Making Time

KOLOT

A booklet of blessings and customs for your Shabbat table

Kolot brings insights and innovative practices from the study of gender and Judaism to the Jewish community.
Shabbat... time out of the work week to share a meal, talk with friends, study Torah, read poetry, dream about the future, remember the past, and be in the present. Time for yourself.

This booklet is for you, whether you regularly celebrate Shabbat or if you’d like to sample Shabbat’s spiritual practices.

Kolot’s intention in bringing you Making Time is to provide everyone at your Friday night table with an easy-to-use booklet that includes a selection of blessings.

We also offer you a sample of customs to enrich your experience from various Jewish kolot (voices):

One interpretation defines “Israel” as “God-wrestler.” In Making Time we respond to the struggle of addressing God in three ways:

1. In the gender-neutral English translations we avoid referring to God as “He” or “She.”

2. In Hebrew – a gendered language with all words either masculine or feminine – the prayers are presented in two forms, addressing God as You/Feminine and You/Masculine.

3. In the blessings addressing God as female, we change the usual formula, “King of the universe” (melekh ha’olam) to “Spirit of the universe” (ruah ha’olam), used by a growing number of Jews because it expresses inclusivity with gender-neutral imagery while maintaining the rhyme and rhythm of the traditional formula.

For some of us, saying the blessings in the feminine brings us immediately closer to a feeling of God’s presence. For others, it may at first feel uncomfortable. We can use our heightened awareness to explore our feelings about God, human authority and compassion, gender, and language.

How does addressing God with different terms affect how you relate to and conceive of the Divine, yourself, and other human beings?

We hope you enjoy the exploration, and for those curious about how to chant or pronounce the Hebrew, look for the icon 🎵 and listen to those blessings on-line at www.kolot.org/resources/shabbat.

Inspired by tradition and living in the present, we wish you a Shabbat Shalom.
Shabbat begins on its own... as the earth turns and the sun sets. We mark this transition – from workweek to Shabbat – right before sunset with the lighting of candles. The tradition, from before electricity, is to light two candles, with some families lighting one candle for each person.

People often circle their hands across the top of the candles three times, washing the light toward themselves, and then cover their eyes as they recite the blessing.

You can take this time to silently pray for loved ones, meditate on and release the week’s events, and offer your intentions for Shabbat and the week ahead.

Men and women can both light Shabbat candles, although historically, this ritual was one of the few performed almost exclusively by women. There is a rich tradition of women’s prayers (tekhines in Yiddish) for candlelighting. On the next page, we offer you a Sephardic woman’s prayer.

---

**FEMININE GOD LANGUAGE**

Berukhah at yah eloheynu ruah ha’olam asher kideshatnu bemitzvoteha vetzivatnu lehadlik ner shel shabbat.

**MASCULINE GOD LANGUAGE**

Barukh atah adonai eloheynu melekh ha’olam asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel shabbat.

Blessed are you, Yah our God, Spirit of the universe, who has made us holy with your mitzvot, and commanded us to light the Shabbat light.
As we gather for candlelighting, I like to offer everyone the opportunity to share a highlight from the week which has passed. Then we all sing the blessing together and usher in the light. If there are non-Jewish or non-Hebrew-familiar folks with us, I translate the blessing. Once the candles are lit, we all greet each person in the room with a “Shabbat Shalom!”

Elizheva Hurvich

La Orasion de la Mujer (The Woman’s Prayer) is a traditional Sephardic Shabbat blessing that my mother’s family has used since they were ousted from Spain around 1492.

Betty Jagoda Murphy

---

LA ORASION DE LA MUJER

Kun estas kandelas
Arrogamos al Dio
El Dio de muetros padres
Avram, Isak i Yakov
Ke muz de vida saludoza
A todos miz keriduz
I al mundo intero.
Kun estas kandelas
Arrogamos al Dio
El Dio de muetros madres
Sara, Rifka, Lea i Rahel
Ke muz de vida saludoza
A todos miz keriduz
I al mundo intero.

THE WOMAN’S PRAYER

With these candles
We pray to God
The God of our fathers
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
To grant us good life and health
To all my dear ones
And the whole world.
With these candles
We pray to God
The God of our mothers
Sarah, Rebecca, Leah and Rachel
To grant us good life and health
To all my dear ones
And the whole world.
We recite the Kiddush (sanctification) on Friday night over a cup of wine, in accordance with Psalm 104’s declaration that God makes wine “to gladden people’s hearts.” For this reason, it is traditional to fill your Kiddush cup until it brims over, symbolizing the overflowing joy and pleasure of Shabbat.

There are many practices for reciting the Kiddush. Some people stand around the table. Some families pass one Kiddush cup around, while others give everyone their own cup.

An increasing number of people make a small change in the second paragraph of the Kiddush. Instead of saying that Jews were chosen “from all peoples” (min kol ha’amim), they use the more inclusive phrase “with all peoples” (im kol ha’amim). We present both versions and encourage you to experiment and discover what feels right to you.

**CALLING ON THE DIVINE PRESENCE**

We have used “Yah” (a Biblical form of God’s name) in the English translations in this booklet. Although technically a masculine name, it has been used so infrequently in liturgy that it is still relatively free of the more gendered associations that many of us have with more traditional names for God, such as “Adonai” (My Lord).

The first four words of the Kiddush (Vayhi erev vayhi voker – “And there was evening and there was morning”) are recited in an undertone because this practice allows us to emphasize the next two words that conclude the biblical verse (Yom Hashishi – “The sixth day”), the first letters of which combine to spell out “Yah.” So, when we recite Kiddush, we call down God’s presence into our world and into our celebration of rest, gratitude, and joy.
Kiddush in the Feminine

Drinking Deeply


Savrey ha’averotay vah:

Berukhah at yah eloheynu ruah ha’olam boreyt peri hagafen.
Berukhah at yah, eloheynu ruah ha’olam, asher kideshatnu bemitzvoteha veratztah vanu, veshhabbat kodshah be’ahavah uvratzon hinhatlatnu, zikaron lema’asey vereyshit. Ki hu yom tehilah lemiakra’ey kodesh zekher litzi’at mitzrayim.
Ki vanu va’hart veotanu kidsht milok (some say: im kol) ha’amim.
Veshhabbat kodshekh be’ahavah uvratzon hinbaltnu. Berukhah at yah mekadeshet hashabbat.

Reconstructionists say:
*Ki eleynu karat veotanu kidsht la’avodatekh

*Ki eleynu karat veotanu kidsht la’avodatekh

Savrey haveray vahaverotay:

Barukh atah adonay eloheynu melekh ha’olam borey peri hagafen.

Reconstructionists say:
*Ki eleynu karata veotanu kidashta leavodatekha

§ Kiddush in the Masculine

Drinking Deeply

Reconstructionists say:
*C er Alaynu karat (and) molten

Kadosh LeOvedotenu
“And there was evening and there was morning:
The sixth day.

Heaven, earth, and all they contain were completed.
On the seventh day, God completed the work that God had been doing; God rested on the seventh day from all the work that God had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and called it holy, for on it God rested from all the work of Creation.”

With your permission, friends:

**Blessed are you, our God, Spirit of the universe,**
**Who creates the fruit of the vine.**

Blessed are you, our God, Spirit of the universe, whose commandments add holiness to our lives. Lovingly you have favored us with the gift of your holy Shabbat, a reminder of Creation. For it is the first of all the sacred days that recall the Exodus from Egypt. Thus you have chosen us from among all peoples (some say: with all peoples)* and made us holy by giving us, with loving favor, your holy Shabbat. Blessed are you, Yah, our God, who makes Shabbat holy.

Reconstructionists say:

*Thus you have called to us and made us holy for your service.
The handwashing ritual can add mindfulness to your Shabbat celebration.

Remove all rings from your hands so the water reaches everywhere. Pour a cup of water over one hand, and then over the other. Think of the work you have done with your hands all week long.

In order to connect washing with eating, people often maintain a meditative silence or hum a niggun (wordless tune) until everyone finishes washing and the blessing over the hallah is said.

