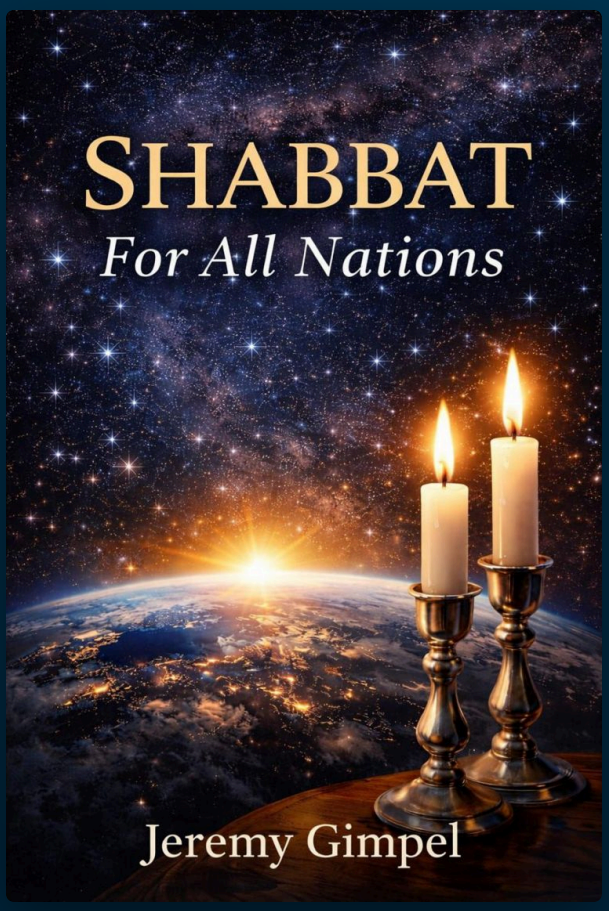


THE LAND OF ISRAEL NETWORK · FREE E-BOOK

SHABBAT

For All Nations

By **Rabbi Jeremy Gimpel** · Edited by Greg Upham

Why the seventh day was given to all mankind — and a practical, step-by-step guide to welcoming your first Shabbat, with every blessing in Hebrew, transliteration and English.

Copyright © 2026 New Light Media LLC. All rights reserved.
Published by Judean Way Press, Arugot Farm, Israel · First Digital Edition, 2026 · ISBN 979-8-9980867-0-0 (ebook)

זָכוֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."

EXODUS 20:8

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to and in honor of all our dear friends from the nations around the world who truly love the God of Israel, the People of Israel, the Land of Israel and the Torah of Israel.

You are all such an integral part of God's plan of Redemption and an inspiration for the important work we do here at The Land of Israel Network. Thank you for your courage to stand with us during these days when standing with Israel is not so popular.

Great is your reward in heaven!

Hazak v'amatz!

Contents

Preface 4 by Greg Upham

PART 1

Shabbat For All Nations

1 Why Shabbat Matters in the Modern World 7

2 The First Blessing in Creation 11

3 A Weekly Taste of the Messianic Future 16

4 Shabbat and Emunah: Faith You Can Live 20

5 Shabbat at Sinai: The Ten Commandments 25

6 Shabbat and the Ten Commandments: A Deeper Structure 32

7 Why God Commanded Shabbat, Not Suggested It 38

8 The Blessing and Healing of Shabbat 42

9 Shabbat: A Prophecy for the Righteous Among the Nations 45

PART 2

A Practical Guide

10 A Practical Guide 52

11 Introducing The Friday Night Shabbat Meal 61

12 Havdalah: The Sacred Art of Separation 80

13 Conclusion 85

BACK MATTER

About

About the Author 88

About the Organization 89

Preface

As a non-Jew, my wife and I have been on a spiritual journey for more than twenty-five years. Like many who will read this book, I was raised culturally Christian — Christian in name, not so much in practice. I had no particular interest in God or spiritual matters until college, when He began to stir one in me. I started attending church with my girlfriend, now my wife, and I remain grateful to HaShem for that season of my life. It introduced me to the Bible for the first time and to the beginning of a real relationship with God. But within a few years I had questions that my pastors, church leaders, and Christian friends could never answer satisfactorily. Without making a long story longer, those questions sent me on a journey that I suspect many of you will recognize.

Chief among them was the fourth commandment — ***remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy***. Of all the sermons I heard on the Ten Commandments, number four was always glossed over or ignored altogether. Why, I wondered? Searching for an answer led me to study Torah and the Hebrew Bible from Jewish sources: line upon line, precept upon precept, a little here and a little there. Slowly the pieces came together, and my understanding, along with my spiritual and religious practice, grew and evolved with them.

Before long I was living on a spiritual island — no man's land. Too "Jewish" now for many of my Christian friends and family, and too "Christian" to be welcomed into a Torah-observant Jewish community. But once you see truth, you cannot unsee it. So, we soldiered on, raising our five children with Torah as best we knew how with the limited access we had to real Torah learning. Baruch HaShem, that has changed for my wife and I — but it took patience and perseverance.

In 2025 I brought an idea to our team at The Land of Israel Network: that we needed to elevate Shabbat consciousness in the whole world and help hasten the final Redemption. My thesis was simple — Shabbat is not merely a "Jewish" thing but a universal institution. My beloved friend of twenty years, my rabbi, mentor, and brother from another mother, Jeremy Gimpel, graciously took up the challenge. This book is the result. Thank you, Jeremy!

To the many non-Jews whose stories resemble my own, I pray this book is a blessing — a help in your own practice and an encouragement to invite others in your circle of influence to take up the challenge of honoring the Shabbat.

And to my dear Jewish friends and to the broader Jewish community: I know that some of the ideas in this book are "un-orthodox," per se. But the world needs you now more than ever to take up your mantle, engage and be a light to the nations.

Greg Upham
Cofounder, LOI Network

PART 1

Shabbat For All Nations

CHAPTER 1

Why Shabbat Matters in the Modern World

We live in an age defined by extraordinary progress. Our devices connect us instantly with people around the world. Information is available within moments. Yet with all the advancements, humanity has never been so distracted. It seems like the more time-saving technologies we develop, the less time we have. The mind rarely rests. The heart rarely finds stillness. Work no longer ends when we leave the office. The boundaries that once shaped our days have dissolved into a constant stream of digital noise. Our attention is captured by notifications and headlines before it can be directed toward the people and values we hold dear.

With all the digital connectivity, more people feel more isolated than ever before. We may accomplish more than any generation before us, yet we struggle to feel present in our own lives.

Modern culture pushes us toward constant movement. Always doing. Instead of human beings, we should be called "human doings". The world today encourages us to produce, advance, and accumulate without pause. To stop can feel like falling behind. But a life without rest is not a life of flourishing, it is a slow forgetting of what it means to be human.

In the opening chapters of Genesis, the Torah offers a different vision of time. After six days of creative work, the seventh day arrives not as an afterthought but as the culmination of creation itself. On that day, God rests.[1] He makes the first holiday by making the seventh day holy.[2] By choosing to stop, God gives meaning to everything He has made. Creation only becomes meaningful when it is no longer being used or expanded, but instead encountered and experienced. Time becomes cherished when it makes room for presence rather than production.

Shabbat stands as God's answer to the deepest crisis of the modern soul. It interrupts the tyranny of urgency and returns us to what is eternal. One day each week, we are invited to step back from the noise and rediscover the goodness that fills the world when we are attentive to it.

Shabbat is a return to reality as God intended it. It reminds us that we are more than the sum of our responsibilities. We are not defined only by what we do but by who we are and Whom we serve. When we cease creating, we allow God and family to be present again at the center of our lives.

Shabbat transforms shared meals into the centerpiece of the day. Around the table, families reconnect, communities deepen, and relationships are nourished. Shabbat restores the inner life that modern pressures often push aside, reminding us to cherish what is timeless rather than what is urgent.

> *Shabbat is God's answer to the deepest crisis of the modern soul – a weekly return to what it means to be human.*

Every week, Shabbat gives the human soul room to breathe. It teaches us to notice the blessings that surround us. It restores balance and reminds us that life is not measured solely by achievement but by connection and joy.

Furthermore, Shabbat portends of a coming, future reality whom the Sages of Israel refer to as "Yom shekulo Shabbat" – the day that is entirely Shabbat.[3] This is a reference to the swiftly approaching Messianic era where the whole world will experience a time of peace, calm, joy and abundance with no more war, no more sickness and no more suffering. Shabbat is a weekly rehearsal for this much anticipated state of blessing.

This book is dedicated to exploring the meaning, purpose, and promise of Shabbat for all mankind. It is an invitation to rediscover the rest God established at the dawn of time and the blessings stored within the seventh day. In a world that asks us to run faster, Shabbat calls us to slow down and walk with God. Once a week, the Creator extends His hand and asks us to return to Him, to ourselves, and to what matters most in life.

If you find value in this Book and want to learn more and take the next step on this journey, I encourage you to join our global community, **The Land of Israel Fellowship**.[4] With families from different countries and cultures around the world come together to live a guided life by the Torah and who have a deep love for Israel.

FOR YOUR TABLE OR STUDY GROUP

Questions for Reflection

1. The author suggests that modern people have become “human doings” rather than human beings. Where in your own week do you feel most pulled toward constant doing?

2. In Genesis, the seventh day arrives not as an afterthought but as the culmination of creation. How does seeing rest as the climax of the week — rather than the absence of work — change the way you think about your own labor?

3. What “digital noise” most consistently captures your attention before it can be directed toward the people and values you hold dear? What would silencing it for one full day look like?

4. The Sages speak of “Yom shekulo Shabbat” — the day that is entirely Shabbat. How does understanding Shabbat as a weekly rehearsal for the Messianic era change its meaning for you?

5. “We are not defined only by what we do but by who we are and Whom we serve.” What would it take for you to truly live that truth one day each week?

WORDS TO KNOW

Hebrew Terms

Shabbat שַׁבָּת

The Sabbath; the seventh day. From the Hebrew root meaning to cease — God’s answer to the deepest crisis of the modern soul.

Torah תּוֹרָה

God's teaching and instruction. In its opening chapters, the Torah offers a radically different vision of time.

Yom Shekulo Shabbat יוֹם שֶׁכֻּלּוֹ שַׁבָּת

"The day that is entirely Shabbat." The Sages' name for the coming Messianic era of peace, calm, joy, and abundance — for which Shabbat is a weekly rehearsal. In Christian parlance, this era is often referred to as the Millennial Reign of Messiah or the Millennial Kingdom.

NOTES 4

1. Genesis 2:2–3
2. Ibid.
3. The phrase "Yom shekulo Shabbat" ("a day that is entirely Shabbat") derives from Mishnah Tamid 7:4, which describes the Sabbath psalm (Psalm 92) as "a song for the time to come, for the day that is entirely Shabbat and rest for life everlasting." See also Babylonian Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 31a; the phrase is recited in the Birkat HaMazon (Grace after Meals).
4. To learn more and take the next step, visit thelandofisrael.com/fellowship-chabura.

CHAPTER 2

The First Blessing in Creation

Shabbat is introduced to us not as a commandment, but as a feature woven into creation itself. Before the Torah was given at Sinai, the rhythm of six days of work and the seventh day of rest was written into the very fabric of existence.

Shabbat begins with creation, and therefore it begins as a gift to all who inhabit the earth. Long before there was an Israelite nation, and long before humanity divided itself into tribes and cultures, Shabbat was already there. It was given not to some, but to everyone. Shabbat is a universal institution. It is a covenant written in time itself rather than in the history of any particular people. Shabbat serves as the center of gravity—the sun—around which all other biblical rhythms orbit. While the weekly Shabbat offers rest from our technological mastery over the world, the annual festivals act as "Sabbaths of the year" where we rest our mastery over the plant and animal worlds. Furthermore, the Sabbatical year (known as the שְׁמִטָּה *shmitah*[5] in Hebrew) acts as a "Sabbath in years" where the land itself is granted its own independence and rest.

> *Shabbat was given not to some, but to everyone — a covenant written in time itself, a universal gift to all who inhabit the earth.*

At the beginning of time, holiness was applied not to a place, not to an object, not even to a person, but to time.

Scripture says:

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ, כִּי בוֹ שָׁבַת מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת. (בראשית ב:ג)

"Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made." (Genesis 2:3)

In the story of creation, the seventh day, known as Saturday[6] in common English vernacular, the Sabbath or, as transliterated from Hebrew, *Shabbat*, is the only thing that God blessed and made holy. Shabbat stands apart from the rest of creation as the wellspring from which blessing flows into the world.

There is nothing in nature that points to a seven-day cycle, yet every culture in the world today recognizes a seven-day week. From China to India, Argentina to Alaska, the entire world lives by a seven-day work week. Months revolve around the moon, days and years are determined by the sun. But a seven-day work week? It's not natural. In fact, it is supernatural. The only reason to recognize a seven-day work week is because God created the world in six days and rested on Shabbat.

> *The seventh day is the only thing in all of creation that God blessed and made holy.*

In Hebrew, the language of the Torah, the number seven (7) carries profound linguistic and spiritual significance. The Hebrew word for seven is "sheva" (שֶׁבַע). This word shares the exact same root letters as the word for an oath or a covenant, "shevua" (שְׁבוּעָה), as well as the word for wholeness and satisfaction, "sova" (שׂוֹבַע). Therefore, in biblical thought, the number seven is not just a mathematical digit; it represents a state of covenantal completion and wholeness. It is the number that signifies an unbreakable promise between the Creator and His creation.

Furthermore, ancient Jewish wisdom teaches that the number seven represents the entirety of the physical universe infused with the Divine. The physical world exists in three dimensions, expanding in six directions: up, down, north, south, east, and west.

Number seven represents the spiritual focal point in the center that anchors, sustains, and unites them all.[7] Just as the center point gives meaning and balance to the six directions, the holy seventh day gives meaning to the six mundane days of the week.

The world celebrates the extraordinary: mountains, stars, oceans, and the miracle of life itself. Yet God chose to bless something invisible and intangible. The holiness of Shabbat is found in a pause. It is discovered when we cease doing and rediscover being. Shabbat teaches us that we are not holy because of what we produce. We are holy because we are created in the image of God.[8] The greatest blessing in creation is not found in more activity but in the sacred act of stopping.

