The first mitzva in the Torah given to the Jewish people as a nation was Kiddush Hachodesh. Why this particular mitzva? The Seforno explains that slaves have no clear concept of time because their time is not their own. A slave is not obligated in time related mitzvot because he lacks time consciousness. Only free men, who are in control of their time and can fill it with spirituality, can understand the essence of time. Sanctification of time and freedom are bound together. Therefore, to mark the Jewish people’s emergence as a liberated nation, they were given the mitzva of Kiddush Hachodesh.

Creation exists in the dimension of time. It continually evolves and reshapes itself. However, only man can sense the passage of time and appreciate its beauty and significance. There are three dimensions of time: retrospection, anticipation, and appreciation. Retrospection is when the past becomes present. One can relive and retell an experience long gone as if it was happening at the moment. Anticipation is man’s projection of time: retrospection, anticipation, and appreciation. There are three dimensions of time, and only man can sense the passage of time and appreciate its beauty and significance. Retrospection, anticipation, and appreciation. Retrospection is when the past becomes present. One can relive and retell an experience long gone as if it was happening at the moment. Anticipation is man’s projection of time: retrospection, anticipation, and appreciation. Retrospection is when the past becomes present. 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Judaism is about expressing time. A difference of a few minutes can alter the status of the same action. If one studies Jewish law, he can become sensitive to a time-conscious relationship with Hashem. How do we tap into the power of chiddush? The key is the first halachic obligation of a Jew in Shulchan Aruch, “Hitgaber k’ari.” Strengthen yourself like a lion. Arising each morning with vigor, like the king of beasts, will transform our day into one that is spiritually elevating and everlasting.

Achieving Balance: Class #4
Excerpted from RebbeTzin Tziporah Heller’s Question and Answer series on Naaleh.com

Question:
I’ve heard you discuss a few times the responsibility of health and safety. I understand that this falls under the Torah commandment of “Vnishmartem me’od.” What about good nutrition? Is this optional or praiseworthy?

Answer:
Nobody really knows what good nutrition is.
Adding to Shabbat
Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Michael Taubes

In Parshat Vayakhel, the Torah tells us, “Six days you shall work and on the seventh day you shall rest.” When does the seventh day actually begin? Can one accept Shabbat early? The earliest time when one can voluntarily accept Shabbat is plag mincha, approximately one and half hours before sunset. It has become accepted in many communities to have an early minyan for Kabbalat Shabbat, especially during the long summer days when nightfall is very late. If the Torah specifically says that Shabbat begins on the seventh day, and since in Jewish law the next day is only counted from nightfall, how can one accept Shabbat when it is still day?

The origin of accepting Shabbat early is a verse in Parshat Emor that relates to Yom Kippur. “V’ìnitem et nafshoteichem… You shall afflict your soul on the ninth of the month in the evening.” The Gemara asks, if Yom Kippur begins on the ninth day at night then shouldn’t the Torah refer to it as the tenth day. Why mention the ninth? The Gemara answers, “Mosifin m’chol al kodesh.” The weekday is added to the holy day.” We begin fasting while it is still day. Indeed, most shuls commence Kol Nidrei before sunset. The Gemara adds that all holy days during which we refrain from work fall under the category of mosifin, we begin early and end late.

The Rambam, however, records this law with regard to Yom Kippur only and does not mention it in relation to Shabbat and Yom Tov. The Kesef Mishna explains that the Rambam held that toseft Shabbat was neither a d’oraita nor a d’rabanan obligation. The Radvaz disagrees and explains that the Rambam did hold that this law applied to Shabbat. He only mentions it in relation to Yom Kippur because it is implicit that since Shabbat is holier than Yom Kippur it would most certainly apply to Shabbat. L’halacha, there are significant opinions that hold that one should add on to Shabbat and one may certainly do so if one wants to.

The Maharsha asks, if one davened Maariv on Friday night while it was still daylight, can one still count the Omer? He answers that something related to Shabbat can be done after accepting Shabbat even though it is still daylight. However, something dependent on actual nightfall like Sefirat Haomer, must be done after tzetz hakochavim. Similarly, if one davened Maariv while it was still day, he is obligated to repeat Shema after nightfall. The Maharsha rules that one should not accept Shemini Atzeret early, since the two competing days would raise a problem of whether to recite a brachah before eating in the Sukkah.

The general consensus among many poskim is not to accept Shavuot early as the verse speaks about Shavuot. However, the Taz disagrees and counters that once one accepts the Yom Tov it automatically becomes seven complete weeks. There is a disagreement among the Batei Hatosfot if one can accept Pesach while it is still day. One opinion allows it. Others disagree based on the verse, “V’yochlu et hapesach b’layla hazeh.” The sacrifice must be eaten at night. Since matzot and marror have the same halacha as korban Pesach it must be eaten after dark. Can one still accept Pesach early if he argues that it will take until nightfall to eat the matzot and marror? According to the Terumat Hadeshen anything unique to Pesach must be performed in the evening. This would include Kiddush and the four cups of wine. Technically, one can daven earlier, but the Seder must begin when it is definitely nightfall.

Similarly, one cannot accept Sukkot early because the Gemara draws a correlation between the first night of Sukkot and Pesach. The Taz notes that the obligation to eat three meals on Shabbat is derived from the verse that repeats the word hayom, this day, three times. The question then arises, does tosefet Shabbat allow a person to eat the Shabbat meal when it is still day, or does it only permit one to pray the Shabbat davening? Some opinions hold that one can eat the meal and others disagree. The Mishna Berura suggests that one extend the meal into the night and eat a kzayit after dark.

To summarize, one can accept kedushat Shabbat and Yom Tov earlier, as tosefet Shabbat has the power to transform a mundane weekday into a sanctified day. However, it does not transform the astronomical aspect of the day and therefore, any mitzva that is connected to nightfall must be performed after the stars emerge.