

# Shabbat Seder Guide

## A Concise Manual for Christians

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## Introduction to Shabbat

Shabbat begins at sunset on Friday evening and ends Saturday night when three stars are visible in the sky (25 hours). On Shabbat we remember that God created the world and then rested from His labors (Genesis 2:2).

Shabbat is considered the most important of the Jewish holidays -- even more important than Yom Kippur or the other High Holidays. This special day is to be marked by three qualities: rest (*menuchah*), holiness (*kedushah*), and joy (*oneg*). During Shabbat we spend time with family, friends, pray, read, and rejuvenate. We light candles to symbolically drive away darkness and welcome the Light of the Mashiach Jesus into our hearts.

There are three main rituals regarding Shabbat observance:

- 1) Lighting the Sabbath candles
- 2) Saying *Kiddush* over wine
- 3) Reciting *HaMotzi* over challah

The Shabbat meal is a time when friends and families share highlights from the week and sing table songs, called *zemirot*.

### ***Remembering the Sabbath***

In Genesis 2:3 we are told that God rested (*shavat*) from His creative activity and set apart the seventh day as the memorial of the work of His hands. God called the seventh day “holy” (*kodesh*), which means set apart as sacred, exalted, and honored.

The fourth of the ten mitzvot (commandments) is, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (KJV):

זְכוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ:

le-ka-de-sho	ha-shab-bat	et-yom	za-khor
<i>to keep it holy</i>	<i>the Sabbath</i>	<i>the day (of)</i>	<i>Remember</i>

*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy* (Exodus 20:8)

The word translated “remember” (*zakhor*) means to recall or recollect past events and experiences and renew them in the present. In a sense, then, such remembering is a form of re-creation, where we reinterpret our lives and our identities in new ways.

How do we so remember? By candle lighting, reciting Kiddush, dining festively, dressing in special clothes, praying, listening to Torah reading in synagogue, and learning and discussing portions of Torah.

### ***Guarding the Sabbath***

Interestingly, the fourth commandment is repeated in Deuteronomy 5:12:

שְׁמֹר	אֶת-יוֹם	הַשַּׁבָּת	לְקַדְּשׁוֹ:
le-ka-de-sho	ha-shab-bat	et-yom	sha-mor
<i>to keep it holy</i>	<i>the Sabbath</i>	<i>the day (of)</i>	<i>Keep</i>

*Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it... (Deuteronomy 5:12)*

The word translated “keep” (*shamor*) means to guard something held in trust, to protect and to watch closely. Not only are we to remember the Sabbath, but we are to guard and protect its sanctity as something of great value.

How are we to guard it? By refraining from secular activities (usually thought of as one of the forbidden 39 categories of work (*melachah*) which are not appropriate for this special day (the Rabbinics defined 39 categories of activity that are forbidden on Shabbat that derive from the assembling of the Mishkan (tabernacle). Traditionally all observant Jews will refrain from these sorts of activities during the 25 hour period of Shabbat.)

Just as God set apart a time to focus on and honor the marvelous works of His hands, so we are commanded to regularly set apart a time to focus and honor our own creative life in God. Notice that both God and man set apart the Sabbath day and share in the glory of creative life.

Some Jewish sages have said that the Sabbath is a picture of the *Olam HaBah*, or world to come. In the rhythm of the *Olam HaZeh*, or present world, however, the Sabbath is a sacred time to become spiritually reconnected with our true identities as God’s very children. Are we regularly setting apart a time to remember the sacred work of God in our lives? The Sabbath is our God-given opportunity and privilege.

## Preparing for Shabbat

In order to make Shabbat a time of rest (*menuchah*), holiness (*kedushah*), and joy (*oneg*), certain preparations need to be in place.

### Planning for Shabbat

First, you may want to invite friends over to join you for Shabbat. It is especially worthwhile to invite over those who are needy or who would otherwise be alone during this special time.

Next, plan your Shabbat meal. This often includes doing some shopping and getting the items together before Thursday. Traditional *Erev Shabbat* (Friday evening) meals include fish, chicken, and roast beef - or you can go vegetarian. And please do NOT serve ham or other food that is considered unkosher for your shabbat meal!

Be sure to read the weekly Torah portion to be spiritually prepared for Shabbat. The Jewish sages actually recommend reading the portion through twice before Shabbat begins on Friday evening. Since this involves a bit of study on your part, be sure to make allowances in your schedule to find the time for your reading.

### Setting the Shabbat Table

The Sabbath Table normally will include the following items:

- A Tzedakah Box
- Candle Holders and Shabbat Candles (at least two of each)
- A clean tablecloth
- Fresh flowers or other decorations
- Kiddush cup(s)
- Wine or grape juice
- Challot (two loaves) with challah plate and cover
- A challah knife
- Salt (to be sprinkled on the challah before eating)
- A hand washing basin with decorative towel
- A siddur or shabbat song book
- A Havdalah Candle (blue and white braided)
- Besamim box (spice box)



**A shabbat table**

The Shabbat Table should be ready - and the meal prepared - no later than Friday afternoon, well before sundown (in the Northern Hemisphere, this is normally no problem during the spring and summer, though fall and winter days are short!)

## Giving Tzedakah

*Kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh.*

“All Israel is responsible for one another.”  
(Talmud Shavuot 39a).

It is customary to give *tzedakah* (charity) by putting a few coins in a Tzedakah box before lighting the Shabbat candles. This money is for the purpose of *tikkun olam*, or the “repair of the world.” Many families place the Tzedakah box next to the Shabbat candle holders to remind them to perform this mitzvah. Encourage even the youngest of your children to contribute a coin or two for the betterment of the world!

When money is put into the Tzedekah box, recite the following blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר  
 a-sher ha-'o-lam me-lekh e-lo-hei-nu Adonai at-tah ba-rukH  
 who King of the universe our God LORD You Blessed

קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל הַצְּדָקָה.  
 ha-tse-da-kah al ve-tsi-va-nu be-mits-vo-tav kid-de-sha-nu  
 the tzedakah about and commanded with his mitzvot sanctifies us  
 us



*Barukh attah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,  
 asher kideshanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu  
 al ha-tzedakah.*

“Blessed art thou, Lord our God, Master of the universe, who hast sanctified us with thy commandments, and commanded us about the Tzedakah.” [Amen.]

## Lighting the Sabbath Candles

Sabbath candles are lit by the (eldest) woman of the house no later than 18 minutes before sundown on Friday evening (i.e., before Shabbat begins). After kindling the candles, she waives her hands over the flames three times (as if welcoming in the Sabbath), and covering her eyes with her hands (so as not to see the candles burning) says:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

ha-'o-lam me-lekh e-lo-hei-nu Adonai at-tah ba-rukh  
the universe king (of) our God Lord are you Blessed

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהִיּוֹת אֹר

or le-hiyot v'tsivanu be-mits-vo-tav kid-de-sha-nu a-sher  
a light to be and with his sanctified us who  
commanded us commandments

לְגוֹיִם וְנָתַן-לָנוּ אֶת יֵשׁוּעַ מְשִׁיחֵנוּ אֹר הָעוֹלָם.

ha-olam or meshicheinu yeshua et v'natan-lanu le-goyim  
the light of the world our Messiah Jesus ( ) and gave to us to the nations

*Barukh attah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,  
asher kideshanu bemitzvotav ve-tsivanu lehiyot or  
le-goyim v'natan-lanu et Yeshua Meshicheinu or ha-olam.*



“Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe, Who sanctified us with his commandments, and commanded us to be a light to the nations and Who gave to us Jesus our Messiah the Light of the world.” [Amen.]

**Note:** A Friday night service called *Kabbalat Shabbat* is normally offered at the synagogue after the candle-lighting time but before the Shabbat meal. From the time the candles are lit until after kiddush is made, one should not eat or drink anything.