In fact, rest is not simply the absence of work; it is a positive creation in itself. An all-powerful Creator does not need to pause to catch His breath. Instead, God's rest was the final creative act that granted the universe its independence. As long as a creator is constantly tinkering and fixing, the creation is merely an extension of the creator. By stepping back and resting, God broke the strings of the marionette, allowing the world to exist independently so that a true relationship could form between the Creator and His creation.

Furthermore, when we stop on the seventh day, we are not merely taking a break from the previous six; we are elevating them. Without the seventh day, the six days of work can easily become an endless, purposeless cycle of surviving and consuming. But by pausing our labor on the seventh day to consciously commune with God, we retrospectively consecrate our six days of work. The seventh day proves that our weekly toil is not a meaningless treadmill, but a purposeful preparation for holiness.

Shabbat reminds us that creation is complete only when it includes rest. Human flourishing requires renewal. God blessed the seventh day so that humanity could live a blessed life. He made it holy so that each of us could enter holiness regularly, not through struggle but through freedom. Once a week, the blessing of creation is renewed, and we are invited to receive it.

FOR YOUR TABLE OR STUDY GROUP

Questions for Reflection

1. Shabbat appears in creation long before any commandment is given at Sinai. Why does it matter that Shabbat began as a universal gift rather than a national law?

2. The only thing God blessed and sanctified in all of creation was time — not a place, an object, or a person. What does this teach about where holiness is first found?

3. Nothing in nature points to a seven-day cycle, yet the entire world lives by a seven-day week. What do you make of this?

4. The Hebrew word for seven (sheva) shares its root with the words for oath (shevua) and wholeness (sova). How do covenant and completion deepen your understanding of the seventh day?

5. "Rest is not simply the absence of work; it is a positive creation in itself." How does pausing on the seventh day retroactively give meaning and purpose to the six days of work?

WORDS TO KNOW

Hebrew Terms

Sheva שֶׁבַע

Seven. In biblical thought, not just a number but a state of covenantal completion and wholeness.

Shevua שְׁבוּעָה

Oath; covenant. Sharing the root of seven — the number that signifies an unbreakable promise between the Creator and His creation.

Sova שׂוֹבַע

Wholeness; satisfaction. The third word built on the root of seven, pointing to the fullness the seventh day brings.

Shmitah שְׁמִטָּה

The Sabbatical year — a "Sabbath in years" in which the land itself is granted its own independence and rest.

NOTES 4

5. Exodus 23:10–11; Leviticus 25:1–7; Deuteronomy 15:1–11.
6. The English name "Saturday" derives from the Old English Sæternesdæg, itself a translation of the Latin dies Saturni, "day of Saturn" — the Roman god of agriculture and time, after whom the planet Saturn is named. Alone among the English weekday names, it preserves a Roman deity rather than being replaced by a Germanic counterpart, as happened with Wednesday (Woden), Thursday (Thor), and Friday (Frigg). Notably, many other languages retain the Hebrew designation instead: Spanish sábado, Italian sabato, Greek Sávvato, and Russian subbota all derive from Shabbat.
7. Sefer Yetzirah 4:2–4.
8. Genesis 1:26–27.

CHAPTER 3

A Weekly Taste of the Messianic Future

Jewish tradition teaches that Shabbat is a taste of *Olam HaBa* (עוֹלָם הַבָּא), the World to Come.[9] God created everything in six days and rested on the seventh day. In parallel, ancient Jewish wisdom teaches that the history of mankind from Adam will unfold over six thousand years and then the 7th millennium arrives as a time of peace, restoration, and healing for all nations hallmarked with the Jewish Messiah reigning on the restored throne of David from the holy city of Jerusalem.[10] This idea suggests that Shabbat is not merely a remembrance of creation. It is a window into the future, a glimpse of the coming redemption. For one day each week, we are invited to experience life not as it is, but as it will be, when the world is healed and God's presence is fully revealed.

During the week, we see the world as broken and lacking. We witness conflict, struggle, need and uncertainty. We experience moments of fear and disappointment. One day each week, when we stop working to create, we step into a world that is already complete. We taste what it would be like if the Messiah had already arrived and the world was redeemed.

> *Shabbat is a weekly taste of the World to Come — one day when nothing is broken and nothing is missing.*

For one day each week, human beings live as if the brokenness of the world has already been healed, as if peace has already embraced creation. This weekly experience reminds us that history has a destination and that the pain of the present will ultimately give way to the joy of the future.

Human labor is usually driven by necessity and lack - a need for money and a lack of security, order or comfort. During the week, we work because something is missing. On Shabbat, that striving comes to an end. As Heschel describes it, Shabbat is an armistice in the human struggle for existence, a sanctuary in time where nothing must be conquered and nothing needs to be achieved. There is a profound inverse relationship

between how we build a sanctuary in space versus a sanctuary in time. To build a physical sanctuary for God, like the biblical Tabernacle, human beings must engage in *melachah* (מְלָאכָה)—creative, transformative action. But to build a sanctuary in time, we must do the exact opposite: we must completely desist from melachah.[11] If engaging in creative labor is how we invite God into our physical space, completely disengaging from that labor is how we create the Sabbath and invite God into our time.

This sanctuary in time also serves as a portal back to the *Gan Eden* (גַּן עֵדֶן), the Garden of Eden. While the physical gates to Eden—a sanctuary in space where humanity originally communed with God—were closed after the expulsion[12], Shabbat functions as God's summer home in time. It provides a weekly opportunity for humanity to return to that original intimacy and presence, offering a taste of paradise within the world as it is. In stepping into Shabbat, we experience life not as a problem to be solved, but as a gift already complete. Shabbat allows us to taste the World to Come within the world as it is.

***"The Sabbath is a foretaste of eternity. It is an example of the world to come."* — The Sabbath, Abraham Joshua Heschel**

Shabbat gives us one day each week when nothing is broken and nothing is missing. It is the sacred pause where we stop trying to fix the world and allow ourselves to experience it as God dreams it will be. On Shabbat we practice contentment. We taste wholeness. We live, even briefly, in a world redeemed. This weekly glimpse of the Messianic future strengthens the soul against despair, reminding us that history is moving toward healing, not chaos. To honor Shabbat is to step into that future now.

By living one day each week as if the Messiah has already come, we train our hearts to trust that redemption is not just a promise — it is a reality already entering our lives, one Shabbat at a time. The peace we taste on Shabbat is a foretaste of the peace that God intends for all creation.

When we honor Shabbat, we join God in saying that creation is good, life is sacred, and existence is enough. Shabbat lifts our eyes from the struggles of the moment and reminds us that the story of history is moving toward light. It is to say with our lives that God's promises are true and that redemption is already unfolding.

FOR YOUR TABLE OR STUDY GROUP

Questions for Reflection

1. Ancient Jewish wisdom teaches that history will unfold over six thousand years, followed by a seventh millennium of peace and restoration. How does this parallel between the seven day week and history reshape the way you experience each Shabbat?

2. During the week, we work because something is missing. What would it feel like to live one day each week as if nothing were broken and nothing was missing?

3. Heschel calls Shabbat "an armistice in the human struggle for existence." Which battles do you most need to lay down for one day?

4. Building a sanctuary in space requires *melachah* — creative labor — while building a sanctuary in time requires ceasing from it entirely. Why do you think the two are exact opposites?

5. The chapter describes Shabbat as a portal back to the Garden of Eden. In what ways can a day of sacred rest restore the original intimacy between humanity and God?

WORDS TO KNOW

Hebrew Terms

Olam HaBa — עוֹלָם הַבָּא

The World to Come. Jewish tradition teaches that Shabbat is a foretaste of this redeemed future — one day each week lived in a world already complete.

Melachah — מְלָאכָה

Creative, transformative labor. Required to build a sanctuary in space; completely set aside to build a sanctuary in time.

Gan Eden גַּן עֵדֶן

The Garden of Eden. Though its physical gates were closed, Shabbat offers a weekly return to that original intimacy and presence.

NOTES 4

9. Berakhot 57b; Genesis Rabbah 17:5; Mishnah Tamid 7:4. The Talmud calls Shabbat "one-sixtieth of the World to Come," and the midrash describes it as me'ein Olam HaBa — a semblance of the World to Come. The theme is echoed weekly in the liturgy (the Harachaman of Birkat HaMazon for Shabbat) and in the table song Mah Yedidut.

10. Sanhedrin 97a; Avodah Zarah 9a; cf. Psalm 90:4 ("a thousand years in Your sight are like a day"). Rav Kattina teaches that the world will exist for six thousand years followed by a millennium of rest, just as the seventh year is a year of release. Ramban on Genesis 2:3 develops the parallel explicitly: each day of creation alludes to a millennium of history, and the seventh day to the World to Come.

11. Genesis 2:2–3: "And on the seventh day God finished His work (מְלַאכְתּוֹ, *melachto*) which He had done, and He rested (וַיִּשְׁבֹּת, *vayishbot*) on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it He rested from all His work which God had created to do." The noun *melachto* shares the root of *melachah* (מְלָאכָה), and it is this verse that the Sages take as the scriptural basis for defining the categories of labor forbidden on Shabbat — the same term used for the work of building the Tabernacle (Exodus 31:1–11; 35:30–36:1).

12. Genesis 3:23–24. After the expulsion, God stationed the cherubim and the flaming, ever-turning sword east of the Garden of Eden to guard the way to the Tree of Life.

CHAPTER 4

Shabbat and Emunah: Faith You Can Live

In the modern world, faith is often understood as an idea. A belief in something unseen. A private conviction held in the heart or mind. But in the Torah, faith is not primarily a concept. It is a way of living. It is a posture of the soul that is revealed through action, discipline, and trust.

This is why the Hebrew word for faith, e*munah* (אֱמוּנָה), cannot be translated fully into the English word "belief." Belief can remain abstract. Emunah is never abstract. Emunah is faith that becomes reality through loyalty and practice.

In Hebrew, words are built on roots that carry meaning beneath the surface. When we look closely at the root of emunah, we uncover a definition of biblical faith that is both deeper and more demanding than mere intellectual agreement.

Emunah is comprised of several words that all direct us to the definition of Hebrew faith.

Emunah = Faith

Emun = Practice

Ne'eman = Loyalty

Consequently, the concept of Biblical faith, e*munah*, means faith practiced with loyalty.

Biblical faith is therefore not only believing that God exists. It is trust expressed through obedience.

There is perhaps no mitzvah that embodies this more clearly than Shabbat.

Shabbat is one of the greatest expressions of emunah because it requires us to do something profoundly unnatural. It asks us to stop. To step away from the urgent pressures of life and live for one day each week as if the world is not dependent on our constant effort.

> *Emunah is not abstract belief. It is faith made real through loyalty — and Shabbat is Emunah lived in time.*

All week long, the modern person lives under a heavy burden. We are pressured to succeed, provide, achieve, build, produce, earn, and compete. We are taught, subtly or explicitly, that if we do not push forward, we will fall behind. We begin to feel that everything depends on our productivity. We begin to believe that our safety depends on our control.

Then Friday night arrives, and Shabbat makes a radical demand.

It says: stop.

Not because you have mastered worry, but because you are commanded to release it.

Shabbat is the weekly act of placing the world back into God's hands.

When we honor Shabbat, we are not merely taking a break. We are making a spiritual declaration. We are declaring that God created the world, and therefore God sustains the world. We are declaring that our livelihood does not come only from our striving, but from His blessing. We are declaring that even when we are not producing, God is still providing.

This is why Shabbat is emunah in its purest form.

One biblical example of this idea can be seen in God's commandment that the children of Israel refrain from gathering *manna* (מָן) on the Sabbath. As the children of Israel wandered in the barren wilderness, God miraculously provided bread from heaven each morning. It was incumbent on the children of Israel to go out each day and gather their daily bread for their basic sustenance. Except on Shabbat. There was no gathering manna on the Sabbath. [13] Instead, they had to trust that God would provide double the manna on Friday to sustain them over Shabbat when it was prohibited to gather food. This was a weekly exercise in stopping on Shabbat and trusting God for provision versus working, toiling and laboring on Shabbat to sustain themselves. Biblical faith in action.

To this very day, we always traditionally place two loaves of bread on our Friday night Shabbat table to commemorate this weekly display of God's provision in our lives, and a reminder that He is ultimately the One who sustains us. We do not rely solely on our own efforts.

It is easy to speak about trust in God. It is far harder to live it. Shabbat turns emunah into something tangible. It takes faith out of theory and places it into the rhythm of our week. When the sun sets and we stop working, we are practicing the belief that God can be trusted with our time, our future, and our provision.

In this way, Shabbat is not only rest. It is loyalty. To honor Shabbat is to obey the divine command even when the world insists that stopping is irresponsible.

To honor Shabbat is to say: I trust the Creator more than I trust the culture. I trust God more than I trust my own anxiety. I trust that blessing does not come from constant striving, but from aligning my life with His will.

And perhaps most importantly, Shabbat teaches that faith is not proven in the extraordinary moments of life, but in the weekly decisions that shape who we become. Once a week, we are given the opportunity to choose loyalty over fear and holiness over hustle. Every Shabbat, we let go and let God.

Emunah is faith practiced with loyalty, and Shabbat is emunah lived in time.

FOR YOUR TABLE OR STUDY GROUP

Questions for Reflection

1. The chapter argues that emunah cannot be fully translated as "belief." What is lost when faith becomes only an idea held in the mind?

2. Shabbat asks us to live one day each week as if the world does not depend on our constant effort. Which responsibilities are hardest for you to set down?

3 The children of Israel could gather no manna on Shabbat and had to trust in Friday's double portion. Where in your life might God be inviting you to stop and trust in His provision?

4 To this day, two loaves of bread on the Friday night table commemorate the double portion of manna. Why are physical reminders so important for sustaining faith?

5 "I trust the Creator more than I trust the culture." What cultural message about productivity or security do you most need to resist — and how could Shabbat help you resist it?

WORDS TO KNOW

Hebrew Terms

Emunah אֱמוּנָה

Faith. Not abstract belief, but trust in God that is active, embodied, and expressed through loyalty and practice.

Emun אֱמוּן

Practice. From the same root as emunah — faith is something rehearsed and lived, not merely held.

