

# WHAT'S GOING ON @ THE SHABBOS TABLE?



## LIGHTING CANDLES

Every Friday afternoon, Jewish women light Shabbos candles, providing a beautiful and calm aura to the home. Women pray at this time that just as they are bringing light into their home, their children should bring light into the world.

*The culmination of the Seven Days of Creation was Shabbos. The Torah tells us that Shabbos was not just a day of rest, but it was a creation unto itself. What was created on Shabbos? Shabbos created the ability for people to pause from "doing" and focus on "being." Yes, Shabbos has great food, great time with family, and is a great experience, but underneath it all is a moment once a week to reconnect with yourself and with God.*



## BLESSING THE CHILDREN

Before the meal, many parents have the custom to bless their children. During these loving moments, parents have the opportunity to focus on appreciating their children and connecting with family.



## SINGING EISHES CHAYIL

Originally written as a tribute to Sarah, the mother of the Jewish people, this song is an appreciation for wives and mothers who work so hard to prepare for Shabbos. On a deeper level, Shabbos is the queen of the Jewish nation, and this song welcomes the serenity and sanctity of Shabbos into our homes.



## SHALOM ALEICHEM

Two angels accompany a person home from synagogue on Friday night; one good and one evil. These angels represent the two parts of a person that finally find peace with each other on Shabbos, as both body and soul enjoy the Shabbos experience.

*“The Sabbath is not for the sake of weekdays; the weekdays are for the sake of Sabbath. It is not an interlude but the climax of living.”*  
— Abraham Joshua Heschel



## KIDDUSH

During Kiddush, we give testimony that God created the world in 6 days and rested on the 7th. Just as one testifying in a Jewish court must stand, we stand while testifying that God created the world.



## WASHING HANDS

Eating the Shabbos meal is not just a function of getting food in; it's an opportunity to elevate the mundane act of eating into a spiritual activity. We therefore wash our hands before the meal to eat in a state of purity, imitating the way that the priests washed their hands before serving in the Beis HaMikdash.



## EATING CHALLAH

We place 2 challos at every Shabbos meal to remind ourselves of the kindness that God did after we left Egypt - God fed our entire nation for 40 years in the desert with a miraculous food called "mahn." While our food today might look less miraculous than it did then, challah reminds us that all sustenance comes from God.



## SHABBOS SONGS

Shabbos songs are not simply tunes. They were written by some of the greatest sages in our history and they contain many secrets and much depth. Every day of the week, the angels and creations praise God, but on Shabbos, we the Jewish people are the only ones allowed to sing. (Ohr Zaruah Shabbos 42:4)

*“God said to Moshe: I have a great treasure in my treasury and I want to give it to the Jewish people - its name is 'Shabbos.'”*  
— Talmud Shabbos 10b



## WHY DO WE EAT A 3<sup>rd</sup> SHABBOS MEAL?

Although on weekdays we eat two main meals, on Shabbos we add a third. The purpose of eating this third meal - when we're often too full to eat! - is to demonstrate that all of our eating on Shabbos is for the purpose of honoring this special day. We call it "Shalosh Seudos" - literally "three meals" - since this meal reveals our goal in all three meals.

*On a deeper level, the third Shabbos meal is a time for reconnecting to our spiritual roots. The first day of Creation was Sunday, which - in the Jewish calendar - begins the night before, on Motzei Shabbos. The moments before God created the world, therefore, was the time of the third Shabbos meal. During that time, God decided to create each one of us, and in these precious moments, each of us has the chance to reconnect to who we are and what we want to be. (Nesivos Shalom)*

## WHAT'S GOING ON @ THE END OF SHABBOS?



### BLESSING OVER WINE

Just as we welcome Shabbos in with wine and candles, so too, we honor Shabbos as it leaves with wine and candles during the Havdalah ceremony. It is customary to pour wine into the cup until it overflows to symbolize our hope that God will give us overflowing blessings in the coming week.

*"Havdalah" literally means "separation": in a world with so much confusion, we often struggle to differentiate, separate and prioritize. Ultimately, this wisdom to differentiate between right and wrong, between the important and unimportant, makes us more refined human beings. It is a skill that we strive to incorporate into the coming week as we leave the serenity of Shabbos and become engrossed in weekday matters once again.*



### SMELLING SPICES

We smell spices during Havdalah because our sense of smell is the sense that is least often used for doing evil; it relates to the purest part of a person. As Shabbos ends, we reconnect to the deepest and holiest part of ourselves and from there we grow and change. (Bnei Yissaschar)



### BLESSING OVER A FLAME

When Adam and Eve first sinned, they were expelled from the Garden of Eden in shame, fear and darkness. God then gave them the wisdom to create fire to illuminate the night. The Havdalah candle reminds us that we can always find light even in the darkest places. (Pesachim 54)



### MELAVEH MALKA MEAL

"Melaveh Malka" literally means "escorting the queen." Shabbos is so precious that we never rush it out the door; rather, we escort the Shabbos Queen with a festive send-off. Throughout our history, great people were careful to make special foods for the Melaveh Malka meal, so as to properly honor Shabbos as it leaves.

*“ Kiddush sanctifies Shabbos. Havdalah sanctifies the week. ”*  
— Rav Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin