

# SHABBAT *Shalom*

**Hillel**  
The University of Vermont

Welcome to the Palace in time that is Shabbat! This is your moment to connect with your friends, be present, and enjoy the now.

As you may have noticed, your kit contains a custom piece of art by local artist Giovana Lowry. It's been custom made just for this evening! We hope you'll hold on to it and enjoy it as a reminder of tonight.

To make this evening special, we've put together some Shabbat practices that we think you and your friends might find value in. If you already have your own Shabbat practices, please make this Shabbat your own and share those practices with your friends! They'll almost certainly appreciate it.



Before cooking the meal, let's begin with the warmth of each other and the Shabbat candles.

To build a wonderful world, it's powerful to ask "what do I want to let go of from this week? What do I want to ignite, nourish, celebrate, sustain, and grow?" Before lighting the Shabbat candles, we invite you to ask your friends this question, getting the evening going with your own thoughts. Once everyone has had a chance to share, we invite you to mark the transition into this new period by lighting the candles, and offering the following gratitude below:

ברוך אתה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוֵּנוּ  
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav  
vitzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat.

Blessed are You, G!d, Ruler of the universe, who sanctified us with the  
commandment of lighting Shabbat candles.

*Some people have amended the traditional G!d language to reflect their  
theological outlooks and ethical perspectives.....*

Blessed are You, Source of L!fe, L!fe of all the universe, who sanctified us with  
the commandment of lighting Shabbat candles.





Now that we have finished cooking and are gathered to eat, let us take time to share in what we're grateful for from our week. Sharing the good can be special and allow everyone to share in the feelings.

Begin by opening the grape juice and making sure everyone has a cup. Somebody will begin by saying what they're grateful for in the past week, or something they accomplished, and then pour some grape juice into the cup of their neighbor. Then pass the bottle on and have the next person share what they're grateful for. The idea is that when we reach the last person, everyone will have shared and filled each others cups.

Many people then say the following gratitude before drinking the grape juice.

ברוך אתה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, boreh p'ri hagafen

Blessed are You, G!d, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

As earlier, some people have amended the traditional G!d language to reflect their theological outlooks and ethical perspectives.

Blessed are You, Source of L!fe, L!fe of all the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

And to finally get the food started, let us now take time to share the Challah. So far, we have disconnected from the stress of the week with candles, reflected on the good of the week with grape juice, and now we are connecting with the people in front of us. At UVM Hillel, we have a tradition where, if your friends agree after asking, friends holds on to one another and the challah as we say the gratitude below. Doing this over the challah may help melt away any leftover stress and foster an environment of trust and connection between the people who are at the dinner.

ברוך אתה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ

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

Blessed are You, Lord our G!d, King of the universe, who has brought forth bread from the earth.

And again, some people have amended the traditional G!d language to reflect their theological outlooks and ethical perspectives.

Blessed are You, Source of L!fe, L!fe of all the universe, who has brought forth bread from the earth.



We hope you enjoy the evening you have all helped to co-create!

Everyone celebrates and observes Shabbat differently. Some use it as a time to unplug, some use it as a time to reconnect with friends and a family, and others use it as a time to do something they aren't able to do throughout the week. AJ Heschel wrote an entire book called *The Sabbath*, which is a profound meditation on the meaning of the seventh day. Together with friends, family, our housemates, you might enjoy reading this out loud and then using the discussion questions to have a conversation about this text and what Shabbat this week and in general means to you.

**From “The Sabbath,” p. 3, 13 by Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, 20th century Jewish philosopher**

There is a realm of time where the goal is not to have but to be, not to own but to give, not to control but to share, not to subdue but to be in accord. Life goes wrong when the control of space, the acquisition of things of space, becomes our sole concern.”

“Six days a week we wrestle with the world, wringing profit from the earth; on the Sabbath we especially care for the seed of eternity planted in the soul. The world has our hands, but our soul belongs to Someone Else. Six days a week we seek to dominate the world, **on the seventh day we try to dominate the self.**

Discussion Questions:

- AJ Heschel is quite deep and profound in his writing. What aspects of his thoughts resonate with you?
- Do any of his thoughts sharpen or shift your understanding of how to relate to Shabbat? If so, what in particular?
- What do you think he means in the last line: “on the seventh day we try to dominate the self.” What does this mean in your own words?
- Could “dominating the self” be a modern version of how the benefits of Shabbat might add value to our lives?

This is just two paragraphs from Rabbi Abraham Heschel's book. Interested in what else he has to say? Want to discuss more of his book with family and friends? Just email [matt@uvmhillel.org](mailto:matt@uvmhillel.org) and we'd be happy to send you a copy on us! Open to students and family members!



something



good