Ne'eman נֶאֱמָן

Loyal; faithful. Biblical faith is proven through loyalty — obedience to the Divine command even when the world insists that stopping is irresponsible.

Man מָן

Manna. The bread from heaven that could not be gathered on Shabbat — a weekly exercise in stopping and trusting God for provision.

NOTES 1

13. Exodus 16:4–5, 22–30.

CHAPTER 5

Shabbat at Sinai: The Ten Commandments

Shabbat reappears in the Book of Exodus at Sinai. At the very heart of the Ten Commandments, there its universal calling goes out to the world.

זָכוֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ. שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל־מְלַאכְתֶּךָ.
וְיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָל־מְלָאכָה אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ
וּבִתֶּךָ, עַבְדְּךָ וַאֲמָתְךָ וּבְהֶמְתֶּךָ, וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בִּשְׁעָרֶיךָ. (שמות כ:ח–י)

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you." (Exodus 20:8–10)

The Ten Commandments are among the most influential moral teachings in human history. They have been translated into nearly every language, displayed in courthouses and classrooms, and embraced by cultures far beyond Israel. The gift God gave at Sinai has become the moral foundation for the world. Moses himself is honored even in the United States Capitol for shaping the ethical vision of Western civilization.

This profound connection to creation is woven directly into the language of the Ten Commandments through a stunning linguistic parallel to the Garden of Eden. In Genesis, humanity's original mission contained four elements: God (1) took man from a mundane place, (2) placed him in a restful home, and commanded him to (3) work (la'avod, לַעֲבֹד) and (4) guard (u'leshomrah, וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ).[14] In the Ten Commandments, this exact sequence is beautifully mirrored backward as a chiasm: (4) Guard the Sabbath (shamor, שָׁמוֹר), (3) Work for six days (ta'avod, תַּעֲבֹד), (2) let everyone rest, and (1)

remember being taken from the mundane place of Egypt. This reverse-echo structurally proves that keeping Shabbat is a universal pathway back into the state of creation, literally guiding us backward through our expulsion and right back into the Garden.

With a moral standard comes moral responsibility. Many who affirm the authority of the Bible wholeheartedly affirm the Ten Commandments as binding expressions of God's will. Ask almost any believer, and they will emphatically agree that these commandments must be honored. Yet there is often a surprising lack of awareness that the fourth commandment, positioned at the center of the Decalogue, is the commandment of Shabbat.

In Exodus, the Torah uses the word *zachor* (זָכוֹר) — remember:

> זָכוֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ. (שמות כ:ח)
>
> "*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.*" (Exodus 20:8)

Later, when Moses recounts the Ten Commandments, the Torah uses a different word *shamor* (שָׁמוֹר):

> שָׁמוֹר אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ. (דברים ה:יב)
>
> *"Guard the Sabbath day to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you." (Deuteronomy 5:12)*

Jewish tradition teaches that zachor (remember) and shamor (guard) were spoken simultaneously — a single Divine utterance revealing two inseparable dimensions of Shabbat. [15]

This book proposes that remembering expresses the universal calling of Shabbat. To "zachor" Shabbat is to acknowledge the Creator, to recognize that time itself belongs to God, and to honor the seventh day as distinct and holy. In Hebrew, zachor means more than mental recall; it implies recognition, acknowledgment, and honoring through action.

Just as honoring the memory of a loved one is expressed through concrete acts — lighting a candle or marking a date — remembering Shabbat is expressed by living in a way that honors its holiness.

To "shamor" the Shabbat, on the other hand, expresses Israel's unique covenantal responsibility. It connotes to guard and protect its sanctity through the detailed practices that preserve its holiness across generations.

This duality becomes even clearer when we consider the context in which each command was given. The Ten Commandments as recounted in Exodus 20 were spoken by God Himself at Mount Sinai.

Jewish tradition teaches that God's voice at Sinai was heard in the seventy languages of the world, corresponding to the seventy nations described in Genesis. [16] Why would God speak in every language if the commandments were intended only for the Jewish people?

> *At Sinai, in no man's land, Shabbat's calling went out to all seventy nations of the world.*

Moreover, the giving of the Ten Commandments, as recorded in Exodus 20, did not take place in Jerusalem, Hebron, or any other city of the Land of Israel. Instead, God chose Mount Sinai — a barren, uninhabited wilderness, belonging to no nation and claimed by no people. Sinai was, in every sense, no man's land. This choice was deliberate. Had the commandments been given within the borders of Israel, they might have been understood as belonging exclusively to one people. The Sages teach this explicitly. The Midrash Mekhilta explains that God gave the Torah in the desert so that no nation could claim ownership over it, declaring: "Why was the Torah given in the wilderness? So that if anyone wished to accept it, they could come and accept it." (Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael, Yitro).

By contrast, when Moses recounts the commandments in Deuteronomy 5, he stands on the plains of Moab, within the borders of the Promised Land, addressing only the people of Israel as they prepare to enter their inheritance. It is here that the command shifts from zachor (remember) to shamor (guard) the Sabbath. Unlike Sinai, only the Israelites heard the retelling of the Ten Commandments immediately before going in to possess the land of Canaan.

This distinction reflects two audiences and two responsibilities.

The world is called to ***remember*** Shabbat — to acknowledge God as Creator and sanctify time. Israel is called to ***guard*** Shabbat — to live its holiness through covenantal law.

As Scripture states:

> וְשָׁמְרוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת, לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת לְדֹרֹתָם בְּרִית עוֹלָם. בֵּינִי וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אוֹת הִוא לְעֹלָם, כִּי־שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ, וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבַת וַיִּנָּפַשׁ. (שמות לא:טז–יז)
>
> *"So the sons of Israel shall guard the Sabbath, to celebrate the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever."* (*Exodus* 31:16–17)

Shabbat therefore contains both a universal commandment and a national covenant. One sanctifies time by recognition. The other safeguards holiness by disciplined practice.

Sinai transformed Shabbat from a quiet truth embedded in creation into a living covenant carried through history. The Jewish people have guarded Shabbat for millennia, and through them its light has reached the world. Today, the nations are awakening to this gift.

To honor Shabbat is to honor the God who revealed Himself at Sinai. It is to affirm that God is the Author of time, that creation is good, and that rest is holy. In our generation, the righteous among the nations are invited to take their place in this commandment — to remember the Sabbath and receive the blessing woven into the fabric of creation.

FOR YOUR TABLE OR STUDY GROUP

Questions for Reflection

1. The fourth commandment sits at the very center of the Ten Commandments, yet it is often overlooked by those who affirm the rest. Why do you think Shabbat has become the forgotten commandment?

2. God gave the Ten Commandments at Sinai — no man's land — and tradition teaches His voice was heard in all seventy languages. What do these details suggest about who Shabbat is for?

3. What is the difference between remembering (zachor) and guarding (shamor) Shabbat? How does this distinction shape the different callings of Israel and the nations?

4. The language of the fourth commandment mirrors the Garden of Eden in reverse, guiding humanity back through the expulsion and into the Garden. How does this reframe Shabbat as a return rather than a pause?

5. What would it look like, practically, for you to "remember" the Sabbath day this week — to acknowledge the Creator and honor the seventh day as distinct and holy?

WORDS TO KNOW

Hebrew Terms

Zachor זָכוֹר

Remember (Exodus 20:8). More than mental recall — recognition, acknowledgment, and honoring through action. The universal calling of Shabbat.

Shamor שָׁמוֹר

Guard; observe (Deuteronomy 5:12). Israel's covenantal responsibility to protect Shabbat's sanctity through detailed practice across generations.

La'avod לַעֲבֹד

To work; to serve. Humanity's original mission in the Garden of Eden — echoed in "six days you shall labor."

U'Leshomrah וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ

And to guard it (Genesis 2:15). Adam's charge in Eden, mirrored at Sinai in the command to guard the Sabbath.

NOTES 3

14. Genesis 2:15 — "The LORD God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden to work it and to guard it" (וַיִּקַּח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם וַיַּנִּחֵהוּ בְגַן־עֵדֶן לְעָבְדָהּ וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ). Note that *vayanichehu* ("placed him") shares the root of *menuchah*, rest. The Shabbat commandment mirrors the sequence in reverse: Deuteronomy 5:12–15 (Shamor; rest for all; the taking out of Egypt); cf. Exodus 20:8–11.

15. Shevuot 20b (cf. Rosh Hashanah 27a): "Zachor and Shamor were spoken in a single utterance — what the mouth cannot speak and the ear cannot hear"; Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael, Yitro (Bachodesh 7), cited by Rashi on Exodus 20:8. The teaching is immortalized in the opening words of Lecha Dodi: שָׁמוֹר וְזָכוֹר בְּדִבּוּר אֶחָד ("Guard and Remember in a single utterance").

16. Shabbat 88b — R' Yochanan: "Every utterance that emerged from the mouth of the Almighty split into seventy languages" (citing Psalm 68:12); Shemot Rabbah 5:9 — the voice divided into seventy voices, in seventy languages, so that all the nations would hear. The seventy nations derive from the Table of Nations in Genesis 10; cf. Deuteronomy 32:8.

CHAPTER 6

Shabbat and the Ten Commandments: A Deeper Structure

There is a beautiful and often overlooked teaching about the Ten Commandments that sheds new light on the universal meaning of Shabbat. We usually read the Ten Commandments as ten independent moral instructions, each standing on its own. But Jewish tradition invites us to see them not merely as a list, but as a structure with a carefully balanced moral architecture. [17]

The Torah tells us that the commandments were engraved on two stone tablets. This detail is more than historical. It suggests that the commandments are meant to be read in relationship to one another. Rather than ten isolated imperatives, we can understand them as five corresponding pairs, each commandment on the first tablet aligned with the opposite commandment on the second.

The Two Tablets: Five Corresponding Pairs

Seen this way, each commandment on the first tablet finds an echo on the second. Faith in God expresses itself in moral behavior toward others. Belief is tested by conduct. Theology is validated by ethics.

TABLET 1 · BETWEEN MAN AND GOD			TABLET 2 · BETWEEN MAN AND MAN
1 I am the LORD your God	↔	6	You shall not murder
2 You shall have no other gods	↔	7	You shall not commit adultery
3 Do not take His name in vain	↔	8	You shall not steal
4 **Remember Shabbat, to keep it holy**	↔	9	**You shall not bear false witness**
5 Honor your father and mother	↔	10	You shall not covet

The two tablets read across: five pairs, each duty to God matched by its human counterpart. This pairing invites an important question: what is the connection between each set? How does belief in God shape how we treat one another?

To illustrate how this works, let's explore the first pair. The first commandment on the first tablet states:

> *The Ten Commandments can be understood as Five connected pairs vs. Ten separate commands.*

אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים.

(שמות כ:ב)

"*I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*" (Exodus 20:2)

This commandment is paired with the sixth commandment on the second tablet, where it is written:

לֹא תִרְצָח. (שמות כ:יג)

"*You shall not murder.*" (*Exodus 20:13*)

Now let's examine the relationship between these two commandments that comprise the first of five pairs. What does acknowledging that God is LORD have to do with not murdering someone? Let's hearken back to the book of Genesis and recall the story when God creates Adam. Adam can be understood not just as the first individual man created in that moment, but also as a euphemism for all of mankind, in that all of mankind descends from Adam.[18] Adam was the final and most important of all God's

physical creation. He was made unique from all the other living things. How so? God made Adam – mankind – in His own image.[19] Therefore, if all of mankind is made in God's image, then by murdering a human you are essentially disregarding the Divine sanctity of that human life, and by extension, disavowing the fact that He is the LORD your God. Wow! In some deep sense, to murder is an attempt to destroy the very image of God embedded within each of us. When you put it like that, it becomes even more clear why murder is morally reprehensible to God.

And so, each of the five pairs of commandments has a powerful relationship and truth.

For purposes of this book, the most striking pair is the fourth commandment and the ninth.

Shabbat Testimony and Truth

By now, we are all familiar with what the fourth commandment says. It is paired with the ninth commandment which states:

> לֹא־תַעֲנֶה בְרֵעֲךָ עֵד שָׁקֶר. (שמות כ:טז)
>
> "*You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*" (*Exodus* 20:16)

At first glance, the connection between remembering the Sabbath and not bearing false witness is far from obvious. What does Shabbat have to do with being truthful? What does sacred time have to do with bearing testimony?

But when we look more closely, the relationship is profound.

To remember Shabbat is to bear witness to creation. It is to testify, with our lives, that the world has a Creator, that time has meaning, and that existence is not accidental. Every Shabbat, by ceasing from work, we declare that the universe does not depend solely on human effort. God created the world, and God sustains it.

> *To remember Shabbat is to bear witness to creation. It is truth lived in time.*

If this is true, then failing to remember Shabbat is not a neutral omission. It is a theological statement. When we live as though time belongs entirely to us, as though the world rests on our productivity alone, we are silently testifying to a false reality.

In this light, the pairing becomes clear. To forget Shabbat is, in a sense, to bear false witness — not against another human being, but against God Himself.

Shabbat is truth lived in time. It is testimony enacted through rest. When we remember the Sabbath, we align our lives with the deepest truth of existence: that God is the Creator, and we are His creations.

This insight elevates Shabbat beyond ritual. It reveals Shabbat as an ethical act, a moral declaration, and a public testimony. Each week, by honoring Shabbat, we stand as witnesses to the truth of creation. Bearing witness by honoring Shabbat is a universal responsibility for both Israel and the nations.

FOR YOUR TABLE OR STUDY GROUP

Questions for Reflection

1. Reading the Ten Commandments as five corresponding pairs suggests that belief in God is tested by how we treat one another. Which pairing challenges you the most, and why?

2. Murder is morally reprehensible because every human being carries the image of God. How does the first pairing change the way you see the people around you?

3. The fourth and ninth commandments pair Shabbat with truthful testimony. In what sense is keeping Shabbat an act of bearing witness?

4 The chapter suggests that living as though the world rests on our productivity alone is "silently testifying to a false reality." Do you agree that forgetting Shabbat makes a theological statement? Why or why not?

5 If Shabbat is "truth lived in time," what does your current weekly schedule testify about what you believe?

WORDS TO KNOW

Hebrew Terms

Adam אָדָם

The first man — and all mankind, which descends from him. Every human being is made in the image of God.

