

“The sun slides from the sky
as the sparks of the day are stamped out.
From the last we ignite the twisted candle
that summons us to remember how to braid
into the rough wool of our daily lives
that silken skein of the bright and holy...”

Marge Piercy

(taken from the poem Havdallah, 'The Art of Blessing the Day', 1999)

Marge Piercy (born March 31, 1936) is a Jewish American poet, novelist, and social activist.



Be part of the conversation...

Is it important to mark the end of Shabbat?

Do you have a favourite part of Havdallah?

What new rituals could there be for Havdallah?

Does the image of working days as wool and Shabbat as silk speak to you?



“Shabbat sustains the rhythm of Jewish life. It restores the aches of the past, nourishes the present and gives us the ability to prepare for the future.”

Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner

Laura Janner-Klausner is the Senior Rabbi to the Movement for Reform Judaism



Be part of the conversation...

What does shabbat mean to you?

What do you like about shabbat?

Describe what your perfect shabbat would be like?

Is shabbat the key element to sustaining Jewish life?



“We can say without exaggeration that more than the Jewish people preserved shabbat, it is shabbat that has preserved the Jewish people.”

Ahad Ha'Am

(taken from Shabbat v'Tziyonut, 1898)

Asher Zvi Ginsberg (August 1856 – January 1927), Zionist thinker primarily known by his Hebrew pen name, Ahad Ha'am



Be part of the conversation...

How do you think Shabbat kept the Jewish people?

What does keeping shabbat mean to you?

Describe what your perfect shabbat would be like?

Does it matter if different people have different ways of keeping Shabbat?



“The Sabbath commandment was the first call to humanity at large for real equality.”

Shimon Peres

(Taken from ‘On Freedom’ in Olam magazine, 2000)

Shimon Peres was a former Prime Minister and the ninth President of the State of Israel.



Be part of the conversation...

How is shabbat a call for equality?

Do you feel commanded to observe shabbat?

Does a country need a day where everything closes?

What other ethical calls does Judaism make to humanity?



“When God said, “On the seventh day thou shalt rest,” The meaning behind it was simple: Take a break. Call a timeout. Find some balance. Recharge.”

The Sabbath Manifesto, 2010

The Sabbath Manifesto is a creative project designed to slow down lives in an increasingly hectic world. www.sabbathmanifesto.org/about



Be part of the conversation...

Is the meaning of 'thou shalt rest' a simple one?

Does society allow for a good balance between work and rest?

Does it matter how you re-charge on shabbat?

Is shabbat important if you don't believe in God?



וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת-הַשַּׁבָּת כִּי קֹדֶשׁ הוּא לָכֶם...

U'shmartem et-ha'shabbat ki kodesh hee lachem...

You shall keep the shabbat because it is holy to you...

Exodus/Shemot 31:14

Be part of the conversation...

What does it mean to 'keep' shabbat?

Does shabbat need to be 'holy' to be important?

Why do you think this commandment uses the Hebrew plural form of 'you'?

What if you don't 'keep' shabbat? Does it matter?



**“Shabbat for me is the rituals of candles,
kiddush and *challah* whilst spending
quality time with friends & family.”**

‘Anonymous’, 2014

written by an anonymous attendee at the Reform Judaism biennial Shabbat Chagigah weekend in June 2014



Be part of the conversation...

How would you complete the sentence, ‘Shabbat for me means...’?

Describe what your perfect shabbat would be like?

If you could invite any four people as your shabbat guests who would they be and why?

Can you explain what ‘quality time’ means?



“Shabbat is a time to focus on what really matters: gratitude for our lives and our communities...and an opportunity to pray, sing, meditate, and learn.”

Rabbi Wendi Geffen

Wendi Geffen is the senior Rabbi at North Shore Congregation Israel, Chicago



Be part of the conversation...

What distracts you from what 'really matters'?

What if you don't like to pray, sing, meditate or learn?

In what way does shabbat allow us to express our gratitude for what we have in our lives?

Can you celebrate shabbat without a community?

