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May 17  
אייר תשע"ז

Shalom to all,

Most of our week, we are busy. We work. We travel. We are surrounded by gadgets and devices. And we eat. But for many of us, our weekday meals are squeezed in between the nooks and crannies of our schedule. How many times during the week do we actually stop – put everything aside – and take the time to sit and eat, to enjoy our food, to celebrate friends and family, to take account of those who – unlike us – are hungry?

Thousands of years ago, the Jewish people revealed a revolutionary idea – the idea that each person, even each animal, in fact, every creature under the sun has the right to a day of rest, a day solely devote to the really important things of life.

At Onward Israel, we invite you to also mark and celebrate Shabbat – in whatever way seems meaningful to you. Onward Israel – like the entire Jewish world – is made up of a vast rainbow of outlooks and practices. We want to celebrate them all.

In that spirit, the educational pamphlet below offers a variety of ideas and suggestions that you can bring to your group around a shared Shabbat dinner table.

How can you turn meal into a festival of friends?

What are different ways of marking our appreciation for each other, for the finer things in life, and for the Shabbat?

What might be some of the many takes and interpretations of the Shabbat that can bring extra flavor and extra meaning to your table?

And finally - help people participate... ask people to volunteer... to bring food... to share a story... to teach a tradition from their family and friends... to teach a favorite song... to take part in committees. If you help people to take part, to contribute; Shabbat dinner can be a gift that we give to our participants to take home with them after Onward Israel.

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**“I WISH THAT LIFE SHOULD NOT BE CHEAP, BUT SACRED.  
I WISH THE DAYS TO BE AS CENTURIES, LOADED, FRAGRANT.”  
RALPH WALDO EMERSON**

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**ONE DAY A WEEK I SEEK TO REST  
FROM EARTHLY TOIL AND SORROW.  
REVITALIZED, I FIND THE STRENGTH  
TO BATTLE NEW TOMORROW.**

**RICHELLE E. GOODRICH,  
SLAYING DRAGONS**



### Suggestion #1

Either in the planning of your Shabbat meal or at the Shabbat table together read the excerpt below from a recent article from The Atlantic and share the thought questions below the excerpt. Feel free to bring different and/or additional questions.

#### **“The Importance of Eating Together”**

**Cody C. Delistraty.**

**The Atlantic, July 18, 2014.**

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/07/the-importance-of-eating-together/374256/>

After my mother passed away and my brother went to study in New Zealand, the first thing that really felt different was the dinner table. My father and I began eating separately. We went out to dinners with our friends, ate sandwiches in front of our computers, delivery pizzas while watching movies. Some days we rarely saw each other at all. Then, a few weeks before I was set to leave for university, my father walked downstairs. “You know, I think we should start eating together even if it’s just you and me,” he said. “Your mother would have wanted that.” It wasn’t ideal, of course—the meals we made weren’t particularly amazing and we missed the presence of Mom and my brother—but there was something special about setting aside time to be with my father. It was therapeutic: an excuse to talk, to reflect on the day, and on recent events. Our chats about the banal—of baseball and television—often led to discussions of the serious—of politics and death, of memories and loss. Eating together was a small act, and it required very little of us—45 minutes away from our usual, quotidian distractions—and yet it was invariably one of the happiest parts of my day. Sadly, Americans rarely eat together anymore. It’s a pity that so many Americans are missing out on what could be meaningful time with their loved ones...

In many countries, mealtime is treated as sacred. In France, for instance, while it is acceptable to eat by oneself, one should never rush a meal. A frenzied salad muncher on the *métro* invites dirty glares, and employees are given at least an hour for lunch. In many Mexican cities, townspeople will eat together with friends and family in central areas like parks or town squares. In Cambodia, villagers spread out colorful mats and bring food to share with loved ones like a potluck. Perhaps to “eat intelligently” one needs only to eat together. Although it would be nice to eat healthily as well, even take out makes for a decent enough meal, psychologically speaking, so long as your family, roommates or friend eat present.

How then do we eat better, not just from a nutritional perspective, but from a psychological one as well?

**“TO EAT IS A NECESSITY, BUT TO EAT INTELLIGENTLY IS AN ART,”**  
said the 17th-century writer François de La Rochefoucauld.

### Questions to “Chew Over.”

- Does your family and/or friends have traditions of eating together?
- During the week? For holidays? For birthdays? For Shabbat?
- If you have a family meal tradition – share it with others.
- Is it important to make time to eat together?
- What do you think of the quotation at the end of the excerpt – “To eat is a necessity, but to eat intelligently is an art.”
- What kinds of things can you do at your own table to ‘eat intelligently?’
- In what ways is eating an act of intimacy? Think about the ways we eat at a formal dinner or at a BBQ or at a business meeting or on a first date? What does the way we eat say about us?

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### Suggestion #2

#### Shabbat-O-Gram

Prepare for each guest an individual blessing with a small candy on a greeting card or index card. Blessings could be passed around before the meal or during the meal.

Invite people who will be coming to the meal to write blessings to each other. What would you like to wish a friend for the upcoming week?


Put the blessings together as collections of meaningful quotations around a common theme – Shabbat, friendship, community, rest, etc. Each of the quotations could be passed out like a fortune cook – wrapped inside a pie of candy or around a cookie or a date.

Feel free use any quotation – poetry, song lyric, or blessing – that you think will bring meaning to your table.

If you are not sure that everyone at the meal will know each other, you could also include place cards with names.



An example:



**IN THE TEMPESTUOUS OCEAN OF TIME AND TOIL THERE ARE ISLANDS OF STILLNESS WHERE WE MAY ENTER A HARBOR AND RECLAIM OUR DIGNITY. THE ISLAND IS THE SEVENTH DAY, THE SABBATH, A DAY OF DETACHMENT FROM THINGS, INSTRUMENTS AND PRACTICAL AFFAIRS AS WELL AS OF ATTACHMENT TO THE SPIRIT**

**RABBI ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL**

- ✚ WHEN DURING YOUR WEEK DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE IN AN OCEAN STORM?**
- ✚ WHAT CALMS THE STORM AND GIVES YOU STILLNESS... DIGNITY... PEACE?**
- ✚ HOW DOES SHABBAT HELP US TO DO THIS?**

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### Suggestion #3 Shabbat Spice

Jewish tradition speaks of a special Shabbat spice that contributes a unique flavor and spirit different from all the rest of the week.

(See a version of this Talmudic tale - <http://jhom.com/topics/spices/talmud.html>)

Try the simple suggestion below to add your own Shabbat Spice.

Each participant receives the name of another participant a week before Shabbat dinner. Everybody needs to have a name, so everyone can enjoy being both a giver and receiver. During the week, each participant will send secret messages, hints or small things as gifts for their partner. For the Shabbat dinner everyone will bring a small gift and card (up to 20NIS) that reveals who is their "Shabbat Spice".



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**Suggestion #4**

**60 seconds**

All cultures and faiths create special customs and practices to distinguish holy times and sacred places. We eat all through the week, but the Shabbat table includes its own symbols and rituals to transform the table from just a meal into a holy feast - Candle lighting, Blessings over wine (Kiddush) and bread (HaMotzi). Traditions and rituals can turn the biological need to eat into a special occasion, a celebration.

When we understand why we do what we do, we are empowered. Choose a couple of the Shabbat meal customs and invite participants to prepare short explanations why we do what we do.

**Questions to “Chew Over.”**

- What is the traditional source for the custom?
- Do you find meaning in the custom and why?
- Do you have a Friday night custom from your own family, friends, or community that you want to share with others?
- How do you turn the need to eat into a special celebration and occasion?

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**Suggestion #5**

**The Sweetness of Learning**



Either before the meal or after the meal over dessert, madrichim and participants can lead a short learning sessions. Feel free to remove pieces and add your own.

You could even choose a particular reading to begin a particular course at the meal.

One suggestion – prepare a variety of quotations and texts on slips of colored paper. Fold each quotation of text around a candy or date or some other tasty treat. Put the readings in a bowl in the center of the table and invite people to take a treat – and read the text aloud. See if a particular quotation or text sparks a conversation.

### Suggested Readings

#### Light a Candle

By Zelda

Light a candle,  
drink wine.  
Softly the Sabbath has plucked  
the sinking sun.  
Slowly the Sabbath descends,  
the rose of heaven in her hand.