## Blessing the Children

It is customary to bless your children on Shabbat. The blessing prescribed by tradition invokes the names of Joseph's sons and the names of the matriarchs, and includes the "priestly blessing." Parents may use this intimate moment as a chance to add their own words of blessing and offer expressions of love and appreciation to their children. You may wish to bless all your children together or bless each child individually or privately.

### The Hebrew Blessing for Boys:



יְשִׁמְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה.

v'khi-me-na-sheh ke-'ef-rayim e-lo-him ye-sim-kha  
and like Manasseh like Ephraim May God make you

*Yesinkha Elohim ke'efrayim v'khimenasheh.*

### The Hebrew Blessing for Girls:

יְשִׁמְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּסָרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה.

v'le-'ah ra-chel riv-kah ke-sa-rah e-lo-him ye-si-mekh  
and Leah Rachel Rebecca like Sarah May God make you

*Yesimekh Elohim keSarah, Rivkeh, Rachel, v'leah.*

### The Hebrew Blessing for the Family:

יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ. יָאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיִחַנֶּךָ.

vi-chun-ne-kha e-ley-kha pa-nav Adonai ya'er ve-yish-me-re-kha Adonai ye-va-re-khe-kha  
and be gracious to you his face May the Lord shine and protect you May the Lord bless you

יְשֵׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וְיִשֵּׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם.

sha-lom le-kha ve-ya-sem e-ley-kha pa-nav Adonai yi-sa  
peace to you and give to you May the Lord turn his face

*Yevarekhekha Adonai veyishmerekha. Ya'er Adonai panav eleykha vichuneka.  
Yisa Adonai panav eleykha veyaseim lekha shalom.*

## Friday Night Kiddush

*Kiddush* means “sanctification” and is the blessing said over wine or grape juice on Shabbat or festivals. Normally Kiddush is recited while holding a cup of wine, usually by the father of the household. The blessing begins with Genesis 1:31-2:3 and ends with thanks to God for the gift of the holy Sabbath:

וְהָאָרֶץ וְהַשָּׁמַיִם הָיוּ כִּלְיוֹם הַשִּׁשִּׁי וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר

ve-ha-'a-rets ha-sha-mayim vai-khu-lu ha-shi-shi yom vai-hi-vo-ker vai-hi-'e-rev  
and the earth the heavens were finished the sixth day. and there was evening and morning

וְכָל צְבָאָם: וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה

'a-sah a-sher me-lakh-to hash-she-vi-'i bai-yom e-lo-him vai-khal tse-va-'am vekhol  
He did that His work on the seventh day and God finished their host and all

וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: וַיְבָרֶךְ

vai-va-rekh 'a-sah a-sher me-lakh-to mik-kol hash-she-vi-'i bai-yom vai-yish-bot  
and He blessed He did which His works from all on the seventh day and He rested

אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת מְכָל

mik-kol sha-vat vo ki o-to vai-ka-deish hash-she-vi-'i et-yom e-lo-him  
from all He rested on it for it and sanctified the seventh day God

מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

la-'a-sot e-lo-him ba-ra a-sher me-lakh-to  
to make. God created which His works

“[And the evening and the morning were] the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”



סַבְּרֵי מָרָנָן וְרַבָּנָן וְרַבּוֹתַי:

v' rabo-tai v' raba-nan mara-nan savri  
and teachers and masters distinguished by your  
ones leave

(continued on the next page)

**The Blessing over the Wine:**

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

hag-ga-fen pe-ri bo-re ha-'o-lam me-lekh e-lo-hei-nu Adonai at-tah ba-rukh  
the vine. fruit of Who creates the universe King of our God Lord are You Blessed

[Respond: Amen.]