Blessed are you, Yah our God, Spirit of the universe, who has made us holy with your commandments and given us the mitzvah of washing the hands.

My husband and I have always blessed our children on Friday night but never did anything ritually to recognize each other. Now, following handwashing (for which we have removed our wedding rings) we replace the other’s ring, creating a moment each week reminiscent of our time under the huppah (wedding canopy).

Barbara Hirsh
The blessing over the bread gives us an opportunity to give thanks for the food that sustains us and to celebrate the human-Divine partnership which puts bread on our table. Traditionally, some use two loaves of hallah, recalling the double portion of manna that the Israelites collected before Shabbat during their journey through the desert. (Ashkenazi Jews typically use hallah, while Sephardi Jews often use a variety of flat breads).

You can ask everyone at the table to touch the bread while the blessing is said (either by one person or everyone), or have one person hold the bread and recite the blessing.

There is a custom of sprinkling salt over the bread before eating it, in memory of the salt that was sprinkled on the sacrifices in the ancient Temple, and there is also a custom that during the first year of marriage, a couple uses honey rather than salt to symbolize the sweetness of their new relationship.
In our home we say a traditional blessing over the hallah and then one person – whom I have asked in advance – is invited to say a blessing of their own over the bread. One which I often give is:

“May those who labor in the fields, trucks, and stores, and who helped bring this food to our table, may they be blessed to eat routinely as well as we do tonight.”

Rabbi Goldie Milgram

On Friday morning we like to begin our spiritual preparation for Shabbat with hallah baking, as a meditation, whenever possible. Here is my basic hallah recipe:

1. Let soak 10 minutes
2. 2 packs of yeast | 2 cups warm water
3. Add to yeast
4. 1/2 cup sugar or honey | 3 tsp. salt | 1 cup oil
5. Stir in, until smooth
6. 3 eggs, beaten | 4 cups flour
7. Add
8. 4 more cups of flour to make dough soft
9. Turn
10. onto a well-floured board
11. Knead
12. 10 minutes until smooth
13. Put
14. into a greased bowl
15. Let rise
16. for one hour
17. Turn
18. onto a floured board again
19. Cut
20. into 9 equal portions
21. Braid
22. into 3 loaves
23. Place
24. on greased pans
25. Glaze
26. with poppy seeds
27. Let rise
28. one hour
29. Bake
30. at 350 degrees for 45-60 minutes

Dorian Goldman and Marvin Israelow
Your Friday night Shabbat celebration might also include rituals such as giving tzedakah (“righteous” charitable giving), blessing your partner, guests, or children, or reciting the blessings after the meal. We include some suggestions below.

Please visit us on the web at kolot.org to hear the blessings, and at ritualwell.org for more details and for additional rituals and liturgy to help enrich your Shabbat, holiday, and lifecycle events.

**Tzedakah:** Shabbat reminds us of the awesome work of creation and the potential holiness of daily life. Many people end the week by giving tzedakah and then lighting candles. Before we rest, we “repair the world” by sharing our bounty.

In our home before Shabbat we set a dollar at everyone’s place, on top of the napkin. Then before we light candles our young daughters go around and collect tzedakah from each person in a special Tupperware container we have transformed into our tzedakah box. Every few months we collect mail from non-profit organizations we think would interest the girls and ask them to choose where to send the tzedakah they have gathered.

**Blessing Those We Love:**

Blessings for one’s partner, guests, and children are a traditional way to usher in Shabbat.

My family modified the traditional blessing of the children to be more inclusive by age and gender by having the oldest at the Shabbat table bless the next oldest. Therefore, I bless my partner, who blesses our six-year-old daughter, who blesses her 16-month-old brother, who kisses the keppi (head) of his teddy bear. As our Shabbat table changes, so does the order of the blessings, except that the teddy bear always gets the kiss on the keppi.

*Catherine Sull*

---

**More on Shabbat**

KOLOT

1299 Church Rd.
Wyncote, PA 19095
(215) 576-0800 x149
www.kolot.org