Lo Tirtzach לֹא תִרְצָח

"You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13). Paired with "I am the LORD your God" — to destroy a human life is to disregard the Divine image within it.

Ed Sheker עֵד שָׁקֶר

False witness (Exodus 20:16). Paired with Shabbat — to forget the Sabbath is, in a sense, to bear false testimony against the Creator.

NOTES 3

17. Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael, Yitro, Bachodesh 8 (on Exodus 20:16), in the name of R' Chanina ben Gamliel: the Ten Commandments were written five opposite five (חֲמִשָּׁה עַל לוּחַ זֶה וַחֲמִשָּׁה עַל לוּחַ זֶה), and each commandment on the first tablet corresponds to its counterpart on the second. A parallel appears in Song of Songs Rabbah 4:5.

18. Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5 (cf. Talmud Sanhedrin 37a–38a): man was created alone (יָחִיד) to teach that one who destroys a single soul is regarded as having destroyed an entire world, and one who saves a single soul as having saved an entire world — taught, significantly, in the context of capital cases. See also Genesis 5:1–2, where the name "Adam" is given to male and female together: "He created them male and female… and called their name Adam."

19. Genesis 1:26–27. The Torah itself makes this connection between murder and the divine image explicit in Genesis 9:6: "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man."

CHAPTER 7

Why God Commanded Shabbat, Not Suggested It

The commandment of Shabbat begins with freedom.

At Sinai, God addressed a people who had endured generations of slavery in Egypt. Slaves do not have days of rest. Their time is owned by others. Their worth is determined by productivity. Their lives are measured only by how much work they can perform. But slavery is not merely physical bondage; fundamentally, slavery is work stripped of its transcendent, divine mission. When Adam and Chava were in Eden, they worked in a joyful, exalted partnership with God. Only after the expulsion did work become purposeless toil and a mere mechanism for survival. Shabbat cures this modern and spiritual slavery by ensuring that our work has a purpose, consecrating our six days of labor so we do not fall prey to a purely utilitarian, soul-crushing existence. By commanding rest, God was giving Israel its first experience of true freedom. It was the first time they were told: Time belongs to God, and therefore on Shabbat you are free.

The children of Israel lived in Egypt for 210 years,[20] long enough for slavery to become deeply ingrained in their identity. By the time Moses arose to lead them out, no one alive could remember a life without bondage. Every Israelite was born into servitude, raised without the concept of personal destiny or the dignity of rest. Freedom was not only unfamiliar, it was also unimaginable. In such a reality, Shabbat could not emerge naturally. It had to be commanded. A people who had never known rest needed a law to teach them what it means to live as human beings created in the image of God.

The Torah is not merely a record of historical events. It is a guide and spiritual blueprint for the human journey in every generation. The story of Israel begins in slavery because, on some level, we all begin our life journey enslaved. Whether to fear, to addictions, to achievement, or to the never-ending demands of life. Human beings struggle to stop. If Shabbat were optional, it would quickly disappear. The demands of life are relentless. Work never ends. Worries multiply. Without a commandment, we would always find reasons to delay rest and postpone holiness. God commanded Shabbat because He loves us too much to leave Shabbat to chance. Ironically, it is the law that sets us free.

Choosing to honor the fourth law of the Ten Commandments, we're offered a chance to experience freedom from our slavery. True freedom is experienced not when we can do anything, but when we can choose to stop.

Although God blessed and sanctified the seventh day at creation, Scripture records no instance in which Shabbat was kept during the entire book of Genesis. This silence is striking. It teaches us something profound about human nature. Even when blessing is embedded into the rhythm of creation, without a commandment, people overlook it. The world is too enticing and work is too demanding. Human beings struggle to step away from productivity. The blessing was there from the beginning, but humanity could not access it on its own. Shabbat needed to be commanded so that the gift hidden in time could be revealed in weekly life.

The command to rest is an act of compassion from a God who understands us better than we understand ourselves. Every week, He reminds us that the weight of the world is not on our shoulders. We can stop, unplug and reconnect to what matters inside because He sustains and runs the world outside.

> *The blessing was woven into creation from the beginning — but it had to be commanded before it could be lived.*

Shabbat shatters the illusion that everything depends on us. For anyone who has not experienced a day unplugged, it seems almost impossible to disconnect from the world an entire day, let alone once a week. Shabbat teaches faith by reminding us that creation continues even when we cease creating. It teaches humility by revealing that we are not the ones who hold the universe together. And it teaches trust that God remains the Master of all life.

Once experienced, it becomes clear that the law of Shabbat cultivates freedom rather than restricts it. It protects time from becoming devoured by urgency and anxiety. By refraining from creative labor and the drive to produce, Shabbat restores our ability simply to be — present to ourselves, present to others, and present before God.

הַרְפּוּ וּדְעוּ כִּי־אָנֹכִי אֱלֹהִים, אָרוּם בַּגּוֹיִם אָרוּם בָּאָרֶץ. (תהלים מו:יא)

"*Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.*" (*Psalm* 46:10)

In our generation, distraction has become the greatest form of captivity. Notifications, screens, and endless scrolling fragment our attention and pull us away from the people we love most. Shabbat returns our attention to what truly matters. It offers us uninterrupted presence and the rare gift of undivided attention. Honoring Shabbat creates a weekly sanctuary where our relationships can flourish again.

FOR YOUR TABLE OR STUDY GROUP

Questions for Reflection

1. "Slaves do not have days of rest." In what ways does modern life re-create a kind of slavery — work stripped of its transcendent, divine mission?

2. After 210 years in Egypt, freedom was unimaginable and rest had to be commanded. Why can a gift like Shabbat not simply be suggested?

3. Scripture records no instance of Shabbat being kept in the entire book of Genesis. What does this silence teach about human nature and blessing?

4. "True freedom is experienced not when we can do anything, but when we can choose to stop." How does this definition of freedom differ from the one our culture offers?

5 Psalm 46 commands, “Cease striving and know that I am God.” What is the connection between stopping and knowing?

WORDS TO KNOW

Hebrew Terms

Mitzrayim מִצְרַיִם

Egypt. The house of bondage where Israel served for 210 years — a life in which rest was not only unfamiliar, but unimaginable.

Chava חַוָּה

Eve. In Eden, she and Adam worked in a joyful, exalted partnership with God — before work became toil.

Harpu U’De’u הַרְפּוּ וּדְעוּ

“Cease striving and know” (Psalm 46:10). The psalmist’s command to stop and recognize that God is God.

NOTES 1

20. The Torah speaks of 400 years (Genesis 15:13) and 430 years (Exodus 12:40); rabbinic chronology counts these from the birth of Isaac and reckons the actual sojourn in Egypt at 210 years. See Seder Olam Rabbah 3; Rashi on Exodus 12:40 and Genesis 15:13. The number is hinted at in Jacob's word to his sons, “go down” (רְדוּ, redu) to Egypt (Genesis 42:2), whose numerical value is 210 (Genesis Rabbah 91:2; Rashi ad loc.).

CHAPTER 8

The Blessing and Healing of Shabbat

Human beings need more than survival to live. To thrive, we need purpose, peace, and love. Yet the pressures of the modern world often overshadow these essential truths. Shabbat restores what the week can erode.

Spiritually, Shabbat is a day for returning our attention to God. It is a rebellion against a world defined by productivity, accumulation, and consumerism. The noise of the world quiets, allowing the soul to speak and the heart to listen. On Shabbat, prayer is not rushed. Reflection is encouraged. Gratitude becomes natural. God is no longer competing with the distractions of the ordinary.

Emotionally, Shabbat brings calm. The relentless chase for achievement breeds anxiety, and in the rush, we easily lose sight of our priorities and what truly matters. Shabbat counters this with the assurance that we are valued not because of what we do but because of who we are. The day teaches us to celebrate life as it is and to find joy in the present moment.

> *Shabbat is rest from fear, from striving, from the endless message that you are not enough.*

Relationally, Shabbat strengthens the bonds that hold families and communities together. Without phones or schedules pulling us apart, we rediscover the beauty of conversation, storytelling, and shared meals. Children learn love not only through words but through attention and presence. Marriages find renewal through uninterrupted time together. Communities deepen through hospitality and friendship.

Psychologically, Shabbat offers a pattern of mindfulness that modern science is only beginning to appreciate. It interrupts stress cycles and creates resilience. It restores cognitive clarity. It reconnects the mind with meaning. Studies show that regular rest enhances creativity, empathy, and overall well-being. Shabbat is ancient wisdom perfectly suited to the needs of the modern heart.

The modern person is constantly seeking to find “a healthy work-life balance”, yet the harder we chase it, the more it eludes us. It seems like the more time saving apps and technologies we develop, the less time we have. And too often, what matters most is what gets left behind.

Shabbat is God’s answer — a sacred rhythm designed for human flourishing. It restores balance not only in our schedule, but in our entire being; spiritually through connection with God, emotionally through peace and stillness, relationally through presence and love, and psychologically through clarity and renewal. Shabbat does not simply pause the chaos — it heals the parts of us that the chaos wears down. In a world frantically searching for equilibrium, Shabbat offers the ultimate balance and reminds us once a week of what a whole, meaningful life truly feels like.

FOR YOUR TABLE OR STUDY GROUP

Questions for Reflection

1. Shabbat is described as “a rebellion against a world defined by productivity, accumulation, and consumerism.” What would your weekly rebellion look like?

2. “We are valued not because of what we do but because of who we are.” Where do you feel the most pressure to earn your worth through achievement?

3. Of the four dimensions of Shabbat’s healing — spiritual, emotional, relational, and psychological — which do you need most right now, and why?

4. Modern science is only beginning to appreciate what regular rest does for creativity, empathy, and well-being. Why do you think ancient wisdom anticipated these findings?

5 The chapter observes that the harder we chase “work-life balance,” the more it eludes us. How is Shabbat’s sacred rhythm different from balance as commonly pursued?

WORDS TO KNOW

Hebrew Terms

Menuchah מְנוּחָה

Rest. The deep tranquility of Shabbat that restores the soul, the heart, and the mind.

Refuah רְפוּאָה

Healing. Shabbat does not simply pause the chaos — it heals the parts of us that the chaos wears down.

Shalom שָׁלוֹם

Peace. Wholeness and balance across every dimension of life — spirit, emotions, relationships, and mind.

CHAPTER 9

Shabbat: A Prophecy for the Righteous Among the Nations

In Genesis, at creation, Shabbat is portrayed as a universal gift. The seventh day is a blessing for all to access. When God later commanded Israel to guard Shabbat through the specific observances of Torah law, that calling became a covenantal responsibility unique to the Jewish people. Yet the spiritual blessing and meaning of Shabbat remained accessible to all who seek closeness with the Creator.

Today, many among the nations feel a stirring in their hearts to live and practice the Bible in their own lives. They feel a closeness to the Jewish people, to Israel, and an attraction to the holiness of Shabbat. They recognize that time itself can be sacred and that the rhythm God established at creation holds wisdom that modern life desperately needs. This awakening is not a coincidence. The prophets envisioned a time, toward the end of days, when the nations would turn their hearts toward God and find blessing through honoring the God of Israel.

Isaiah speaks with remarkable clarity about the role of the nations in the redemption of the world. Twice in the same chapter, the prophet promises honor and a place in God's presence to those from among the nations who choose to keep the Sabbath in recognition of the God of Israel. He declares:

> אַשְׁרֵי אֱנוֹשׁ יַעֲשֶׂה־זֹּאת וּבֶן־אָדָם יַחֲזִיק בָּהּ, שֹׁמֵר שַׁבָּת מֵחַלְּלוֹ וְשֹׁמֵר יָדוֹ מֵעֲשׂוֹת כָּל־רָע. (ישעיהו נו:ב)
>
> "*How blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who takes hold of it; who keeps from profaning the Sabbath, and keeps his hand from doing any evil.*" (*Isaiah* 56:2)

Isaiah does not say "Blessed is the Jew", but rather blessed is "the man (enosh, אֱנוֹשׁ)". It's a prophetic promise for all people. In the Messianic era, every believer around the world will recognize and honor that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. In fact, it appears to be the dividing line between those who will be brought to Jerusalem to celebrate in God's house, as Isaiah emphatically declares:

> *Isaiah does not bless 'the Jew' but 'the man.'*
> *Shabbat is a prophetic promise for all people.*

וּבְנֵי הַנֵּכָר הַנִּלְוִים עַל־יְהוָה לְשָׁרְתוֹ וּלְאַהֲבָה אֶת־שֵׁם יְהוָה לִהְיוֹת לוֹ
לַעֲבָדִים, כָּל־שֹׁמֵר שַׁבָּת מֵחַלְּלוֹ וּמַחֲזִיקִים בִּבְרִיתִי. וַהֲבִיאוֹתִים
אֶל־הַר קָדְשִׁי וְשִׂמַּחְתִּים בְּבֵית תְּפִלָּתִי, עוֹלֹתֵיהֶם וְזִבְחֵיהֶם לְרָצוֹן
עַל־מִזְבְּחִי, כִּי בֵיתִי בֵּית־תְּפִלָּה יִקָּרֵא לְכָל־הָעַמִּים. (ישעיהו נו:ו–ז)

"*Also the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants, every one who keeps from profaning the Sabbath and holds fast My covenant; even those I will bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; for My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.*" (Isaiah 56:6–7)

This vision does not erase the distinction between Israel and the nations. Rather, it reveals a future in which those who revere the God of Israel and honor His sacred time will be welcomed into the very place where His presence dwells. Shabbat becomes the sign of connection, the expression of loyalty to the Creator, and the pathway through which the righteous among the nations are granted a share in God's blessing and a place in His unfolding redemption.

Shabbat becomes a bridge that unites Israel and the righteous among the nations and separates God's people from the rest. It allows the nations to join Israel on her mission while strengthening their own connection with God.

Isaiah promises a time will come when Jewish and non-Jewish believers are united and brought together to Jerusalem to God's Temple. And what distinguishes those counted among the righteous? The prophet answers explicitly: they are those who keep the Sabbath without profaning it and who hold fast to God's covenant.