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ

kid-de-sha-nu a-sher ha-'o-lam me-lekh e-lo-hei-nu Adonai at-tah ba-rukh  
sanctified us Who the universe King of our God Lord are You Blessed

בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְרָצָא בָנוּ, וְשַׁבַּת קִדְּשׁוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן הִנְחִילָנוּ,

hin-chi-la-nu uv-ra-tson be-a-ha-vah kod-sho ve-shab-bat va-nu ve-rah-tsa be-mits-vo-tav  
He guided us and in favor in love and His holy Sabbath and was pleased with us with His mitzvot

זְכוֹר לְמַעֲשֵׂה בְרֵאשִׁית. כִּי הוּא יוֹם תְּחִלָּה לְמִקְרָאֵי קֳדֶשׁ,

ko-desh le-mik-ra-ei te-chil-lah yom hu ki ve-re-shit le-ma-'a-sei zik-ka-ron  
holy to convocations opening the day it is for // of creation. of the work a memorial

זְכוֹר לְיִצְיַאת מִצְרַיִם. כִּי בָנוּ בְּחַרְתָּ, וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ,

ki-dash-ta ve-'o-ta-nu va-char-ta va-nu ki mits-rai-yim liy-tsi-at ze-kher  
did You sanctify and us did You choose us For from Egypt. of the Exodus a memorial

מִכָּל הָעַמִּים. וְשַׁבַּת קִדְּשָׁךְ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן הִנְחַלְתָּנוּ.

hin-chal-ta-nu uv-ra-tson be-'a-ha-vah kod-she-kha ve-shab-bat ha-'a-mim mik-kol  
You guided us and favor with love and Your holy Sabbath the nations. from all

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת. [אָמֵן.]

a-mein ha-shab-bat me-ka-desh Adonai at-tah ba-rukh  
Amen. the Sabbath. Who sanctifies Lord are You Blessed

“Blessed art Thou, Adonai our God, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and was pleased with us, and His holy Sabbath in love and in favor, He gave us a heritage, a memorial of the work of creation. For it is the day beginning for holy convocations, a memorial of the exodus from Egypt. For You chose us and sanctified us from all the nations. And Your holy Sabbath with love and favor you gave us a heritage. Blessed are You, Adonai, Who sanctifies the Sabbath.” [Respond: Amen.]

After this blessing is recited, it is customary to give each person present some wine from the Kiddush cup.

## Washing the Hands

Directly after reciting the Kiddush, everyone washes their hands in the prescribed ritual manner to prepare for the blessing over the bread (see note, below). Customarily, after reciting this blessing you do not speak until you have eaten the challah:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

ha-'o-lam me-lekh e-lo-**hei**-nu Adonai at-tah ba-rukh  
the universe king (of) our God Lord are you Blessed

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.

ya-dai-yim ne-ti-lat 'al ve-tsi-va-nu be-mits-vo-tav kid-de-**sha**-nu a-sher  
hands washing and commanded us with his sanctified us who  
about commandments

*Barukh attah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher kideshanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu al netilat yadayim.*

“Blessed art thou, Lord our God, Master of the universe, who hast sanctified us with thy commandments, and commanded us about washing the hands.” [Amen.]

### How to Wash Your Hands



Fill a large cup that holds at least four and a half ounces with water and pour water on each hand front and back, starting with the right hand. Many people use special handwashing cups, which have two handles to them to make the pouring of the water easier.

**Note:** The ritual of *Netilat Yadayim* is actually a “ceremonial” cleansing. In fact, before engaging in this ritual, your hands should already be clean! The Lord Jesus our Mashiach opposed this traditional ritual of cleansing as essentially being meaningless (Matthew 15:2-14; see also Mark 7:3-16). It is included here for educational purposes only.

## Blessing the Bread

After hand-washing, the head of the household lifts the two challah loaves and says the blessing over bread. Before reciting the blessing, however, the head of the household lightly draws the knife across the challah making a slight indentation to indicate the place for cutting, and then raises the loaves to recite the blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

ha-'o-lam    me-lekh    e-lo-hei-nu    Adonai    at-tah    ba-rukh  
*the universe    king (of)    our God    Lord    are you    Blessed*



הַמּוֹצֵיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

ha-'a-rets    min    le-chem    ham-mo-tsi  
*the earth    from    bread    the Who brings forth*

[Respond: Amen.]

*Barukh attah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,  
 hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz.*

“Blessed art thou, Lord our God, Master of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.” [Amen.]

