

Sunset Provisions

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Q May I wash for *seudah shlishis* right before *shkiah*, such that the actual seudah is held after *shkiah*, during *bain hashmashos*?

A There are two distinct issues here.



The first question is whether one may even eat then, because it is *asur* to begin a *seudah* after *shkiah* due to the pending mitzvah of havdalah (Shulchan Aruch O.C. 299:1). If, however, one made *hamotzi* before *shkiah*, that would suffice to be considered a beginning and the meal is then allowed (Mishnah Brurah *ibid.* 2).

The second question is whether one fulfills the mitzvah of *seudah shelishis* by eating after *shkiah*, because it is not certainly daytime. The Mishnah Brurah does not discuss this explicitly, but he does discuss a similar question regarding the Friday night *seudah*: If one made early Shabbos, i.e., he is *mekabel* Shabbos before *shkiah* and begins his *seudah* before *shkiah*, may he conclude it then as well, or must he extend it into the night? The Mishnah Brurah (267:5) cites a dispute about this, and he rules that *lechatchilah* it is proper to be stringent.

It stands to reason that the same dispute would apply to our question regarding *motza'ei* Shabbos, so it would be proper to eat at least a *kezayis* of challah before *shkiah*. In fact, the Ketzos Hashulchan (92, note 8) rules this way.

However, if one has not yet washed and it is just past *shkiah*, he should still wash and eat *seudah shlishis*. The Mishnah Brurah (299:1) rules that even if it is several minutes after *shkiah*, one should still wash. (For a precise cutoff point, one should ask his *rav*.)