The righteous among the nations are destined to turn away from the modern secular culture of the world that is self-absorbed with the hustle and bustle, digital distractions, mindless entertainment, and "keeping up with the Jones" approach to life and return to the Bible and practically live a more Biblical-Judean lifestyle. As the prophet Zechariah foretold:

> כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, בַּיָּמִים הָהֵמָּה אֲשֶׁר יַחֲזִיקוּ עֲשָׂרָה אֲנָשִׁים מִכֹּל לְשֹׁנוֹת הַגּוֹיִם, וְהֶחֱזִיקוּ בִּכְנַף אִישׁ יְהוּדִי לֵאמֹר, נֵלְכָה עִמָּכֶם כִּי שָׁמַעְנוּ אֱלֹהִים עִמָּכֶם. (זכריה ח:כג)
>
> "*Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."'" (Zechariah 8:23)*

Honoring the Ten Commandments in general — and remembering the Sabbath in particular — will become the defining mark of those who choose to stand with God and walk in His ways.

The prophets foresaw a time when the holiness of Shabbat would not be confined to one nation but would become a universal recognition of God's sovereignty. Isaiah envisions a future when all nations participate in honoring Shabbat, as it is written:

> *Shabbat is not Israel's alone. The prophets foresee all mankind — 'from Sabbath to Sabbath' — honoring it together, the mark of a world united under God.*

וְהָיָה מִדֵּי־חֹדֶשׁ בְּחָדְשׁוֹ וּמִדֵּי שַׁבָּת בְּשַׁבַּתּוֹ, יָבוֹא כָל־בָּשָׂר לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לְפָנַי, אָמַר יְהוָה. (ישעיהו סו:כג)

"*And it shall be from new moon to new moon and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all mankind will come to bow down before Me,*" *says the LORD.* (*Isaiah* 66:23)

What is starting now among the nations will turn into an international revival and a transformation of the human condition.

The return of Shabbat consciousness to the world signals the coming of Mashiach and the approach of redemption.

In our generation, we are witnessing some of these final prophecies come true. People from across the globe are rediscovering the beauty of Shabbat. They are setting aside technology to reconnect with family. They are studying the Torah's teachings about appointed times and the holiness within time. They are looking to Israel not only for innovation and security but for spiritual leadership. This awakening reflects the prophetic promise that the nations will join Israel in recognizing God as Creator and King.

Shabbat becomes a sign of unity in a fractured world. It brings peace into homes, communities, and hearts. It reminds us that humanity is ultimately one family under the Fatherhood of God. When Shabbat is honored by Israel and the nations together, creation itself begins to heal.

The prophetic calling of Shabbat is not only to remember the past but to anticipate the future. It invites us to become active participants in redemption. Every Shabbat celebration, every moment of sacred rest, every decision to elevate time brings our

world closer to the day when God's presence will be fully known and peace will reign.

FOR YOUR TABLE OR STUDY GROUP

Questions for Reflection

1. Isaiah blesses "the man" (enosh) who keeps the Sabbath — not "the Jew." What does this word choice reveal about Shabbat's place in God's plan for all people?

2. In Isaiah 56, keeping the Sabbath is the mark of the foreigners who are welcomed to God's holy mountain. Why do you think Shabbat — of all the commandments — is the sign of joining?

3. Zechariah foresees ten men from all the nations grasping the garment of a Jew, saying, "Let us go with you." Where do you see this prophecy beginning to stir in our generation?

4. How does honoring Shabbat allow the nations to join Israel's mission while preserving the distinction between Israel's covenantal calling and the nations' own?

5. The chapter teaches that every Shabbat celebration brings the world closer to redemption. How does it change your motivation to see your weekly rest as participation in the healing of creation?

WORDS TO KNOW

Hebrew Terms

Enosh אֱנוֹשׁ

Man; a mortal. Isaiah blesses "the man" who keeps the Sabbath — a prophetic promise for all people, not one nation.

Shomer Shabbat שֹׁמֵר שַׁבָּת

One who keeps the Sabbath from being profaned — Isaiah's defining mark of the righteous among the nations.

Mashiach מָשִׁיחַ

The Messiah. The return of Shabbat consciousness to the world signals his coming and the approach of redemption.

PART 2

A Practical Guide

CHAPTER 10

A Practical Guide

10.1 Introduction

I want to start by saying that all of this is an invitation. Nothing here is obligatory or demanded. This section of the book should be seen more like menu in a restaurant than a "To Do" list. You don't order everything on the menu all at once. This is a collection of ancient Jewish traditions and wisdoms that we are sharing with the world to enhance their experience and connection to the holy day.

Shabbat is an experience. You can study its meaning, its depth, and the opportunities it offers, but that is like reading the musical notes rather than going to hear the philharmonic orchestra. Shabbat must be lived to be fully known.

This section of the book is a practical guide to help people enhance their Shabbat experience guided by the ancient Jewish customs of Israel. These are not laws that must be adhered to but pathways, time-tested practices that create space for a new kind of rest, connection, and rejuvenation. Consider it an invitation to step beyond theory and into practice, so that the beauty of Shabbat can move from concept to lived reality in your home and in your life.

10.2 Preparing For Shabbat

As the old cliché goes – you get out of something, what you put into it. Preparing for the Shabbat each week is a significant part of implementing a Shabbat practice in your own home. The preparation is more than just the activities of planning the best meal of the week, sending invitations to guests, shopping for groceries needed, cleaning the house and so on. Preparation for Shabbat involves a certain mental and spiritual state of mind.

As discussed in Part 1, the weekly Shabbat is a rehearsal for the coming redemption when the Temple has been rebuilt, and the Jewish Messiah reigns and rules from the restored throne of King David in the holy city of Jerusalem. Shabbat is a microcosm of the Messianic Age when there are peace and prosperity for all people under the righteous leadership of God's anointed king.

Now imagine if you knew the Messiah was coming tomorrow and the final redemption was imminent. How would you behave? What would you change about your normal daily life and priorities? Would you spend less time "doom scrolling" on your iPhone and maybe more time praying? Perhaps you'd think about that repentance for a previous mistake that you haven't addressed? Your focus and anticipation would be heightened due to the imminent arrival of Redemption with all its implications.

This is the spiritual mindset we should strive to have as we approach Shabbat each week. It is easier said than done because life will always be there to distract and impede us. But your preparation for the weekly Shabbat is a spiritual parallel to your preparation for the Messianic Age and the World to Come. When can we do mitzvot and good deeds? When can we be a blessing to others who may not be able to bless us in return? When can we take inventory of our lives and work on improving our character traits according to the values we aspire to as described in Scripture? We can only make those preparations in this life and in this present World. Because once the World to Come arrives – the Shabbat, as it were – it's too late. You are either prepared – or you are not! Whatever preparations are left undone, remain undone.

> *Prepare for Shabbat as though redemption arrives tomorrow — because once it begins, whatever is left undone stays undone.*

In this way, our physical and spiritual preparation each week for Shabbat is also a dress rehearsal and object lesson to teach us the eternal importance of doing good and serving God while we still have time. Because once Shabbat starts its "pencils down" as we say.

From this emerges the notion that one has not truly experienced Shabbat in its entirety unless one has experienced Friday – the day of preparation. And if you have ever been in an observant Jewish home on Friday, you know exactly what I'm talking about.

FRIDAY

- DAYTIME — Prepare the home, the food and yourself — 10.2
- BEFORE SUNSET — Light the Shabbat candles — 10.4
- AT THE TABLE — Sing Shalom Aleichem — 11.1
- Bless the children — 11.2
- Sing Eshet Chayil — 11.3
- Kiddush over wine — 11.4
- Wash hands, then HaMotzi over the challah — 11.6
- The meal: Torah, highlights of the week — 11.7–11.8

SATURDAY

- ALL DAY — Rest, unplugged, with family and Torah — 10.5
- THREE STARS — Havdalah: wine, spices, fire, separation — 12

One Shabbat, in order. Numbers point to the section that explains each step.

10.3 Friday Night

Shabbat begins Friday evening at sundown. Why sundown some may ask? Returning to the creation account in Genesis 1, we find it is written:

וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָאוֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לָיְלָה, וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד. (בראשית א:ה)

"And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day." (Genesis 1:5)

In this verse Scripture describes the first day as “there was evening and there was morning”. The second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth days of creation are all described in a similar manner. From this we learn that days are reckoned from sundown to sundown.

Friday night is the doorway into Shabbat. To honor Shabbat means to actively welcome Shabbat into your home. Although Shabbat is woven into the fabric of time, to experience the transition from the six days of creative work into the day of rest, you must make mental, psychological and spiritual space for Shabbat to enter the home.

It is the moment when the world of striving gives way to the world of being. When we consciously notice the sun setting on Friday eve, the week loosens its grip, and a different kind of presence enters the home.

Families gather not to accomplish anything, but simply to be together. For the first time all week, there is no agenda beyond presence, no goal beyond connection. The table becomes a meeting place for hearts that have been pulled in a hundred directions and are finally allowed to return.

When we make space for this transition, we can feel it: a quiet blessing settles in, a sense of peace that cannot be manufactured or scheduled. It is the rest that comes from knowing that for one sacred day, the world can wait, because it is Shabbat. Life has been gently turned off, and something deeper has been turned on.

10.4 Shabbat Candles

If Friday night is the doorway into Shabbat, Shabbat candles are the key. It is the first opportunity to gather the family around together and welcome Shabbat into the home. With the lighting of the candles, we mark the end of the workweek and the arrival of Shabbat. Before any words are spoken, before the meal is served, the candles create a peaceful atmosphere in the home that announces that this time is different.

Shabbat is a family-centered day, and it is no accident that the wife and mother of the home take center stage at this moment. The tradition entrusts her with welcoming the Light of Shabbat into the household because she embodies the heart of the home itself. Just as light gently pushes away darkness, her act of lighting the candles brings warmth and peace into the space where family life unfolds.

The candles mark more than the end of the workweek; they mark a shift in consciousness. With their glow, urgency fades and peace settles in. After all the Friday preparations, the woman of the home gently recites the blessing over the Shabbat candles and the light reminds us that Shabbat is not entered through effort or achievement, but through receiving. We do not create Shabbat; we welcome it.

> *We do not create Shabbat; we welcome it — the candles are lit to receive, not to achieve.*

There is also a profound symbolism in the light itself. Fire transforms darkness without noise or force. In the same way, Shabbat transforms the home quietly, from within. The candles teach that holiness does not overwhelm life; it softens it. Their steady flame invites calm, reflection, and presence. Children sense it immediately. The atmosphere changes. Something sacred has arrived.

In many homes, the blessing recited over the candles is a moment of personal prayer.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat.

"*Blessed are you Hashem our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His mitzvot and commanded us to light the candles of the Sabbath.*"

There's a custom that when the wife and mother of the home says the blessing over the candles that she covers her eyes with both hands. My wife Tehila taught me that when she does that she says in her heart something like, "There's so much to do, so many

problems that exist… right now I'm not going to look at those. I'm going into Shabbat and I'm only going to see the blessing of what's around me and in front of me right now."

> *She covers her eyes and chooses, for one day, to see only the blessing in front of her.*

Sparking a match, kindling a flame while lighting the candles is the last creative act of the week. It is a pause before the rush of the week dissolves completely, a chance to ask for peace in the home, protection for loved ones, and gratitude for the gift of life. In this way, the candles do not merely welcome Shabbat into the house; they welcome God into the most intimate spaces of family life.

My family usually sings this song together right after my wife Tehila lights the candles. It encapsulates our deepest hopes for the family we are building together and allows the family to welcome Shabbat together.

Grant me the merit
to raise children and children's children,
wise and understanding,
lovers of the Lord,
those who fear God,
people of truth,
holy offspring,
clinging to the Lord.

And may their light illuminate the world
with Torah and good deeds
and with every form of sacred service of the Creator.

The feeling I get after Tehila lights the Shabbat candles and together with my children we finish singing the song that welcomes Shabbat is like no other. Finally… Shabbat.

The light of Shabbat must be kindled intentionally. Peace does not appear on its own. Holiness must be invited. When we pause, gather, and light the candles together, we create a weekly sanctuary in time where the soul can rest and relationships can be

renewed. With Shabbat candles we initiate Shabbat in the home. Shabbat begins not with words or laws, but with light — and in that light, we as a home welcome the peace and blessing of Shabbat.

10.5 Living Unplugged

Shabbat offers a weekly opportunity to unplug from the internet, from our phones, and from the array of screens that compete for our attention. In my view, this may be the most transformative practice in this book. If going unplugged every Shabbat becomes a habit, its impact is life changing.

Although Shabbat has been observed for thousands of years, in many ways our generation can appreciate its blessing more than ever before. Studies show that many people feel as though they have an unhealthy relationship with their phone and other devices.

The American Psychological Association's annual Stress in America survey has repeatedly found that over two-thirds of adults report that their phone use causes stress and anxiety. A significant number describe feeling unable to disconnect, even when they want to. Many feel pressure to respond quickly to texts, emails, and social media notifications.

The Pew Research Center reported that 46% of U.S. adults say they are "almost constantly" online. No break. Ever. Shabbat is the opportunity to finally go offline and unplug regularly.

A commandment given so long ago at Sinai that addresses so directly one of the biggest struggles of modern people stands as living testimony to the divine and transcendent wisdom of the Torah and the Ten Commandments in particular.

One of the most powerful and life-changing aspects of Shabbat can be the decision to unplug from electronics and screens. No notifications. No emails. No messages demanding immediate response. For one day each week, the constant pull of urgency is released, and life is restored to its natural state.

Disconnecting from your phone one day a week on Shabbat is profoundly beneficial for mental and emotional health. Constant connectivity trains the mind to live in a state of alertness, reacting endlessly to notifications, messages, and news, which quietly fuels

anxiety and mental fatigue. Shabbat interrupts this cycle. When the phone is turned off, the nervous system finally has permission to rest. Thoughts slow down, stress hormones decrease, and a sense of inner calm begins to return. Without the pressure to respond or keep up, the mind regains clarity and focus.

What modern psychology now calls a "digital detox," Shabbat has offered for millennia: a weekly restoration of the human soul, reminding us that we are not meant to be constantly available to everyone, but to be truly available to people closest to us.

> *What modern psychology calls a 'digital detox,' Shabbat has offered for millennia.*

Modern technology has quietly trained us to live in a perpetual state of interruption. Our attention is fragmented, our thoughts are scattered, and even our moments of rest are filled with noise. We may be physically present with our loved ones, yet mentally tethered to distant conversations, breaking news, and endless demands. The result is a life lived everywhere and nowhere at once.