The head of the household cuts a piece of challah for himself, and then either dips it in salt or sprinkles salt over the slice. He or she then cuts and distributes the rest of the challah to those around the table.

Note that salt is used to commemorate the sacrifices in the Temple, which were always required to be offered with salt.

## Eating the Shabbat Meal

The Friday night meal is normally eaten after the Synagogue service (Kabbalat Shabbat). The meal typically includes some kind of fish, soup and chicken or meat.

During the meal someone usually will offer a commentary on the weekly Torah portion (i.e., the Torah portion that will be read in the Shabbat morning service). Such discussions are called *Divrei Torah*.

Often *Zemirot*, or Shabbat table songs, are sung during the meal as well.



Some table songs (zemirot) include:

- *Shalom Alechem*
- *L'cha Dodi*
- *Etz Chayim*
- *Kol HaOlam*
- *Lev Tahor*
- *Shabbat Shalom!*

שַׁבַּת שְׁלוֹם

*S h a b b a t S h a l o m !*

## Grace after Meals

Jews normally do not say “grace” before meals (as do many Christians), but rather after they have eaten. They do not “bless” the food, either, but rather acknowledge that God is the One who provides for their sustenance.

The full grace said after meals, called Birkat Hamazon, is a rather long prayer that involves several blessings (see a good Siddur for the entire recitation). An alternative, shorter version is provided here (it is actually the first part of the entire blessing):

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

ha·'o-lam me-lekh e-lo-hei-nu Adonai at-tah ba-ruk  
*the universe king (of) our God Lord are you Blessed*

הַזֵּן אֶת הָעוֹלָם כְּלוּ בְטוֹבוֹ, בְּחֵן בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים.

uv-ra-cha-mim be-che-sed be-chen be-tu-vo kul-lo ha-olam et ha-zan  
*with grace, kindness, and compassion in goodness who nourishes the whole world*

הוּא נוֹתֵן לֶחֶם לְכָל-בָּשָׂר, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדּוֹ.

chas-do le-o-lam ki le-khol-ba-sar le-chem no-tein hu  
*His mercy endures forever for to all flesh bread gives He*

וּבְטוֹבוֹ הַגָּדוֹל תָּמִיד לֹא חָסַר לָנוּ

la-nu cha-seir lo ta-mid hag-ga-dol uv-tu-vo  
*we have never lacked And through His great goodness*

וְאֵל יַחְסַר לָנוּ מִזֶּן לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד,

va-ed le-o-lam ma-zon la-nu yech-sar ve-al  
*forever and we will not lack food*

בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁמוֹ הַגָּדוֹל. כִּי הוּא אֵל זֶן וּמְפָרֵס לְכֹל,

la-kol um-far-neis zan el hu ki hag-ga-dol she-mo ba-a-vur  
who nourishes and sustains all God He is for His great Name for the sake

וּמַטִּיב לְכֹל, וּמַכִּין מַזּוֹן לְכֹל-בְּרִיּוֹתָיו, אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא.

ba-ra a-sher le-khol b'ri-yo-tav ma-zon u-mei-khin la-kol u-mei-tiv  
He created which for all His creatures and prepares food and does good to all

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה הַזֶּן אֶת הַכֹּל. אָמֵן.

a-mein hak-kol et ha-zan Adonai at-tah ba-ruk  
Amen who nourishes all LORD are you Blessed

*Barukh attah Adonai eloheinu melek ha'olam  
hazan et ha'olam kullo betuvo, bechen bechesed uvrachamim.  
Hu notein lechem lekolbasar ki le'olam chasdo.  
Uvtuvo haggadol tamid lo chaseir lanu  
ve'al yechsar lanu mazon le'olam va'ed,  
ba'avur shemo haggadol. Ki hu El zan umfarneis lakhol,  
umeitiv lakol umeikhin mazon lekol b'riyotav, asher bara.  
Barukh attah hazan et hakkol. Amein.*

“Blessed are you, LORD our God, master of the universe, Who nourishes the whole world in goodness, with grace, kindness, and compassion. He gives bread to all flesh, for His mercy endures forever. And through His great goodness we have never lacked, nor will we lack food forever, for the sake of His great Name. For He is God, who nourishes and sustains all, and does good to all, and prepares food for all His creatures which He created. Blessed are You, LORD, who nourishes all. Amen.” [Amen.]

