



HOW TO SEPARATE CHALLAH

Separating challah is one of three mitzvot given especially to women. (The other two mitzvot are Shabbat candles and family purity.) Nevertheless, men are equally obligated to separate challah.



REQUIREMENTS

The requirement to separate challah applies any time you make a large dough from any one (or combination) of **five flours**: wheat, spelt, rye, barley, or oats.

Challah must be separated from **any large dough** (ex. for bread, cookies, cake, etc.), whether you are baking it for Shabbos or for the week.

You should only separate challah if your dough is **large enough** according to halachic standards:

- ⇒ More than 5 lb. of flour: Separate challah and recite the blessing.
- ⇒ Between 2 lb. and 5 lb. of flour: Ask a Rabbi whether or not to separate challah and whether or not to say the brachah.
- ⇒ Less than 2 lb. of flour: Do not separate challah at all.

PROCEDURE

After you have mixed all ingredients into a dough, prepare to separate challah. (If you are separating challah from a liquidy batter, separate challah only after it has been baked).

Hold the dough in your right hand (preferably while standing) and recite the following blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ
לְהַפְרִישׁ חֲלָה.

*Baruch atta Ado-noy Elo-hai-nu Melech ha'olam
asher keed-sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav v'tzi-vanu
l'haf-reesh challah.*

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to separate challah.



Now pull off a handful of dough with your right hand, and declare:

הַרִי זוֹ חַלָּה. Harei zu Challah

This [piece of dough] is challah.*



(*Note: Although we typically refer to our Shabbos bread as "challah," the word "challah" actually refers to the small piece of dough that you pulled off; it does not refer to the dough as a whole.)

The moment after separating challah is a special time for spiritual closeness with God; it is a time to pray for anything your heart desires. Take advantage of this special moment!

After you have finished praying, set aside the piece of dough to be burned. It should be burned as soon as possible, but you can bake the rest of the dough first if you prefer.

The challah piece must be burned until it is completely charred.

To accomplish this, you can burn it either:

- (a) in the flame on a gas stove top, or
- (b) uncovered in an oven, resting on a piece of foil.

Nothing else may be baking in the oven at the same time.



Some recite the following prayer after separating challah:

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלְקֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
שֶׁהַמִּצְוָה שֶׁל הַפְּרֶשֶׁת חַלָּה תִּחְשַׁב כְּאִלוּ קִיּוּמֵתִיחָה
בְּכָל פְּרֻטְיָהּ וְדִקְדוּקֶיהָ, וְתִחְשַׁב הַרְמַת הַחַלָּה שְׂאֵנִי
מְרִימָה, כְּמוֹ הַקָּרְבָּן שֶׁהִקְרַב עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ, שֶׁנִּתְקַבֵּל
בְּרָצוֹן. וְכִמוֹ שְׁלֻפְנִים הֵיטָה הַחַלָּה נְתוּנָה לַכֹּהֵן
וְהֵיטָה זֹו לְכַפֶּרֶת עֲוֹנוֹת, כִּי תִהְיֶה לְכַפֶּרָה לְעֹוֹנוֹתֵי,
וְאִז אֵתֶּה כְּאִלוּ נוֹלֶדֶתִי מִחֲדָשׁ, נִקְיָה מִחַטָּא וְעוֹן.
וְאוֹכֵל לֶקִים מִצֹּוֹת שַׁבַּת קֹדֶשׁ וְהַיָּמִים הַטּוֹבִים
עִם בַּעֲלִי (וְיִלְדִינוּ, לְהִיּוֹת נְזוּנִים מִקְדָּשַׁת הַיָּמִים
הָאֵלֶּה. וּמֵהַשְּׁפָעֶתָה שֶׁל מִצְוֹת חַלָּה, יִהְיוּ יִלְדֵינוּ
נְזוּנִים תָּמִיד מִיַּדֵּי שֶׁל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, בָּרַב
רַחֲמָיו וְחֶסֶדִּי, וּבָרַב אֲהָבָה, וְשֶׁתִּתְקַבֵּל מִצְוֹת חַלָּה
כְּאִלוּ נִתְתִּי מַעֲשֶׂה. וְכִשֶּׁם שֶׁהִנְנִי מְקִימַת מִצְוֹת
חַלָּה בְּכָל לֵב, כִּי יִתְעוֹרְרוּ רַחֲמָיו שֶׁל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ
הוּא לְשִׁמְרָנִי מִצַּעַר וּמִמְכָּאוּבִים כָּל הַיָּמִים, אָמֵן:

May it be Your Will, Eternal, our God, that the commandment of separating challah be considered as if I had performed it with all its details and ramifications. May my elevation of the challah be comparable to the sacrifice that was offered on the altar, which was acceptable and pleasing. Just as giving the challah to the Kohein in former times served to atone for sins, so may it atone for mine, and make me like a person reborn without sins. May it enable me to observe the holy Sabbath (or Festival of...) with my husband (and our children) and to become imbued with its holiness. May the spiritual influence of the mitzvah of challah enable our children to be constantly sustained by the hands of the Holy One, blessed is He, with His abundant mercy, loving-kindness, and love. Consider the mitzvah of challah as if I have given the tithe. And just as I am fulfilling this mitzvah with all my heart, so may Your compassion be aroused to keep me from sorrow and pain, always. Amen.