Shabbat offers a different way of being. By disconnecting from global connectivity, we rediscover local intimacy. When screens go dark, faces come into focus. Conversations deepen. Silence becomes comfortable. Laughter returns without distraction. Children feel truly seen. Relationships are no longer competing with devices for attention.

The absence of electronics also restores our inner world. Without constant alerts, the nervous system relaxes. Anxiety loosens its grip. Time slows. We are no longer reacting; we are present. Shabbat teaches us that not everything urgent is important, and the things that are most important in life require no urgency at all.

This weekly digital fast is not an escape from life, but a return to it. It reminds us that we were created for connection, not constant consumption. By setting aside our screens, we make space for God, for family, and for ourselves. What begins as a discipline quickly becomes a delight.

For many, unplugging from electronics becomes the single most impactful Shabbat practice. It reshapes relationships, restores a peace of mind, and reorients priorities. Once experienced, it becomes difficult to imagine Shabbat any other way. In stepping

away from the noise of the world, we discover the quiet blessing that has been waiting for us all along.

CHAPTER 11

Introducing The Friday Night Shabbat Meal

In many ways, the Friday night meal is the diamond in the crown of Shabbat evening. As a weekly practice, it creates family togetherness like nothing else. It is the ultimate family builder. There are no distractions pulling us away, no errands to run, no appointments waiting. It is a prepared feast, not rushed or improvised, but anticipated and cherished. The table itself becomes a place of arrival.

The power of the Friday night meal lies not only in what is served, but in what is set aside. Phones are gone. The week's urgency has ended. No one is multitasking. Everyone is present. In a world where shared meals have become increasingly rare, Shabbat restores the table to its rightful place as the heart of family life.

In our world it is a rare and precious sight, especially on Friday night. But during the Shabbat meal one can witness the blessings of the Bible come to life. Around the Shabbat table, King David's vision of a blessed life described in the Psalms becomes a lived reality. Shabbat creates the space where his words are fulfilled:

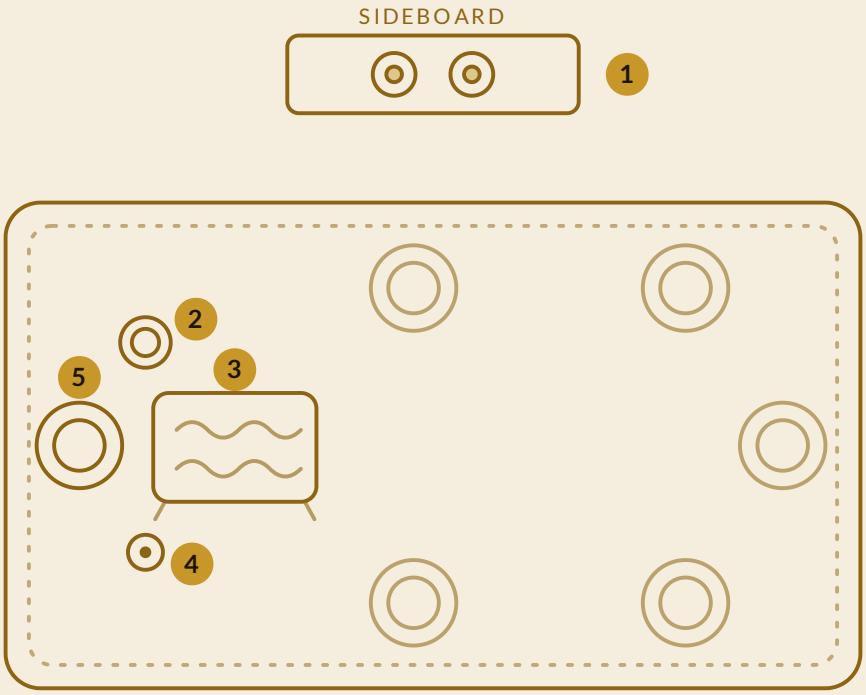
> *Around the Shabbat table, the blessings of the Bible come to life.*

אֶשְׁתְּךָ כְּגֶפֶן פֹּרִיָּה בְּיַרְכְּתֵי בֵיתֶךָ, בָּנֶיךָ כִּשְׁתִלֵי זֵיתִים סָבִיב לְשֻׁלְחָנֶךָ.
הִנֵּה כִי־כֵן יְבֹרַךְ גָּבֶר יְרֵא ה'. (תהלים קכח:ג–ד)

"Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine within your house, your children like olive plants around your table. Behold, for thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD." — Psalm 128:3–4

When practiced week after week, the Shabbat meal teaches families how to be together in harmony. There is a world of difference between occasional or yearly gatherings and a weekly family feast. Consistency is key. It creates a different family culture, and over time these shared meals quietly build the cohesion, trust, and rhythm that hold a family together.

As the food nourishes the body, the atmosphere nourishes the soul. It demonstrates how to celebrate without consuming and how to connect without distraction. Conversation flows differently when there is nowhere else to be and nothing else to check. Stories are told. Laughter rises. Children feel the security of being fully seen. Adults rediscover the joy of unhurried presence. Although you can see parts of Shabbat as a break from life; the Shabbat meal is a window into life as it was meant to be lived.



1. **Two candles** — lit before sunset, usually nearby rather than on the table: a sideboard, counter or window ledge (10.4).
2. **Kiddush cup** — wine or grape juice, at the host's place (11.4).
3. **Two challah loaves** — beside the host, kept covered until HaMotzi; two for the double manna (11.6).
4. **Salt** — next to the challah, sprinkled on it after the blessing.
5. **The host's place** — where Kiddush and HaMotzi are led, with everything they need close at hand.

The Friday night table, seen from above.

11.1 Welcoming the Sabbath Angels

The Friday night meal is surrounded by gentle rituals that bring order, intention, and meaning to the evening. These customs are not meant to complicate Shabbat, but to slow us down and guide us into its spirit. One of the most beloved of these is the singing of Shalom Aleichem.

Before the meal begins, families stand together and sing a song welcoming the angels of peace. Jewish tradition teaches that we are accompanied by different spiritual forces during the week and on Shabbat. As Shabbat enters, the angels of the weekday depart, and the angels of Shabbat arrive to accompany us through this sacred time.

The Talmud (Tractate Shabbat) shares a striking tradition that two angels—one kind and one harsh—accompany a person home on Friday night to inspect the house. They look to see if the candles are lit, the table is set, and the home is prepared for rest. If it is, the kind angel declares that the next Shabbat should be just as beautiful, and the harsh angel is forced to say 'Amen.' If the home is unprepared, the reverse happens.[21] While this might sound like a terrifying judgment of our chores, it actually carries a profound spiritual truth. The angels are not inspecting our housekeeping; they are inspecting whether our work during the week was purposeful. They are checking to see if we successfully used the mundane labor of the past six days to set up a dedicated space and time to be with God.

Whether understood literally or metaphorically, the angels of Shabbat represent the forces of harmony, blessing, and serenity that accompany this day. By singing *Shalom Aleichem*, we say goodbye to the energy of striving and welcome the energy of rest.

Remarkably, these angels of Shabbat can also be understood as the very same cherubim stationed at the Garden of Eden, who were placed there with fiery swords to guard the way back to the Tree of Life after humanity was expelled. Under this interpretation, singing Shalom Aleichem represents a "changing of the guard". When we welcome the angels in peace, we are effectively telling them to put down their swords because, by keeping Shabbat, we are stepping back into our original Edenic mission of guarding and serving God's world. Ushering the angels out at the end of the song is not rude, but rather a powerful acknowledgment that humanity is no longer cursed, but once again blessed.

> *On Shabbat the cherubim who once guarded Eden are welcomed as guests — the sword that barred the way becomes a blessing.*

As the family sings together welcoming the Shabbat angels, we acknowledge that this day carries a unique spiritual presence, distinct from the other six days of the week. Just singing together creates an atmosphere that is absolutely unique to Shabbat. It gathers everyone into a shared moment of peace and unity. Children sense that something special is happening and together, the family steps into the anticipation of the Shabbat family meal.

Shalom Aleichem שָׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם

HEBREW

שָׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם, מַלְאֲכֵי הַשָּׁרֵת, מַלְאֲכֵי עֶלְיוֹן, מִמֶּלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא.

בּוֹאֲכֶם לְשָׁלוֹם, מַלְאֲכֵי הַשָּׁלוֹם, מַלְאֲכֵי עֶלְיוֹן, מִמֶּלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא.

בָּרְכוּנִי לְשָׁלוֹם, מַלְאֲכֵי הַשָּׁלוֹם, מַלְאֲכֵי עֶלְיוֹן, מִמֶּלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא.

צֵאתְכֶם לְשָׁלוֹם, מַלְאֲכֵי הַשָּׁלוֹם, מַלְאֲכֵי עֶלְיוֹן, מִמֶּלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא.

SAY IT

Shalom aleichem malachei ha-shareit, malachei elyon, mi-Melech malchei ha-melachim, ha-Kadosh Baruch Hu.

Bo'achem l'shalom malachei ha-shalom, malachei elyon, mi-Melech malchei ha-melachim, ha-Kadosh Baruch Hu.

Barchuni l'shalom malachei ha-shalom, malachei elyon, mi-Melech malchei ha-melachim, ha-Kadosh Baruch Hu.

Tzeitchem l'shalom malachei ha-shalom, malachei elyon, mi-Melech malchei ha-melachim, ha-Kadosh Baruch Hu.

MEANING

Peace be upon you, ministering angels, angels of the Most High, from the King, King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.

Come in peace, angels of peace, angels of the Most High, from the King, King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.

Bless me with peace, angels of peace, angels of the Most High, from the King, King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.

Go in peace, angels of peace, angels of the Most High, from the King, King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.

11.2 - Blessing the Children

This is one of the most beautiful, meaningful, and transformative practices of Friday night. Before we sit down to delight in the Shabbat meal, we bless our children. Before food is tasted, before conversation begins, blessing becomes the center of the evening.

For me personally, this is the most meaningful moment every Friday night. Tehila and I bless each of our children separately, each in our own way. There is something profoundly right about it. A father and a mother place their hands on their child and speaking words of blessing feels as ancient and authentic as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob themselves.

My father blessed me every Friday night, and his father blessed him and when I bless my children, it's as if time is sewn together and generations touch. A parent's love is spoken aloud and made tangible for the children to hear and experience.

Beyond any personal blessing, the tradition is to recite the Aaronic blessing over our children. The same blessings the priests in Jerusalem would bless the nation of Israel as they entered the courtyard of the Temple. In this way, the father and mother are the priests, the spiritual leaders, of the family tasked with the same mission as the priests of Israel - to bless and to teach their children.

This has been the custom of the Jewish people for as long as anyone can remember. And perhaps this is the quiet secret behind the enduring blessing of Israel. People often ask why the Jewish people are so resilient, so rooted, so strong across generations. The

answer may be simpler than we imagine. The people of Israel are blessed because they have been blessed — week after week — by their fathers and their mothers.

Shabbat is a gift to families in many ways, but for the parent-child relationship, there is nothing I know of that is more powerful or more restorative. Every family experiences tension. Words are spoken during the week that we wish we could take back. Patience wears thin. Love can feel strained. Friday night arrives and offers an opportunity for a sincere reset. No matter what happens during the week, a parent and child have a chance to begin again. The child hears, perhaps more clearly than at any other time, that they are cherished, and that their parents' deepest wish is that their beloved child be blessed.

The weekly blessing plants a quiet certainty within the child that says, "I am loved. I am wanted. I am blessed." Over time, these weekly moments do something extraordinary. They form souls that know their worth and hearts that know where they belong. In blessing our children every Shabbat, we are not only shaping their present. We are helping to shape their future. We are passing on faith, love, and belonging from one generation to the next.

> *Every week the blessing tells a child: you are loved, you are wanted, you are blessed.*

Birkat HaBanim — בִּרְכַּת הַבָּנִים

BLESSING FOR SONS

HEBREW

יְשִׂמְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכִמְנַשֶּׁה.

SAY IT

Yesimcha Elohim k'Ephraim v'chi-Menasheh.

MEANING

May God make you like Ephraim and like Manasseh.

BLESSING FOR DAUGHTERS

HEBREW

יְשִׂמֵךְ אֱלֹהִים כְּשָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל וְלֵאָה.

SAY IT

Yesimech Elohim k'Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel v'Leah.

MEANING

May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah.

THE PRIESTLY BLESSING (FOR ALL CHILDREN)

HEBREW

יְבָרֶכְךָ ה' וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ.

יָאֵר ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ.

יִשָּׂא ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם.

SAY IT

Yevarechecha Adonai v'yishmerecha.
Ya'er Adonai panav eilecha vichuneka.
Yisa Adonai panav eilecha v'yasem lecha shalom.

MEANING

May the LORD bless you and guard you.
May the LORD shine His face upon you and be gracious to you.
May the LORD lift up His face toward you and grant you peace.

(*Numbers* 6:24–26)

11.3 Eshet Chayil – A Love Song for the Wife and Mother of the Home

There is one more powerful and ancient custom a family does around the table before the family feast. Before the Shabbat meal begins, there is a time dedicated to gratitude. We sing *Eshet Chayil* — Woman of Valor — a song of praise drawn from the Book of Proverbs, chapter 31. It is a moment set aside to honor the wife and mother of the home, the one who has prepared the meal, readied the house, and quietly carried the weight of the home during the week.

In Jewish tradition, the woman of the home is not simply a participant in the home; she is the heart of the home itself. Every week, she creates the environment in which Shabbat can be received. Long before the candles are lit and the table is set, in some ways every day of the week, she has been preparing space — physical, emotional, and spiritual — so that peace can enter. Eshet Chayil gives voice to what is too often assumed, taken for granted and too rarely spoken.

Just as ancient Jewish tradition calls parents to bless their children each Friday night, it also calls the husband to lead the family in honoring his wife, the mother of the home. In the same way that blessing the children renews the bond between parent and child, singing Eshet Chayil renews the bond between husband and wife, restoring appreciation, closeness, and love.