## Thanking God for Salvation

Of all the various *berachot*, this is one of the most important of all, since we come to be in a right relationship with YHVH - the Father of Glory - by means of salvation through Yeshua the Mashiach. It is fitting, then, to offer up thanks to the LORD for the way of salvation given though Yeshua the Messiah:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

ha·'o-lam    me-lekh    e-lo·hei-nu    Adonai    at-tah    ba-ruk  
*the universe    king (of)    our God    Lord    are you    Blessed*

אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת דֶּרֶךְ הַיְשׁוּעָה

ha·ye-shu·ah    de-rekh    et    la-nu    na-tan    a-she  
*the way of salvation    ( )    to us    gave    Who*

בְּמַשִּׁיחַ יֵשׁוּעַ בְּרוּךְ הוּא. אָמֵן.

a-mein    hu    ba-ruk    ye·shu·a'    ba-ma-shi·ach  
*Amen    He    blessed be    in the Messiah Yeshua*

*Barukh attah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,  
 asher natan lanu et derekh ha-yeshuah  
 bamashiach Yeshua, barukh hu. Amein.*

“Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe, Who gave to us the way of salvation though the Messiah Yeshua, blessed be He. Amen.” [Amen.]

## Sabbath Day Activities

Shabbat day is marked by a special *shacharit* (morning) service that includes *Keriat HaTorah* (the reading of the Torah portion of the week), the reading from the *Haftarah* (prophets), and a *Musaf* (additional) portion read in commemoration of the Musaf sacrifices made in the *Bet HaMikdash* (Temple).

After services, another (noon day) meal is served at home with friends and family. The Shabbat noon day meal begins with Kiddush (called *Kiddush Rabbah*). The daytime Kiddush is of later origin, established by the Sages, and is of less prominence than the Kiddush of Friday night. It is also shorter with just one blessing recited.

The rest of the day is spent with family and friends, or perhaps by taking a nap and relaxing. Some families take walks on Shabbat day and visit other friends. Torah study is encouraged on Shabbat, especially for children.

## The Havdalah Ceremony

The *Havdalah* (literally, “separation”) ceremony is recited at the end of the Sabbath (on Saturday night when three stars are visible in the sky) to mark the distinction between the departing sacred day and the ordinary weekday (*yom khol*) that is beginning. One way to begin your Havdalah ceremony is to go outside and look at the stars to behold the wonder of God’s creation.

The ceremony is usually celebrated at home with family or friends and includes three blessings—over wine, spices, and light—as well as the *hamavdil*, a blessing thanking God for separating the days and making the Shabbat sacred. Three components are required for the home ceremony: a tall, braided candle with several wicks, a Kiddush cup of wine, and a box filled with fragrant spices (*besamim*).

### Opening Scriptures

The Havdalah ceremony usually begins with the recitation of a number of biblical verses commemorating God’s salvation. For example, Isaiah 12:2-3 is often recited:

הִנֵּה אֵל יְשׁוּעָתִי אֲבַטַח וְלֹא אֶפְחָד כִּי־עַיִי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה יֵהְיֶה  
 Adonai yah ve-zim-rat ki-'o-zi ef-chad ve-lo ev-tach ye-shu-'a-ti el hin-neh  
*is Lord God and my song for my strength be afraid and not I will trust my salvation God is behold*

וַיְהִי־לִי לְיְשׁוּעָה: וְשָׁאַבְתֶּם־מַיִם בְּשִׂשׁוֹן מִמַּעַיְנֵי הַיְשׁוּעָה:  
 hai-shu-'ah mim-ma-'ai-nei be-sa-son ush-'av-tem-mayim liy-shu-'ah vai-hi-li  
*salvation from the wellsof with joy you will draw water my salvation and He is to me*

*Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD Adonai is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. (Isaiah 12:2-3)*

And Psalm 116:13 is also often recited:

כּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת אֲשָׂא וּבְשֵׁם יְהוָה אֶקְרָא:  
 ek-ra Adonai u-ve-shem es-sa ye-shu-'ot kos  
*I call Lord on the name I lift of salvation Cup*

*I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD  
 (Psalm 116:13)*

**Blessing over the wine**

Just as Sabbath is welcomed with wine, so it is concluded with wine as well. We lift the Kiddush cup of wine and say the blessing, but do not drink from the cup at this time:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.  
 hag·ga·fen pe-ri bo-rei ha-‘o-lam me-lekh e-lo·hei-nu Adonai at-tah ba-rukḥ  
*the vine. fruit of Who creates the universe King of our God Lord are You Blessed*

*Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe,  
 Who creates the fruit of the vine.*



**Blessing over the Spices**

A special spice box filled with fragrant herbs (*besamim*) is used to represent the redolence of Shabbat (the spices commonly used are cloves, cinnamon, or bay leaves). Since smelling spices helps distinguish special fragrance from the more ordinary, part of the reason for the *besamim box* is to illustrate another separation of the sacred from the profane. The following blessing is said upon smelling the spice box:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מִיְּנֵי בְשָׂמִים.  
 ve-sa-mim mi-nei bo-rei ha-‘o-lam me-lekh e-lo·hei-nu Adonai at-tah ba-rukḥ  
*spices. of all Creator the universe King of our God Lord are You Blessed*

*Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of all spices.*

**Blessing over the Fire**

The Havdalah candle represents light, the first element created by God at the beginning of the first week. Lighting this candle is the first act of work permitted on the *yom khol*. After lighting, hold your hands close to the flame in order to see the reflection of the flame on our fingernails or the shadow on your palm. This light represents the light by which we can now work with our hands in the world around us. The following blessing is said upon considering the light:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מְאוּרֵי הָאֵשׁ.  
 ha-‘esh me-‘o-rei bo-rei ha-‘o-lam me-lekh e-lo·hei-nu Adonai at-tah ba-rukḥ  
*of the fire. of the light Creator the universe King of our God Lord are You Blessed*

*Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe,  
 Creator of the light of fire.*

### The Havdalah Blessing

The last blessing of the ceremony is the *hamavdil*, the blessing over the separation of different things. This blessing is recited over the Kiddush cup of wine using only the light of the Havdalah Candle:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמְבַדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ  
 ko-desh bein ham-mav-dil ha-'o-lam me-lekh e-lo-hei-nu Adonai at-tah ba-rukh  
*the holy between Who separates the universe King of our God Lord are You Blessed*

לְחֹל, בֵּין אֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ, בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַמִּים, בֵּין  
 bein la-'am-mim yis-ra'el bein le-cho-shekh or bein le-chol  
*between and the nations Israel between and darkness light between the profane*

יּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי לְשֵׁשֶׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה הַמְבַדִּיל  
 ham-mav-dil Adonai at-tah ba-rukh ham-ma-'a-seh ye-mei le-she-shet ha-shev-i-'i yom  
*Who separates Lord are You Blessed and the six days of work the seventh day*

בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחֹל. [אָמֵן].  
 a-mein le-chol ko-desh bein  
*Amen. the profane the holy between*

*Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe,  
 Who separates the holy from the profane, light from darkness, Israel from the nations,  
 the seventh day from the six days of labor. Blessed are You, Lord our God,  
 Who separates between the holy from the profane. [Amen.]*

After the blessing is complete, we spill a small amount of the wine from the Kiddush cup onto a plate (to symbolize the loss of Shabbat) and then drink from our cups. Finally, we extinguish the flame from the Havdallah candle by dipping it into the wine cup and listening to it sizzle. The room is now entirely dark. We turn on the lights and the sing the song *Eliyahu Hanavi* (“The Prophet Elijah”) and wish everyone present “*Shavu‘a Tov*” – a good week ahead!

