

ערב שבת

Observing Shabbat at Home

1. Lighting the Candles: It is customary to light two candles made especially for Shabbat, which remain burning until they go out. One explanation for the two candles is that they represent the two Torah commandments concerning Shabbat: “keep” and “remember”. Keeping Shabbat is understood as an obligation to observe Shabbat, and remembering Shabbat is associated with preparing for it.

(Many people have a candle for each member of the family so that each person gets to light one.)

Between saying the blessing and lighting the candles, some people symbolically draw in the light from the candles with gentle circular hand motions over the flame. We then cover or close our eyes while reciting the candle lighting blessing. The reason for covering the eyes is that the usual order is to say the blessing before doing the action, but in this case, if we said the blessing first, thereby beginning Shabbat, we technically could not light a fire!

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

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם,
אשר קדשנו במצותיו, וצונו להדליק נר של שבת.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who has sanctified us with commandments and commanded us to light the Shabbat candles.

2. Singing Shalom Aleichem: As we sit down at the table on Friday night, it is traditional to begin with singing “Shalom Aleichem.” This song welcomes the Shabbat angels into the home.

Sha-lom a-lei-chem, mal-a-chei ha-sha-reit, mal-a-chei El-yon mi-melech ma-le-chei ha-m'la-chim, ha-ka-dosh ba-ruch Hu.

שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם, מַלְאָכֵי
הַשָּׁרֵת, מַלְאָכֵי עֲלִיּוֹן
מִמֶּלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים,
הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

Peace be to you, O ministering angels, messengers of the Most High, the supreme Ruler of rulers, the Holy One of blessing.

Bo-a-chem l'shalom mal-a-chei ha-shalom, mal-a-chei El-yon mi-melech ma-le-chei ha-m'la-chim, ha-ka-dosh, ba-ruch Hu.

בּוֹאֲכֶם לְשָׁלוֹם, מַלְאָכֵי
הַשָּׁלוֹם, מַלְאָכֵי עֲלִיּוֹן
מִמֶּלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים,
הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

Enter in peace, O messengers of peace, messengers of the Most High, the supreme Ruler of rulers, the Holy One of blessing.

Ba-re-chu ni le-shalom, ma-a-chei ha shalom, ma-a-chei El-yon mi melech mal-a-chei ha-m'la-chim, hakadosh baruch Hu.

בְּרַכּוּנֵי לְשָׁלוֹם, מַלְאָכֵי
הַשָּׁלוֹם, מַלְאָכֵי עֲלִיּוֹן
מִמֶּלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים,
הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

Bless me with peace, O messengers of peace, messengers of the Most High, the supreme Ruler of rulers, the Holy One of blessing.

Tseit chem le shalom, ma-la-chei ha-shalom, ma-la-chei Elyon, mi melech mal-a-chei ha-m'la-chim, ha-kadosh baruch Hu.

צאתכם לשלום, מלאכי השלום, מלאכי עליון ממלך מלכי המלכים, הקדוש ברוך הוא.

Depart in peace, O messengers of peace, messengers of the Most High, the supreme Ruler of rulers, the Holy One of blessing.

3. Blessing each other on Friday night: It is customary for parents to bless their children and each other, concluding with the priestly blessing. The sources of the tradition for blessing children are biblical. Isaac blessed his sons, Jacob and Esau. And Jacob blessed his grandsons Ephraim and Menasseh. The blessing for girls recalls the matriarchs of our people. The priestly blessing is taken from the biblical book of Numbers (6:24-26.) As the parents say the blessing, they place their hands on the children's heads.

Traditional blessing for a girl:

Ye-si-maech Elohim k'Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel v'Leah.

ישמך אלהים כשרה רבקה רחל ו Leah.

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

And for a boy:

Yesim'cha Elohim k'Efraim, v'chi-Menasheh.

ישמך אלהים כ Eפראים ו כ Menasheh.

May God make you like Ephraim and Menasseh.

This is followed by the Priestly blessing:

Yivareche-cha Adonai v'yish-m'recha.
Ya'er Adonai panav ay-lecha vi-chu-neka.
Yisa Adonai panav ay-lecha v'ya-sem l'cha Shalom.

