

*What is Shabbat?  
How Do I Do It?  
Why Do I Do It?  
A Shabbat Guide*

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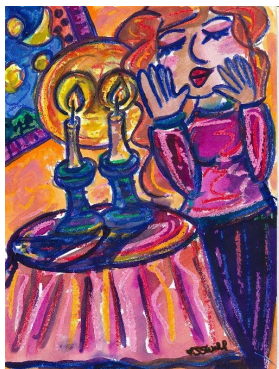
***Macks Center for Jewish Education***



*Because this booklet contains God's name, please treat it with respect.*

## What is Preparing for Shabbat?

As we end our busy week, many prepare for *Shabbat* by setting our table, giving *tzedakah* and lighting the *Shabbat* candles.



### How Do I Do It?

Put a few coins (or more) in the *tzedakah* box just before lighting candles. There is no blessing for giving *tzedakah*. It is such an important *mitzvah* that we do not even stop to say one before we give.

When lighting candles, light first, then cover your eyes and say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי 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, Sovereign our G-d, Ruler of the universe, who has sanctified us with Your commandments, and commanded us to kindle the light of the holy Shabbat.*

Candle-lighting is also a time when many people say their own personal prayers. After lighting, many people then go to synagogue for the *Kabbalat Shabbat* service.

### Why Do I Do It?

We light the candles and then immediately cover our eyes before saying the blessing. In most cases we recite a blessing before taking an action. However, in the case of lighting the candles, once we say the blessing we would not be able to light, due to Shabbat restrictions. Therefore we light the candles first, but then cover our eyes so that we cannot see the light while we say the blessing.

## Why Do I Do It?

The Rabbis knew long before social scientists studied the phenomenon that sitting and eating as a family ritual is one of the most important things we can do to build a successful family life.

The Jewish community approach to prayer is very special. We do not only thank G-d for our food before we eat it, but we make sure to stop after we eat to reflect and appreciate what we have been given.



For the rest of the blessing, check out [myjewishlearning.com/birkat-hamazon](http://myjewishlearning.com/birkat-hamazon) or purchase a booklet called a *Bentcher* (Yiddish) or *Birkon* (Hebrew).



## What Are the Introductory Songs?

We sing *Shalom Aleichem* (Peace Be Unto You) and *Eishet Chayil* (Woman of Valor).



### How Do I Do It?

Many people attend synagogue, then return home for the evening meal. Everyone sings *Shalom Aleichem* before reciting Kiddush:

שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם, מַלְאָכֵי הַשָּׁרֵת, מַלְאָכֵי  
עֲלִיוֹן, מִמְּלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים, הַקְּדוֹשׁ  
בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

*Shalom aleichem Malekhei hasharet,  
Malekhei Elyon, miMelekh Malekhei  
ham'lakhim, hakadosh baruch hu.*

*Peace unto you, ministering angels, messengers of the Most High, of the supreme Ruler, ruler of rulers — the holy, blessed be G-d.*

### Why Do I Do It?

The *Talmud* (Babylonian **Talmud Shabbat 119a-b**) says that when people come home from synagogue on Friday night, they are accompanied by two angels -- a good angel and a bad angel. If the table is beautifully set and there is a peaceful atmosphere in the home, then the good angel says, "So may it be next week," and the bad angel is forced to say, "Amen -- so may it be!" But if the house is a mess (both physically and emotionally), then the bad angel says, "So may it be next week," and the good angel is forced to say, "Amen!" We sing *Shalom Aleichem* to remind us to work towards peace within our home and throughout the world.



You can listen to the song, find more verses and hear other songs and prayers at [myjewishlearning.com/article/friday-night-at-home](http://myjewishlearning.com/article/friday-night-at-home).



## What is Eishet Chayil?

Eishet Chayil means “Woman of Valor” and comes from Proverbs 31. It is a poem that speaks of strong and capable Jewish women.

### How Do I Do It?

Traditionally, the husband or male guests sing this song in honor of the hostess. However, if there are no women present, it can be sung in honor of women everywhere. If there are no men present, it can be sung by women in honor of each other.