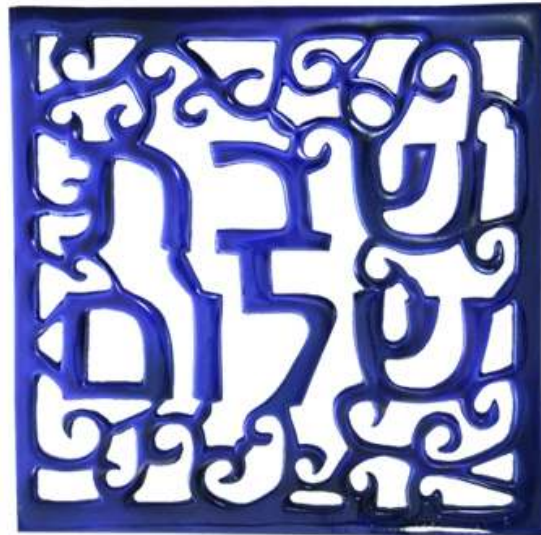
How can the Sabbath  
plant a huge and shining flower  
in a blind and narrow heart?  
How can the Sabbath  
plant the bud of angels  
in a heart of raving flesh?  
Can the rose of immortality grow  
in a generation enslaved  
to destruction,  
a generation enslaved  
to death?

Light a candle!  
Drink wine!  
Slowly the Sabbath descends  
and in her hand the flower,  
and in her hand  
the sinking sun.

Translation: 2004, Marcia Lee Falk  
From: *The Spectacular Difference*  
Publisher: Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, 2004.

#### Questions to “Chew Over.”

- In a world where we are almost always surrounded by electric lights, is there something particularly meaningful or symbolic in match-lit candles?
- Why do so many religions and cultures light candles as part of their sacred moments?
- Zelda speaks that the Shabbat ‘plants the buds of angels?’ What do you think she means by this phrase? How can we bring the angelic into our own lives?





### **Shabbat as a Personal and Spiritual Renewal**

“An artist cannot be continually wielding his brush. He must stop at times in his painting to freshen his vision of the object, the meaning of which he wishes to express on his canvas. Living is also an art. We dare not become absorbed in its technical processes and lose our consciousness of its general plan... Shabbat represents those moments when we pause in our brushwork to renew our vision of this object. Having done so we take ourselves to our painting with clarified vision and renewed energy”.

Mordecai Kaplan, *The Meaning of God In Modern Jewish Religion* (Wayne State University Press), 1994.

### **Questions to “Chew Over.”**

- When do I feel like that I need to “unplug and recharge” my life?
- What are the personal rituals and customs that you use to ‘unplug and recharge’?
- Think about Shabbat in Israel... in what kinds of ways do Israelis (both so-called religious and so-called secular) “unplug and recharge” over Shabbat.
- What are the differences between the Shabbat atmosphere back home and that in Israel?

**HE WHO IS FULL OF JOY IS FULL OF LOVE.**

**THE BAAL SHEM TOV**

*Joy*



### **The Sense of Shabbat**

Rebbe Elimelech and Rebbe Zusya both sensed the sanctity of the Shabbat from its arrival until its departure, and particularly when the Hassidim sat together at the Shabbat table and shared Torah between them. It once happened that the two rabbis happened to be in the same place together.

Rebbe Elimelech said to Rebbe Zusya, 'My brother, I am sometimes gripped by terror when I consider that perhaps the sanctity of the Shabbat is not real but rather only imagined. If that is so, my own worship of the Divine is also only imagined – not real.'

"My brother," replied Zusya, "I am also periodically struck by the same terror." "What shall we do?" asked Elimelech

Zusya said, "Each one of us should celebrate the Shabbat and her special meals to the smallest detail on a regular work day. We should sit with our Hassidim and share with each other words of Torah. If we feel the sanctity of the Shabbat even on a regular work day, we will know that our way has been mistaken. And if we feel nothing, it is a sign that our way is true."

And thus they did. On a regular work day they hosted a Shabbat banquet. They dressed in their Shabbat clothing. They wore their Shabbat Shtreimel \* (the special fur brimmed hat included in the distinctive dress of Shabbat among certain hassidim). And they sat among their hassidim and together share words of Torah. Their hearts were instantly overcome by the sanctity of the Shabbat as if it was in fact Shabbat.

When the two met again Rebbe Elimelech asked, "So my brother, what are we to do?"

Rebbe Zusya replied, "Let us travel together to our teacher, the Maggid of Mezritch.

They traveled to Mezritch and shared with their Rebbe the issue that weighed on their hearts.

The Maggid said to them, "If you wore special clothing for the Shabbat, and if the Shtreimel adorned your heads, then by all right and law you felt the sanctity of the Shabbat for special Shabbat clothing and the Shtreimel have the power to bring to earth the sacred aura of the Shabbat. You have nothing to fear at all."

**From: The Hidden Light, Martin Buber, p. 224, Shoken Publishing.**

*According to Rabbi Aaron Wertheim, Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz (1726–1791) stated, "The acronym for Shabbos is: Shtreimel Bimkom Tefillin -- the shtreimel takes the place of tefillin." [Halakhot V'halichost B'Hasidut, p. 196] Since wearing special clothing on Shabbat is a form of*

*sanctification, among the Hasidim of Galicia and Hungary, the shtreimel is associated with the holiness of Shabbat, a crown such as that worn by royalty, which enhances and beatifies Shabbat.*

**Questions to “Chew Over.”**

- What creates holy times and places?
- How can we see holiness? How can we act our holiness?
- What is holy for you?
- Is holiness just “religious” or can non-believers can have holiness in their lives as well?

**Prayer / Lea Goldberg**

Teach me to pray and to bless you for all.

For the ripening fruit and the fading in Fall.

For the freedom to breathe and to sense and to hold and to know and to wish and to fly and to fold.

Teach me to sing you the songs of your praise for the cycling of moon and the opening days so that each of my moments for ever be new, so that each of my moments will always be true, so that each of my moments I walk here with you.

English Translation/Interpretation by Orit Perlman

**Questions to “Chew Over.”**

- What is a pray for you?
- Do you pray? When did you pray last?
- Does praying is only for “believers”?
- Are a wish and a prayer the same thing?



**..Bless it (the day) with delicacies.**

Rabbeinu (Rabbi Yehudah/Rebbi) made a feast for Antoninus on the Shabbat. They brought before him prepared foods that were cold. He ate from them and found them very tasty. He (Rebbi) made a feast for him (Antoninus) on a weekday and brought before him steaming foods. He (Antoninus) said to him (Rebbi) those (the cold food on Shabbat) tasted better to me than these (warm foods). He (Rebbi) explained that the warm weekday food was missing a single spice. He (Antoninus) said to him, 'and is there anything in the king's treasury that is lacking? He (Rebbi) said that the food was missing Shabbat, Do you have Shabbat?

Breshit Rabba 11

**Questions to "Chew Over."**

- What changes an everyday meal into a feast?
- Do you have a memory of a special meal – with friends or family, at home or away – that made an impression on you? What was it that made that meal unique and memorable?
- Do you have a Shabbat spice of your own?

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### **Oneg Shabbat**

Jewish teaching points us to enjoy the Shabbat, to cherish it. The Oneg Shabbat (in modern times) was a community get together of song and poetry, of learning and good humor, of enjoying the Shabbat with friends that was initiated by the Hebrew poet Hayyim Nahman Bialik. Bialik is to Hebrew poetry and letters what Wordsworth and Blake are to English literature.

After eating and sharing the meal together, you may want to continue in the living room with dessert and some games – with your own Oneg Shabbat.

See below the links below with a few ideas for your Oneg Shabbat.

#### **Games from ‘Whose Line is it Anyway?’**

Deepfun with Bernard Koven

<http://www.deepfun.com/games-from-whose-line-is-it-anyway/>

#### **How to Host an Oneg Shabbat?**

Babaganews

<https://www.google.co.il/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=31&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwigrKaz54DUAhWEiRoKHbpvBbg4HhAWCCQwAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.behrmanhouse.com%2Fdownload%2Ffile%2Ffid%2F4549&usg=AFQjCNGoWX7MpKBjPI7b-4OG3GkFqifJOQ>

#### **The World of Gaming**

Gabriela Demby

The Shabbas Project

<https://www.theshabbosproject.org/en/blog/the-world-of-gaming>

#### **375 Shabbat Idea for Kids and Adults**

Shabbat Ideas.org

<http://www.sabbathideas.org/p/home.html>

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### **Basic Shabbat Concepts for Friday Night**

A few basic concepts and customs that help differentiate the Friday night meal from our weekly eating. In Hebrew, we typically talk about “seudat Shabbat – סעודת שבת” (the Shabbat banquet) as compared to a typical weekly meal – “arucha – ארוחה.”

