an *eiruv tavshilin* if one will light Shabbat candles at home, although most *poskim* recommend doing so without a *beracha* (Shulchan Aruch [S.A.], O.C. 527:19; M.B. 527:55; R. Simcha Bunim Cohen, "The Laws of Yom Tov," p.256). Some Sephardic *poskim* rule that in this case

one should not make an *eiruv* at all (*Chazon Ovadia* [C.O.], *Yom Tov, Eiruv Tavshilin* 2).

HOW IS IT DONE?

The *eiruv tavshilin* is performed using both a baked item and a cooked item. The baked item should preferably be bread or matzah, ideally whole. If neither is available, a *mezonot* item may also be used (*Sefer Eruv Tavshilin Ha'aruch*). The cooked item may be a hard-boiled egg, piece of fish, or piece of chicken, or another significant cooked food (S.A., O.C. 527:2; M.B. 527:8). Each item should be at least a *k'zayit* (approximately 28 cc) (S.A., O.C. 527:3). Ashkenazim preferably use a baked item that is at least a *k'beitzah* (approximately 55 cc) (Rema, O.C. 527:3). Any baked or cooked item may be used, including food purchased from a store, although the most ideal practice is to use food prepared specifically for the mitzvah of *eiruv tavshilin* (M.B.).

The *eiruv tavshilin* should be performed at some point on Thursday, before Yom Tov begins. Hold these items in one's right hand and recite the following *berachah*:

בְּרִינָה אֲתָהּ ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל מִצְוֹת עֶרְבֹה,

Blessed are You, Hashem, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with his mitzvot and commanded us concerning the mitzvah of the *eruv*.

This is followed by a declaration:

“בעירוב זה יהיה מותר לנו לאפות ולבשל ולהדליק
נר ולעשות את כל צרכנו מיום טוב לשבת”

It can also be recited in English: “With this *eruv*, it will be permitted to us to bake, cook, light a flame, and do everything necessary on Yom Tov for the sake of Shabbat” (S.A. and Rema, O.C. 527:12). One should understand the declaration in whatever language it is recited.

The foods used for the *eiruv tavshilin* should be set aside carefully so that they will not spoil

or be eaten before Shabbat (S.A., O.C. 527:15). It is customary to use the bread or matzah of the *eiruv tavshilin* as the second loaf for *lechem mishneh* of the Friday night and Shabbat day meals, and then again for *seudah shlishit*, at which point it is eaten. Since one mitzvah was already performed with this bread, we seek to use it for additional mitzvot as well (M.B. 527:48). The cooked food should likewise be eaten during one of the Shabbat meals.

OTHER IMPORTANT POINTERS

All cooking done on Friday for the sake of Shabbat should ideally be completed early enough in the day that the food could theoretically still be eaten before sunset. This is because, as mentioned earlier, according to one explanation in the Gemara, cooking on Yom Tov for Shabbat is permitted only when the food could potentially still be used for Yom Tov itself before the end of the day (M.B. 527:3; Bi'ur Halachah 527:1).

A family living together is included in the *eiruv tavshilin* performed by one member of the household (M.B. 527:56). According to many poskim, guests staying in the host's home, such as friends or married children, who wish to cook or light candles are likewise automatically included in the host's *eiruv tavshilin* (*Piskei Teshuvot* 527:17; R. Simcha Bunim Cohen, *The Laws of Yom Tov*, p.286). Some have the custom that the other family members or guests are present when the *eiruv* is performed, but this is not required (Aruch Hashulchan 527:22).

Some poskim are stringent and maintain that guests are not automatically included unless the host explicitly acquires the *eiruv tavshilin* on their behalf. This may be done by having the guests, or another non-household member acting on their behalf, lift the *eiruv* at least a handbreadth (approximately 8-10 cm)

before handing it to the host, who then recites the *berachah* and declaration for everyone included (Chut Shani, p. 154).

It is preferable that someone from the household perform the *eiruv tavshilin* (Kaf Hachaim 527:57). However, in cases where this is difficult for whatever reason, it is permitted to appoint someone else, such as a neighbor, to come to the house and perform the *eiruv tavshilin* using the food of the person for whom it is being performed (Bi'ur Halacha 527:12; Piskei Teshuvot 527:14).

One who will be staying in a hotel over Yom Tov should perform *eiruv tavshilin* since Shabbat candles will need to be lit, but a *berachah* should not be recited, as discussed above (C.O., p.276; Piskei Teshuvot 527:17).

COMMON EIRUV TAVSHILIN PROBLEMS

If one performed *eiruv tavshilin* using only a cooked item and no baked item, the *eiruv* is still valid (Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 527:2). However, an *eiruv tavshilin* made without a cooked item is invalid.

If one forgot to perform *eiruv tavshilin* entirely, one may rely after the fact on the *eiruv tavshilin* performed by the local rabbi, who customarily does so while explicitly intending to include anyone who forgot to perform an *eiruv tavshilin* themselves (S.A., O.C. 527:7). According to many poskim, the same applies if the *eiruv tavshilin* was accidentally lost or eaten before Shabbat (*ibid.*), or even if one recited the *berachah* but forgot to recite the declaration afterward. However, many poskim maintain that one may not intentionally neglect to perform *eiruv tavshilin* and rely on the rabbi's *eiruv* (*ibid.*; M.B. 527:26).

If one remembers before sunset that one did not perform *eiruv tavshilin* but has already left home, one may ask a family member at home to perform it instead. If that is not possible, some

poskim allow one to recite the *berachah* and declaration remotely while having a specific baked and cooked item in mind (Tiferet Yisrael, Beitza 2:1), whereas others maintain that this is not effective (Maharsham 2:36). If necessary, one may rely on the lenient opinion (Maor HaShabbat, vol.2; "The Laws of Yom Tov," p.285)

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EATING THE YOM TOV MEAL ON FRIDAY

One may not generally eat an especially large meal on Friday in order to maintain an appetite for the Shabbat meal (Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 249:2). However, this restriction does not apply to a *seudat mitzvah*, which certainly includes the Yom Tov meal.

Nevertheless, one should ideally begin the meal before the tenth halachic hour of the day (see Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 249:3; Rema 529:1; Mishnah Berurah 529:5-8 and Bi'ur Halachah).

Some poskim recommend beginning even before *chatzot*, based on discussions regarding other Friday *seudot mitzvah*. Others, however, do not require this, and in practice this is not always feasible on Shavuot, particularly for those who remain awake learning throughout the night and sleep later in the morning (see Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 249:3; Shulchan Aruch HaRav 249:7; Mishnah Berurah 249:13 and Sha'ar Hatziun 249:17; Dirshu edition of the Mishnah Berurah to O.C. 249). ■

Rabbi Eli Ozarowski serves as editor of the *Tzurba M' Rabanan* English Series, an innovative, systematic learning program covering hundreds of major topics in the Shulchan Aruch from Tanach through modern-day halachic application. He is also the author of the OU's Torat Imecha Halacha Series. Rabbi Ozarowski received semicha from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) and holds an M.A. from the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration. He lives in Mitzpeh Yericho with his wife, Zemira, who serves as Director of Women's Programming at OU Israel, together with their nine children.