אֵשֶׁת חַיִּיל מִי יִמְצָא, וְרַחֵק  
מִפְּנִינִים מִכָּרָה. בָּטַח בָּהּ לֵב  
בַּעֲלָהּ, וְשָׁלַל לָא יַחְסָר.

*Eshet chayil mi yim'tzah, v'rachokh mip'ninim mikh'ra. Batach bah lav ba'lah, v'shalal lo yech'sar.*

*What a rare find is a capable wife! Her worth is far beyond that of rubies. Her husband puts his confidence in her, and lacks no good thing.*

### Why do I do it?

*Eishet Chayil* is a song in praise of the wife who makes the Shabbat meal and cares for the family. However, it is also an ode to Shabbat itself, which is often seen as the metaphorical bride of the Jewish people. According to *Midrash*, our ancestor Abraham wrote *Eishet Chayil* as a eulogy to his wife Sarah.



You can visit [myjewishlearning.com/article/how-to-read-eshet-hayil](https://myjewishlearning.com/article/how-to-read-eshet-hayil) to read and hear the complete *Eishet Chayil*.

After washing, people return to the table and refrain from speaking until they have eaten a piece of challah offered by the host. Before eating the challah, we recite this blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָאוֹלָם הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz.*

*Blessed are you, Sovereign our God, Ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.*

## What is the Shabbat Meal?

The *Shabbat* meal is a special time to sit down as a family and enjoy company and good food. Following the meal, there is a special blessing known as *Birkat HaMazon* (in Hebrew) or *bentching* (in Yiddish).

### How Do I Do It?

Prepare the food before *Shabbat*. It is often a multi-course meal but can be anything that appeals to your family and friends. Following the blessings, eating, and general merriment, we have another opportunity to give thanks. The blessing after the meals is intended to be recited after any bread; however on *Shabbat* we add a special introductory paragraph from the psalms. It starts:

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת, בְּשׁוּב יְיָ אֶת שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן, הִינֵנו כְּחֹלְמִים. אֲזַ  
יִמְלֵא שְׂחוֹק פִּינוּ וּלְשׁוֹנֵנוּ רִנָּה.

*Shir HaMaalot b'shuv Adonai et shivat tziyon hayinu k'cholmim. Az yimaleh s'chok pinu ul'shoneinu rina.*

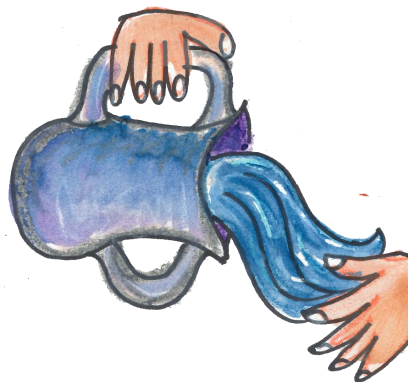
*A song of ascents. When the Lord restores the fortunes of Zion — we see it as in a dream— our mouths shall be filled with laughter, our tongues, with songs of joy.*

## What is the Ritual Hand Washing?

We ritually wash our hands and say a blessing over the *challah*.

### How Do I Do It?

Before we recite the blessing (*HaMotzi*) over the bread, we ritually wash our hands. You may see some people remove their rings before performing this ritual. Fill the special washing cup with water, pour it over each hand three times and then recite the blessing...



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ  
עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.

*Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al n'tilat yadayim.*

*Blessed are You, Sovereign our G-d, Ruler of the universe, who has sanctified us with Your commandments, and commanded us concerning the washing of the hands.*

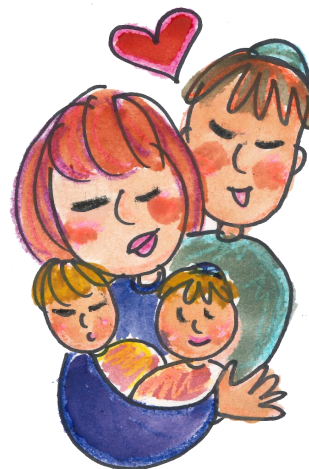
### Why Do I Do It?