ויברךך יי וישמרך
יאר יי פניו אליך ויחנך
ישא יי פניו אליך וישם לך שלום:

May God bless you and keep you.
May God turn toward you and be gracious to you.
May God turn to you and grant you peace.

Many couples also bless each other, or say a few loving words. Traditionally a man recites a passage from Proverbs 31:10-31... known as Eyshet Chayil (woman of valor) to his wife. Women can offer Psalm 112... Or You can read from your ketubah (marriage contract.)

4. Saying Kiddush (the prayer of sanctification of Shabbat that is said over wine.) On Friday night the Kiddush has four parts. The first part recalls the biblical account of the creation of Shabbat. The second part is the blessing over wine. The third describes the gift of Shabbat, its meanings and symbolism. And the fourth describes Shabbat as a sign of covenant between God and Israel.

Va-yi-hi erev va-yi-hi voker, yom ha-shi-shi Va-yi-chu-lu ha-shamayim v'ha-aretz v'chol tzi-va-am.
Va-yi-chal Elohim, ba-yom ha-sh-vi-i m'lachto asher asah. Vayish-boat, ba-yom hash-vi-i mikol mi-lach-to asher asah. Va-yi-va-rech Elohim et yom ha-sh'vi-i va-yikadesh oto. Ki vo Shabbat mi-kol mi-lach-to asher barah Elohim la-a-sot.

ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום הששי,
ויכלו השמים והארץ וכל צבאם:
ויכל אלהים ביום השביעי, מלאכתו אשר עשה,
וישבת ביום השביעי, מכל מלאכתו אשר עשה:
ויברך אלהים את-יום השביעי, ויקדש אתו,
כי בו שבת מכל מלאכתו, אשר-ברא אלהים לעשות:

There was evening and there was morning. On the sixth day, the heavens and the earth and all their hosts were completed. And God completed, on the seventh day, God's work, which God had made, and God ceased on the seventh day, all God's work in which God had been engaged. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; because on it God ceased all God's work which God had created. [Genesis 1:31, 2:1-3]

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha-Olam,
borei p'ri ha gafen.

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם,
בורא פרי הגפן.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Baruch a-ta Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam a-she-
ki-de-sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav ve-rat-sa vanu
v'shabbat kod-sho b'a-ha-va u've-ratson hin-chi
lanu zi-karon le-ma-ah-sei v'reit-shit.
Ki hu yom t'chi-la, le-mikra-ei ko-desh ze-cher l'tsi-
at Mits-ra-yim.

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו מלך העולם,
אשר קדשנו במצותיו ורצה בנו,
ושבת קדשו באהבה וברצון הנחילנו
זכרון למעשה בראשית
כי הוא יום תחילה למקרהאי קדש,
זכר ליציאת מצרים

Ki va-nu va-char-ta v'o-ta-nu ki-dash-ta mi-kol ha-a-
mim. V'shab-bat kod-she-cha be-a-hava u've-ra-
tson hin-chal-ta-nu
Baruch atah Adonai, m'ka-deish ha Shabbat.

כי־בנו בחרות, ואותנו קדשת
מכל־העמים ושבת קדשך
באהבה וברצון הנחלתנו:
ברוך אתה, יי, מקדש השבת

We praise you Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who hallows us with mitzvot and favors us with the holy Shabbat, lovingly and graciously bestowed upon us, a memorial of the act of creation, first of the holy assemblies, a remembrance of the going forth from Egypt.

You have chosen us and hallowed us from among all peoples, by lovingly and graciously bestowing upon us Your holy Sabbath. We praise You, O God, who sanctifies Shabbat.

5. Reciting the blessing over the challah: The challah remains covered while Shabbat is being sanctified with the blessing over the wine so as not to embarrass it [the challah.] The person saying the blessing traditionally holds two loaves together. These correspond to the two portions of manna that fell from heaven on Fridays so that the Israelites, wandering in the desert, would have enough food to last through Shabbat.

Baruch ata, Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam ha
motsi lechem min ha-arets.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם
המוציא לחם מן הארץ.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

שֵׁבֶת שְׁלוֹם