> *The strength of a home is not in its walls but in the woman who sustains it — and Shabbat says so out loud, every week.*

For the husband it's a moment to sing a love song to his wife. To publicly express his appreciation, not only for what his wife has done, but for who she is. He acknowledges her strength, her wisdom, her devotion, and her unseen labor. In a busy life where effort often goes unnoticed, Shabbat gives us the opportunity to express true gratitude.

For the children, this song becomes a lesson in honor. They see their mother valued, praised, and respected. They learn to say, "Thank you." They learn that love is expressed through recognition, and that the heart of the home deserves reverence. Over time, this weekly ritual shapes how children understand marriage, partnership, and respect.

Eshet Chayil is a reminder that the strength of the home rests not in walls or possessions, but in the character and love of the woman who sustains it. Inspired by the words of King Solomon, the song lifts her role out of the ordinary and places it in the realm of the sacred.

Week after week, this moment quietly repairs what the busyness of life can strain. Appreciation softens tension. Honor rebuilds closeness. Gratitude restores joy. Through Eshet Chayil, Shabbat becomes not only a day of rest, but a weekly act of healing — where love is spoken aloud, and the foundation of the family is strengthened once again.

11.4 Kiddush — Sanctifying the Day

The next stage before the meal is a family blessing, the *Kiddush*, led by the father of the home. Kiddush is the blessing recited over wine at the Shabbat table before everyone begins to eat. It is the moment when Shabbat is formally sanctified in the home. With a cup of wine (or grape juice) raised, we recite the Torah passages that proclaim that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, declaring this day as distinct and elevated above all others.

> *Kiddush means sanctification — but it also means invitation: we welcome God to our table.*

The word *kiddush* means sanctification, but according to Rashi's commentary it also carries a deeper implication: invitation. In the book of Exodus, when the people of Israel prepared themselves for the revelation at Mount Sinai, Rashi explains that they were invited to the mountain. Sanctification, then, is not separation alone; it is an invitation. In this spirit, Kiddush becomes the act through which we invite God into our home and to our Shabbat table.

This order is essential. Before the family partakes in the meal, before conversation and celebration begin, God is welcomed first. Kiddush gathers the family together, but it does so by anchoring that togetherness in faith. Our bond is not built only on shared food or shared space, but on a shared awareness that God is present among us.

Through Kiddush, the meal is elevated from physical enjoyment to a spiritual encounter. Wine, which gladdens the heart, becomes a vessel for holiness. What might otherwise be just another family dinner during the week is transformed into something entirely different. This is not an ordinary time. This is Shabbat.

Within the words of the Kiddush prayer itself, we can already hear Shabbat's invitation to the world. The blessing we recite weaves together two defining moments in human history. We declare that Shabbat is a remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt — a uniquely Jewish experience of redemption, covenant, and national birth. Yet in the very same breath, we proclaim that Shabbat is also a remembrance of the Creation of the world — an event that belongs to all humanity.

In this way, Kiddush holds together the universal and the particular. The Exodus speaks to Israel's distinct story, while Creation speaks to the shared origin of all people. Every Friday night, as the cup of wine is raised, Shabbat quietly announces that this day is both Israel's sacred inheritance and a gift intended for the entire world.

Although Shabbat exists as a reality embedded in creation, we are entrusted with the responsibility to sanctify it in our lives. God created holiness in time, and we respond by recognizing it, creating space for it in our lives and welcoming it. Kiddush expresses this partnership.

When the Kiddush is recited, the home becomes a sanctuary, the table becomes an altar, and the family becomes aware that they are not alone. Shabbat is not only honored or observed; it is welcomed. And in that welcome, we invite the presence of God to rest gently among us.

The full text of the Friday night Kiddush follows. It is recited over a raised cup of wine or grape juice, standing, with the family gathered around the table.

Vayechulu — The Testimony of Creation

(*Genesis* 2:1–3)

HEBREW

יוֹם הַשִּׁשִּׁי. וַיְכֻלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל צְבָאָם. וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה. וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ, כִּי בוֹ שָׁבַת מִכָּל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת.

SAY IT

Yom hashishi. Vayechulu hashamayim v'ha'aretz v'chol tz'va'am. Vayechal Elohim bayom hashvi'i m'lachto asher asah, vayishbot bayom hashvi'i mikol m'lachto asher asah. Vay'varech Elohim et yom hashvi'i vay'kadesh oto, ki vo shavat mikol m'lachto asher bara Elohim la'asot.

MEANING

The sixth day. And the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their host. And on the seventh day God finished the work that He had made, and He rested on the seventh day from all the work that He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for on it He rested from all His work which God created to do.

The Blessing Over the Wine

HEBREW

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

SAY IT

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

MEANING

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

The Sanctification of the Day[22]

HEBREW

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה׳ אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְרָצָה בָנוּ, וְשַׁבַּת קָדְשׁוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן הִנְחִילָנוּ, זִכָּרוֹן לְמַעֲשֵׂה בְרֵאשִׁית. כִּי הוּא יוֹם תְּחִלָּה לְמִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ, זֵכֶר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם. כִּי בָנוּ בָחַרְתָּ וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדַּשְׁתָּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים, וְשַׁבַּת קָדְשְׁךָ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן הִנְחַלְתָּנוּ. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה׳, מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת.

SAY IT

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'ratzah vanu, v'Shabbat kodsho b'ahavah uv'ratzon hinchilanu, zikaron l'ma'aseh v'reishit. Ki hu yom t'chilah l'mikra'ei kodesh, zecher litziat Mitzrayim. Ki vanu vacharta v'otanu kidashta mikol ha'amim, v'Shabbat kodsh'cha b'ahavah uv'ratzon hinchaltanu. Baruch atah Adonai, m'kadesh haShabbat.

MEANING

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who sanctified us with His commandments and favored us, and in love and favor gave us His holy Shabbat as an inheritance, a remembrance of the work of creation. For it is the first among the holy convocations, a remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt. For You chose us and sanctified us from among all the nations, and in love and favor gave us Your holy Shabbat as an inheritance. Blessed are You, Lord, Who sanctifies the Shabbat.

11.6 – Hamotzi – Breaking Challah Bread Together

Now it's time to eat. The Shabbat meal begins with the family quite literally breaking bread together. Before we taste the food, before the conversation unfolds, we pause and lift the challah and recite HaMotzi — the blessing over bread: "Blessed are You,

Hashem our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth."

There is something beautifully peculiar about this blessing. God does not "bring forth bread from the earth". Human hands make the Challah. Bread is the result of a long and intricate process: wheat must grow, be harvested, ground into flour, mixed, kneaded, and baked. It is one of the most human of foods. Bread-making is the ultimate expression of human mastery over the plant world. In many ways, it mimics God's own creation of humanity. We harvest and grind the wheat, turning it into lifeless dust, but then we mix it with water to form a clay-like dough. By adding yeast, we literally breathe life back into it—just as God formed man from the dust of the earth and breathed the breath of life into him. Through this process, we act as creators, exerting the power of life and death over the plant world. But on Shabbat, we pull back.

> *All week we exert our mastery over the world.*
> *On Shabbat, we defer to the Master of the world.*

And yet, when we recite the blessing over the bread, we declare that despite all our effort, it is God alone in whom we must ultimately rely upon, as it is written:

כִּי לֹא עַל־הַלֶּחֶם לְבַדּוֹ יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם, כִּי עַל־כָּל־מוֹצָא פִי־יְהוָה יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם. (דברים ח:ג)

"...man shall not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD." (Deuteronomy 8:3)

The blessing sets the tone for the entire meal we're about to enjoy. It trains us to see beneath the surface of our labor and recognize the Divine generosity that sustains us all. This is the spiritual genius of HaMotzi. We acknowledge that even when we work, even when we create, we are partnering with God.

Traditionally, two loaves of challah are placed on the table. They recall the double portion of manna that fell from heaven before Shabbat in the wilderness, sustaining the Israelites so they would not need to gather food on the sacred day.[23] Every Shabbat, both consciously and subconsciously, we are carried back to our earliest Shabbats as a people, in the wilderness, journeying from Egypt toward the Land of Israel.

Challah itself is a primary symbol of Shabbat. It is not ordinary bread. Often home made by the mother of the home, it is usually braided, beautiful, and prepared especially for this day. Its very presence announces that this meal is different. It is a Shabbat feast and celebration.

The two loaves placed on the table carry an additional underlying message that resonates throughout the meal: abundance. They remind us that for this meal, for this Shabbat, and for this moment, nothing is lacking. We have what we need and more. Everything is exactly as it should be.

After reciting the Kiddush and completing a ceremonial handwashing, the Father of the home will uncover the challah, raise it and recite the following blessing.

Birkat HaMotzi — בִּרְכַּת הַמּוֹצִיא

HEBREW

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה׳, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמּוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

SAY IT

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz.

MEANING

"Blessed are You, Hashem our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth."

Upon completing the blessing, the Father will take a piece of challah for himself and everyone at the table, sprinkle them with a pinch of salt and then partake.

11.7 – Tips and Guidance For The Shabbat Meal

Shabbat meals are arguably the best opportunity for the family to talk together, listen to each other and bond. The following tips can help make the Shabbat meal into a more meaningful and enjoyable experience that nourishes both body and soul. **Welcoming Guests**

Hospitality is at the heart of Shabbat. When guests are present, take a moment before the meal truly begins to welcome them warmly. Invite each guest to share their name and go around the table with an inviting question. Some examples are; What is something that made you smile this week? What is one thing you're grateful for right now? Pick any question and go around the table. This simple practice breaks the ice, creates immediate belonging, and sets a tone of openness. Our father Abraham teaches us that no one should feel like a stranger at our table.

SHARING TORAH AT THE TABLE

Shabbat meals have long been a place for Torah conversation. This does not need to be a lecture or a test of knowledge. A simple idea learned throughout the week is enough. (Parents need to prepare this part of the meal). Even a single question from the weekly Parasha is enough to spark reflection and conversation. Ask something open and inviting. If young children are present, make the questions and discussion age appropriate and fun for them. Encourage them to engage. Some even have the tradition of sharing candy or sweets with small children if they listen and participate in the Torah discussion as a way of reinforcing the idea that God's word is always sweet.

> *Torah spoken at the table becomes Torah lived — these practices ask for presence, not perfection.*

Torah shared at the table becomes Torah lived. It connects ancient wisdom to the present moment in a natural and relational way. Starting the Shabbat meal with a focus around Torah sets a tone and undoubtedly the conversation throughout the evening will go in countless directions but having an anchor in Torah is the best way to ensure the conversation is as elevated and purposeful as possible.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WEEK

A beautiful benefit of Shabbat is it offers an ability to reflect on the week past. One of the most powerful practices is inviting everyone at the table to share a highlight from their week. Children and adults alike are given a voice. This simple act cultivates gratitude, attentiveness, and joy. It allows family members to truly hear one another and discover moments that might otherwise be missed. Over time, this practice teaches us to look for goodness throughout the week, knowing it will be shared and celebrated on Shabbat.

These elements do not require perfection or planning. They require practice and presence. In a world that rushes through meals and multitasks through conversations, the goal of the Shabbat table is to create a weekly anchor where people feel seen, heard, and valued.

11.8. The Torah Portion of the Week

The Torah portion of the week, known in Hebrew as Parashat HaShavua, is the section of the Torah that Jews around the world read and study each week. It's read out loud in public in synagogues around the world every Shabbat morning in services. In recent years, millions of non-Jewish believers from all around the world, have entered the cycle and started learning the Torah Portion together with the Jewish People every week.

Imagine that. One word given every week through the Jewish People and open to everyone who wants to join.

The Torah—the Five Books of Moses—is divided into approximately fifty-four portions, allowing the entire Torah to be completed over the course of a year. Every Shabbat, Jewish communities read the same portion, creating a shared cycle of learning that unites believers across different countries, cultures, and generations.

The practice has ancient origins. The Torah itself records that Moses publicly taught God's laws to the people[24], and later Jewish tradition established a regular cycle of Torah reading in the synagogue. By the time of the Second Temple period, public Torah reading had become a central feature of Jewish communal life. Over centuries, the annual cycle became standardized, so that the Jewish people would collectively revisit the entire Torah year after year.

> *Each week the same portion is read in every synagogue on earth — one word, given through Israel, open to anyone who joins.*

Parashat HaShavua serves a purpose far beyond simply reading a text. It provides a framework for ongoing study, reflection, and discussion. Each week offers new themes, moral lessons, historical narratives, laws, and spiritual insights. Rabbis, teachers, and families often use the weekly portion as a starting point for exploring questions about faith, ethics, leadership, human nature, and the relationship between God and humanity.

The importance of Parashat HaShavua lies in its ability to connect people not only to the Torah, but also to one another. Every week, millions of people engage with the same words that have been studied for thousands of years. This shared journey through the Torah creates a sense of continuity with the past, connection to the present Jewish community, and responsibility to pass these teachings on to future generations.

In this way, the weekly Torah portion is a living word that comes down every week to everyone who is attuned. The message remarkably has the power to speak to us individually, as a nation and as world. Rabbi Nachman of Breslov says that answers to questions we ask God in prayer often come to us through the Torah we learn and the Torah portion often serves as a vehicle of nothing less than divine communication.[25]

NOTES 5

21. Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 119b. Rabbi Yose bar Yehuda teaches that two ministering angels accompany a person home from the synagogue on Shabbat eve, one good and one evil; seeing the lamp lit, the table set, and the couch made, the good angel says, "May it be so on another Shabbat as well," and the evil angel is compelled to answer "Amen" — and if the home is not prepared, the evil angel offers the opposite wish and the good angel must answer "Amen." This passage is the basis for the Friday-night hymn Shalom Aleichem, which welcomes the malachei ha-shareit (ministering angels).

22. Disclaimer: Under current Jewish law there is some question about whether it is appropriate for a non-Jew to recite the traditional Kiddush prayer given that this prayer is describing the covenantal relationship that Israel has with the Shabbat. If you are a non-Jew, prayerfully consider whether you should modify this prayer accordingly.

23. Exodus 16:22–30.

24. Exodus 24:3–7; Deuteronomy 31:9–13.

25. Cf. Likutey Moharan I, 2:6; I, 8:7 — Torah strengthens and renews prayer, and prayer strengthens and renews Torah study; the Torah a person learns joins with his prayers to illuminate them.