שָׁבוּעַ טוֹב

*Shavu‘a Tov!*

## Afterword: Christians and Shabbat

הַשַּׁבָּת הוּכַן בְּעִבּוּר הָאָדָם וְלֹא הָאָדָם בְּעִבּוּר הַשַּׁבָּת

*Shabbat was made for man, and not man for Shabbat. Mark 2:27*

Christians are *not* legalistically required to observe the Sabbath day. Because of the ministry of the Lord Jesus, we are no longer in that sort of relationship with God. We do not earn merit or righteousness through rule-following behaviors, no matter how noble or beautiful (Titus 3:5; Eph 2:8-9).

Indeed, the Lord Jesus is the Substance of all the shadows and patterns we find in the Torah of Moses (Col 2:16-17). Jesus' ministry is that of mediation of a better covenant, based upon better promises (Heb 8:6-7). He is the *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest) of the true *mishkan* (tabernacle) not made by human hands, who, through His sacrificial death, has forever obtained an eternal redemption for those who trust in Him (Heb 9:11-12). *It is finished!* Jesus is the way and the truth and the life. He came to give us life in abundance! He came to set us free from the demands of the Torah and its righteous judgment upon us.

The Lord Jesus is our Sabbath rest (Heb 4:9), the Giver of peace (John 14:27). He is the One who heals us and delivers us from the shame of our sinful condition. In short, Jesus is the fulfillment, goal, and answer of all that the Torah of Moses requires of mankind, and we are made right with God by means of His love for us.

“Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this Man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by Him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the Torah of Moses.” (Acts 13:39)

### So why observe Shabbat?

So why bother with Shabbat? Why should we learn about this special day that the LORD appointed for His people through the Torah of Moses? Let me give a few reasons:

1. Shabbat remembers God's creation (Gen 2:2).
2. Shabbat is one of the first things God blessed (Gen 2:3).
3. Shabbat remembers the Exodus from Egypt (i.e., God's salvation) (Deut 5:15).
4. Shabbat is one of the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12).
5. The Lord Jesus and His disciples observed Shabbat (Mark 1:21, 6:2; Luke 4:16).
6. The Apostle Paul observed Shabbat (Acts 13:13-42; Acts 18:4).
7. Shabbat provides a means of identifying with the Jewish people. Learning about Shabbat improves your Jewish literacy to make you a more effective witness to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt 10:19).
8. Shabbat is a delight – not a burden; a time for celebrating your personal rest in our Mashiach Yeshua (Heb. 4:9).

**We are free to celebrate Shabbat**

Shabbat observance is a *means to an end*, not an end in itself. As the Lord Jesus taught us, “Shabbat was made for man, and not man for Shabbat” (Mark 2:27). In other words, Shabbat is a gift of God to us, a time of rest and reflection, a joyful time set apart from the busy week when we can focus on what is really important in our lives.

Christians are *not* obligated to observe Shabbat on Saturday; nonetheless we are invited to celebrate a holy day of separation each week. “One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.” (Rom 14:5-6). This is a “weaker brother” issue. We are free to worship the LORD on any day of the week, but note well that we are to worship and to enjoy the principles of *shevat*, or rest in the LORD.

If you perform a Shabbat home ceremony (i.e., Shabbat Seder), please keep these matters firmly in mind. You are not effecting any sort of spiritual merit by performing rituals or acts of tradition, since the Lord Jesus is our Torah righteousness before the Father. We are not made right with God through anything other than the shed blood of Jesus on the cross for our sins!

Let me also add that we should never observe a Shabbat Seder in the presence of brothers or sisters who may feel that it is “legalistic” or an attempt at “self-righteousness.” Whenever possible we should follow the principle of charity in these matters and yield ourselves to the needs of others. We understand that we are free to enjoy this tradition and to learn from it, but we should not do so if it injures the faith of one our brothers or sisters in the LORD.

May the Lord God of Israel help us all steer clear of the perils of legalism and self-righteousness! It is only through Jesus, our precious Mashiach, that we are given true rest by the grace of God. Amen.