Washing our hands before bread dates back to the ritual of washing the hands before bringing a sacrifice to the Holy Temple. Even though we no longer have the Temple to which we bring sacrifices, our sages have extended this practice to modern times.

It is thought that in the garden of Eden, bread grew on trees so we did not have to labor to create it. Because of this, many believe bread to be of great significance and a blessing of the Messianic era, when once again we will not have to labor to bring food to our table, and all that are hungry will have food.

## What is the Blessing for the Children?

Parents take a moment to give a blessing to their children.

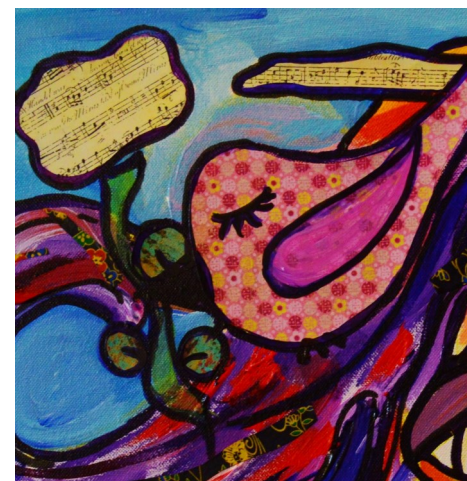


### How Do I Do It?

Place your hands on your child's head and recite the blessing found on the front of this card, according to the gender of your child. Many take the time to whisper a special thought just for that child.

### Why Do I Do it?

The words of the blessing over children are taken from the priestly blessing (Numbers 6:24-26) given to the Israelites during the days of the Holy Temple. Bestowing a blessing on your children is a nice way to bring extra closeness to the family on *Shabbat*, holidays or any special occasion!



## Blessings for Children on Shabbat and Holidays

Every parent has hopes for their child. This blessing offers a Jewish tradition for passing on those hopes. It is said after lighting Shabbat candles.

### **For boys, the introductory line is:**

May you be like Ephraim and Menashe.

יְשִׁימָךְ אֱלֹהִים כְּאַפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה.

*Yesimkha Elohim k'Ephraim v'chi'Menasheh.*

### **For girls, the introductory line is:**

May you be like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah.

יְשִׁימָךְ אֱלֹהִים כְּשָׂרָה רְבֵקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה.

*Yesimakh Elohim k'Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel, v'Leah.*

### **For both boys and girls, the rest of the blessing is:**

May G-d bless you and guard you.

יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ

*Yivarekh'kha Adonai v'yishm'rekha.*

May G-d show you favor and be gracious to you.

יָאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחַנֶּךָ

*Ya'er Adonai panav alekha vichuneka.*

May G-d show you kindness and grant you peace.

יְשֵׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיִשֶּׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

*Yisa Adonai panav alekha v'yaseim l'kha shalom.*

## What is the Kiddush Prayer?

Once we are ready to start the meal we recite the Kiddush prayer, which is said over grape juice or wine

## How Do I Do It?

Traditionally one of the hosts will recite the prayer for their family and guests, keeping in mind that they are saying the prayer on behalf of everyone present. Some families have the custom to stand during this prayer, while other might sit in the middle or for the entire prayer. Once the blessing is made, grape juice or wine will be passed out to everyone to drink.



Here is one small part of the prayer – specifically the prayer we say for the grape juice or wine.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam borei p'ri hagafen.*

*Blessed are You, Sovereign our God, King of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.*

## Why Do I Do It?

According to the 10 Commandments brought down from Mt. Sinai by Moses, we are to “remember Shabbat to sanctify it”. We fulfill this Biblical commandment by saying the Kiddush blessing.

According to Chabad.org “The words in the kiddush testify that G-d, Creator of the world, rested on the seventh day and sanctified it, telling us that this is not an ordinary day and not simply a meal, rather it is a celebration and affirmation of this day that G-d has consecrated.”



As mentioned above, this is one small part of a larger prayer. To hear the whole prayer and learn more: <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/>