- What kind of experience do you imagine when you think about “a meal” as compared when you picture in your mind’s eye “a banquet?”
- Look? Taste? Smells? Even how people might be dressed?

- Ask yourself and your friends – how can we turn our “arucha – ארוחה” into a “seudah - סעודה?”

### **Kabbalat Shabbat – קבלת שבת**

Before enjoying the Friday night banquet, it is traditional to include a series of special prayers and songs as an opening to the Friday night prayer service. Many of the prayers and songs included are unique to Friday night and emphasize the central place of the Shabbat in Jewish life and in the covenant between the Jewish people and the Divine.

Probably the most famous of these prayers and songs is “Lecha Dodi - לך דודי” Written by the Jewish mystic Rabbi Shlomi HaLevi Alkabetz (16<sup>th</sup> Century) in the Galilee city of Tzfat, the song presents Shabbat as a bride with the chorus:

*Lecha Dodi L'krat Kala Pnei Shabbat N'Kabala...*

*לך דודי לקראת קלה פני שבת נקבלה*

*Let us go out my beloved to welcome the bride – to receive the Sabbath's face...*

In communities all around the world, it is customary to sing this song, to rise at its closing lines, and turn away from the front of the synagogue, to open the doors wide, and bow to bring in the Shabbat as a beloved queen and guest.

In communities all around the world, there are different tunes for Lecha Dodi. Take a look on youtube to listen to the countless versions. Check out some of these tunes here:

[http://www.zemirotdatabase.org/view\\_song.php?id=68#rec](http://www.zemirotdatabase.org/view_song.php?id=68#rec)

Learn and share your favorite version at your shabbat table. Take a tune that you particularly love and start your own tradition.

### **Shalom Aleichem – שלום עליכם**

Another song shared worldwide by Jews across communities and times, is Shalom Aleichem – שלום עליכם. Typically sung at the beginning of the Friday evening feast, it welcomes the angels that Jewish tradition identifies as the Divine's sacred entourage to our shabbat table. In some traditions, people stand in song.

Shalom Aleichem malchei hasharet malchei elyon mi melech malkei hamelakhim HaKadosh Baruch Hoo...

*שלום עליכם מלכי השרת מלכי עליון מי מלך מלכי המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא...*



Peace unto you the angelic entourage who serves the Supreme King. Who is the King of Kings?  
The Holy One Blessed Be...

Shalom Aleichem – שלום עליכם is also sung throughout the Jewish world with countless tunes. Search on Google and on youtube to hear tunes from Yemen, from Poland, from the USA, and from modern Israel.

Share your favorites and again – try your own favorite tunes.

### **Kiddush – קידוש**

Jewish ceremony and sacred moments are typically consecrated with a blessing over a goblet of wine. Throughout the ancient world, and particularly in the Ancient Mediterranean and Middle East, grapes and wine were seen as sacred bounty, as a sign of celebration, and a hope that prosperity, happiness, and peace will always be our bounty.

### **HaMotzi Lechem – המוציא לחם**

Observant Jews will mark the beginning of any meal with a blessing over bread. Bread – and wheat – were signs of civilization, and were the most central element of the human diet. At the Friday night table, two loaves of bread grace the table. It has become tradition that braided, egg washed, golden bread – either round or elongated – is the special bread for the Sabbath table: “challah – חלה.”

Two challot are reminders of the food from heaven that Bible recounts as having been the Divine’s gift to the wandering Jewish people in the desert on the day before Shabbat. It also is a memory of the Temples in Jerusalem and the double sacrifice presented on the Sabbath.

It may also be a reminder to us that food is not to be taken for granted. Ceremonial moments create delay... anticipation... and maybe also appreciation. Food is a sacred thing. Most people in the world do not have the resources that we often take for granted. It could be that our rituals are also a hint to recall those who are less fortunate than we are, who need our assistance so all humans can be blessed with the food that is essential to our shared survival.

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**MOST IMPORTANTLY – ENJOY!**

**SHABBAT SHALOM שבת שלום**