CHAPTER 12

Havdalah: The Sacred Art of Separation

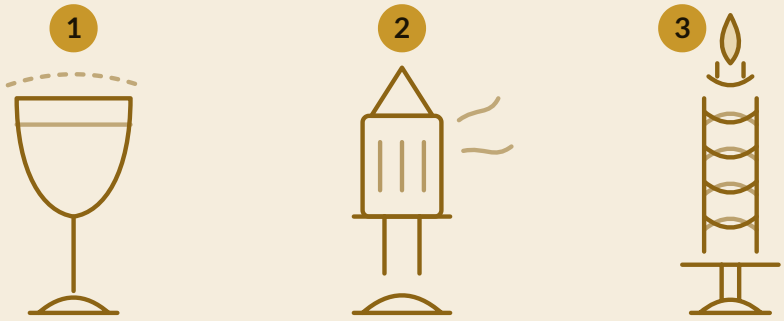
As the sun sets on Saturday evening and three stars appear in the night sky, Shabbat officially comes to a close. But just as we do not abruptly start Shabbat, we do not abruptly leave it; instead, we transition out of this sacred time through a beautiful, multi-sensory ceremony called Havdalah, which translates to "separation" or "distinction" in Hebrew.

The Torah teaches that God created the world by making distinctions—first between light and darkness, then between water and land, and ultimately, between regular time and holy time. Havdalah is the moment we rehearse these divisions, marking the boundary where the spiritual reality of Shabbat meets the material reality of the upcoming week. The greatest tool we have for appreciating anything is the ability to differentiate; by contrasting the holy with the ordinary, we refine our ability to discern and appreciate the rare and unique qualities of life, recognizing that true wisdom lies in the ability to see these differences.

> *Creation began by drawing distinctions — Havdalah teaches us to leave holy time deliberately, not abruptly.*

Jewish mystical tradition teaches that during Shabbat, we are gifted an "added soul" that allows us to experience the transcendent peace of the day, but this extra soul departs from us when Shabbat ends.[26] Because leaving the heightened spiritual state of Shabbat can be jarring, the Havdalah ceremony engages all five of our physical senses—feeling the cup, smelling the spices, seeing the flame, hearing the blessings, and tasting the wine—to comfort us and carry the sweetness of Shabbat into the new week.

The ceremony consists of four core blessings:



1. **The cup** — filled until it overflows, for blessing in the week ahead.
2. **Spices** — cloves or cinnamon, to comfort the soul as Shabbat leaves.
3. **Braided candle** — one flame from several wicks.

What you need for Havdalah. The fourth blessing, separation, needs no object.

1. The Blessing Over the Wine

The ceremony begins with a cup of kosher wine or grape juice, which is customarily filled until it overflows its rim. This overflowing cup is deeply symbolic; it represents our wish that the joy and overflowing blessings we experienced on Shabbat will spill over into the six days of work ahead of us.

HEBREW

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה׳ אֱ־לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

SAY IT

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

MEANING

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

2. The Blessing Over the Spices

Next, we lift a container of fragrant spices—often cloves, cinnamon, or sweet-smelling herbs and fruit. We inhale the sweet scent deeply in order to uplift, comfort, and revive our spirits from the shock and sadness of losing our "extra soul" as Shabbat departs.

HEBREW

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מִינֵי בְשָׂמִים.

SAY IT

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, borei minei v'samim.

MEANING

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who creates varieties of spices.

3. The Blessing Over the Fire

We then recite a blessing over a special braided candle with multiple wicks. Because the blessing praises God who "creates the lights of fire" in the plural, we use a braided candle to merge multiple wicks into a single, bright, torch-like flame. This braiding carries a deep message: as we enter the week, our lives may feel like disparate, unraveling strands pulled in many directions, but through the peace of Shabbat, those strands are woven back together into a strong, unified whole.

Traditionally there are two separate Shabbat candles. In Havdalah, the tradition is to have one fire with at least two wicks. The idea here is that we entered Shabbat after a week of living in a world of separation. Over Shabbat we've experienced a little of the Oneness of creation, and we enter into the week with that new consciousness represented by those two wicks, those two Shabbat candles, that are melded into one flame.

According to the Midrash, Adam and Eve first discovered fire at the close of the very first Shabbat; by striking two stones together in the darkness, they performed humanity's first creative act of the new week.[27] During this blessing, it is customary to hold our hands up to the flame and gaze at the reflection of the light on our fingernails. Looking at our hands creates a stark visual boundary between the lit side of our fingers and the shadowed palm, allowing us to physically observe the distinction between light and dark, wisdom and confusion, and the seen world versus the hidden world of God's presence.

HEBREW

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מְאוֹרֵי הָאֵשׁ.

SAY IT

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, borei m'orei ha'esh.

MEANING

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who creates the lights of the fire.

4. The Blessing of Separation

Finally, we recite the concluding blessing of separation, thanking God for imbuing our lives with the sacred rhythm of time and establishing the boundary between the holy and the mundane.

HEBREW

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמַּבְדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחוֹל, בֵּין אוֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ, בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לָעַמִּים, בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי לְשֵׁשֶׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', הַמַּבְדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחוֹל.

SAY IT

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol, bein or l'choshech, bein Yisrael la'amim, bein yom hashvi'i l'sheshet y'mei hama'aseh. Baruch atah Adonai, hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol.

MEANING

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who distinguishes between the sacred and the secular, between light and dark, between Israel and the nations, between the seventh day and the six days of labor. Blessed are You, Lord, Who distinguishes between the sacred and the secular.

At the ritual's conclusion, the leader sips the wine, and the braided candle is then extinguished directly into the remaining wine, signifying that the flame was lit solely for the honor of this mitzvah. The room lights are turned back on, and the family sings Eliyahu HaNavi (Elijah the Prophet)—a song expressing the hope that he will arrive to herald the ultimate Messianic redemption. Finally, everyone joyfully turns to one another and wishes each other "Shavua Tov"—a good week.

NOTES 2

26. Beitzah 16a (Reish Lakish: an additional soul is given to a person on the eve of Shabbat and withdrawn at its conclusion); see Rashi ad loc. On the Havdalah spices as consolation for the departure of the neshamah yeteirah, see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 297:1.

27. See Babylonian Talmud, Pesachim 54a; Bereishit Rabbah 11:2. In these accounts God grants Adam the insight to strike two stones together after the first Shabbat, producing the first fire.

CHAPTER 13

Conclusion

As we approach this time in history, something unprecedented is unfolding. Never before have the people of Israel invited the nations to walk alongside them in honoring Shabbat. These are not ordinary times. We are living within the fulfillment of ancient Biblical prophecies, watching history bend toward its long-awaited redemption.

I am witnessing a movement growing around the world. I am the Founder of The Land of Israel Fellowship, a global community of families from around the world who gather weekly from around the world to learn Torah together, to connect to the Land of Israel, to build meaningful relationships, and to grow spiritually as individuals and as a movement.

The Land of Israel Fellowship is the inspiration behind this book.

Like the Fellowship, this Book is an invitation to people from all nations — to join Israel, to align your lives with the Bible and to live in the timeless rhythm God established at creation itself. Six days of creation and the seventh day rest.

If there is one idea that has run like a thread through every chapter of this book, it is this: Shabbat is not merely a pause from life. It is a return to life. It is the Creator's invitation to a distracted world to remember what is real, what is holy, and what is worth building a life around.

Shabbat begins in creation, before there was a nation, before there was a covenant, before there was even a command. The seventh day is the only thing in all of creation that God blessed and sanctified. Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote an exquisite book called "The Sabbath" and there he called Shabbat 'a sanctuary in time'. This book adds that it is a sanctuary open to everyone from every nationality and background to enter and enjoy.

The Torah teaches something sobering about human nature. Blessing can exist in the world and still be missed. Holiness can be offered and still be ignored. That is why Shabbat was commanded at Sinai. The gift needed a guardian. The blessing needed a pathway. The human heart needed a weekly reminder that freedom is not the ability to

do anything, but the ability to stop. To cease. To release the illusion that everything depends on us. To live one day each week as though the world is held by God, because it is.

> *A blessing can exist in the world and still be missed — which is why Shabbat was commanded, not merely offered.*

This is where Shabbat becomes more than a concept. It becomes a lived testimony. When a home lights candles, the world changes inside that room. When screens go dark, faces come into focus. When Kiddush is recited, the table becomes an altar of gratitude. When bread is lifted and blessed, we remember that even our most human labor is sustained by Divine generosity. When children are blessed, a future is built. When a husband sings gratitude to his wife, love is restored. When a family breaks bread together and speaks words of Torah, it is not only a meal. It is a small sanctuary in time where the soul can breathe again.

And beneath all these rituals is an even deeper promise. Shabbat is a weekly taste of the world as it will be. A foretaste of redemption. One day each week we live as though nothing is missing, as though peace has already arrived, as though the Messiah is already here, and creation has returned to its proper harmony. That experience is not escapism. It is spiritual training. It shapes the inner life. It teaches the heart what wholeness feels like so that we do not surrender to despair. It gives the mind a pattern of rest so that anxiety does not become our native language. It gives families a rhythm of presence so that love does not become incidental. Shabbat is not only rest from work. It is rest from fear. Rest from striving. Rest from the endless message that you are not enough. On Shabbat, God says: You are enough. Life is enough. Creation is good.

The prophets saw a time when this Shabbat consciousness would spread beyond Israel to the nations. Not as a replacement of Israel's covenant, but as a joining. A bridge. A shared recognition that God is Creator and that His time is holy. Isaiah speaks of the foreigner who clings to God and honors His Sabbath, and he promises joy in God's house of prayer for all nations. Zechariah envisions the day when the nations will grasp the corner of a Jewish garment and say, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." These are not poetic metaphors meant to remain on a page in a book

resting on a shelf. They are a vision of history moving toward unity of all mankind, a brotherhood and sisterhood under the Fatherhood of God. In a world increasingly fractured, Shabbat becomes a sign of belonging. A weekly act of alignment with heaven.

So, the invitation of this book is simple and practical. Do not let Shabbat remain only an idea you admire. Let it become an experience you enter. Choose one Shabbat. Prepare for it. Light the candles. Put away the devices. Gather your family. Bless your children. Sing gratitude. Enjoy the time God has set aside for you. And then, for a day, live as if the world is already redeemed. Because soon it will be.

And if you are ready, make a commitment that is both challenging and attainable: honor three Shabbats in a row. Not perfectly. Not with pressure. But with sincerity. Give Shabbat a chance to work on you. Give it time to reshape your inner world. Many people try Shabbat once and find it meaningful. But when Shabbat becomes a rhythm, it becomes transformational. After three Shabbats, you will not only have tasted rest. You will have begun to build a different life.

This is the weekly revolution of sacred time. What is the meaning of revolution? It is when you revolve all the way around back to the beginning. Shabbat is a revolution of peace. A revolution of presence. A revolution that begins in one home, around one table, with one candle's flame pushing back the darkness.

May the God who blessed the seventh day and made it holy bless you with the courage to stop, the wisdom to delight, and the faith to receive. May your home experience the sanctuary in time. May your table be surrounded by love. May your children grow into light. May your marriage be renewed through gratitude. May your week be healed through Shabbat. And may the taste of redemption you experience each seventh day hasten the day when the entire world will become what Shabbat already is: a dwelling place for peace, for holiness, and for God.

And if you feel that stirring in your heart, you are not alone. Join us in The Land of Israel Fellowship, and become part of a growing global community of people learning to walk with God through His Word, His Land, and His sacred time. The journey is not meant to be walked alone. Please, join us!

Hazak v'amatz!

About the Author

Rabbi Jeremy Gimpel is a teacher, author, musician, and one of Israel's most recognizable English-language media personalities. Originally from Atlanta, Georgia, he moved to Israel as a young man, served in the IDF's Givati infantry brigade, and continues to serve as a sergeant major in the reserves.

He is a co-founder of The Land of Israel Network, the English-language broadcast network based in Judea, and the host of Israel Inspired, whose teachings have reached listeners in more than 120 countries. His work has been featured on international news outlets including Fox News, BBC, and CNN, and he lectures widely throughout Israel and abroad.

In 2018 he and his family, together with several other families, founded the Arugot Farm and Educational Center in the Judean mountains — an organic farm, vineyard, and retreat center built in the wilderness where King David once composed his psalms. What began as barren hillside has become a destination for people from around the world who come to learn, to pray, and to work the land.

Rabbi Gimpel lives at Arugot Farm with his wife, Tehila, and their children.

About the Organization

The Land of Israel Network was founded by Rabbi Ari Abramowitz and Rabbi Jeremy Gimpel to bring the light of Torah to the nations, strengthen the Jewish people, support the flourishing of the Land of Israel, and build a global community devoted to God's promises — all from the heart of Judea.

What began as two friends with a microphone has grown into Israel's leading English-language podcast network, with teachers, journalists, educators, and storytellers broadcasting Torah, Zionism, and the beauty of the Land to hundreds of thousands of listeners worldwide. Alongside the podcasts, the Network produces documentaries, music, tours, and educational programming from the Judean mountains.

At its center is The Land of Israel Fellowship, a virtual community of families from more than thirty countries who gather to study, to celebrate the festivals and the weekly Shabbat, and to align their lives with the God of Israel, the People of Israel, the Land of Israel, and the Torah of Israel.

This book grew out of that community and is offered back to it. If the pages you have just read stirred something in you, do not walk the road alone.

Learn more, listen, and join us at thelandofisrael.com.

Read the interactive edition online: thelandofisrael.com/shabbat-for-all-nations/ebook

Shabbat For All Nations

Jeremy Gimpel · Edited by Greg Upham · Copyright © 2026 New Light Media LLC. All rights reserved.
Published by Judean Way Press, Arugot Farm, Israel · First Digital Edition, 2026 · ISBN 979-8-9980867-0-0 (ebook)

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture translations are the author's own. Hebrew transliterations follow a simplified phonetic system intended to aid pronunciation rather than to represent a formal academic transliteration standard. This book is offered for educational and devotional purposes. It is not intended as a substitute for guidance from a qualified rabbi or halachic authority on questions of Jewish law and practice.

For permissions requests, bulk orders, or speaking inquiries: info@thelandofisrael.com