



Shabbat Manifesto

Goals:

- For participants to reflect on the purpose and value of Shabbat in the Jewish tradition.
- For participants to consider the contribution Shabbat can or could make to their own lives whether or not they are Shabbat observant.

Perhaps the greatest gift the Jewish people gave the world was Shabbat. There was no concept of Shabbat before us – no concept of a rest day on which we somehow refrained from work.

Achad HaAm saw the Shabbat as the thing that kept Jews together – “More than the Jewish people has kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jewish people” – what do you think this means?

Text One: Shmot 20: (All together)

זָכוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת, לְקַדְּשׁוֹ. 7 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד, וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלֹאכֶתְךָ. 8 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work;

וְיוֹם, הַשְּׁבִיעִי--שַׁבָּת, לַיהוָה 9 but the seventh day is a sabbath unto the LORD thy God, in it thou shalt not do any manner of work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates;

כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת-יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ, אֶת-הַיָּם וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-בָּם, וַיִּנַּח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי; עַל-כֵּן, בֵּרַךְ יְהוָה אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת--וַיְקַדְּשֶׁהוּ. {S} {0}

What is the purpose of Shabbat according to the text?

How do we mark the Shabbat? (What does it mean to remember and to keep it Holy, are these the same, or separate commandments?)

Texts 2-4 - Three Perspectives on Shabbat -
In Chavrutot



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Questions for each text

- What is the main purpose of Shabbat according to this text?
- Is this a useful/relevant concept for today? How does/could this manifest in the modern world?

Text Two: Shabbat reminds us that we are no masters of our destiny – Mordechai Kaplan (founder of Reconstructionist Judaism)

"As a result of the mechanization and over-industrialization of present day life, the human being has come to stand in greater need of the Shabbat than before. ...The function of the Sabbath is to prohibit man from engaging in work which in any way alters the environment, so that he should not delude himself into the belief that he is complete master of his destiny."

Text Three: Shabbat celebrates time rather than space Abraham Joshua Heschell

Judaism teaches us to be attached to holiness in time, to be attached to sacred events, to learn how to consecrate sanctuaries that emerge from the magnificent stream of a year. The Shabbats are our great cathedrals and the Holy of Holies is a shrine that neither the Romans nor the Germans were able to burn...

...It is, indeed a unique occasion at which the distinguished word *קדוש* (*kadosh*) is used for the first time: in the book of Genesis at the end of the story of creation. How extremely significant is the fact that it is applied to time: "And God bless the seventh *day* and made it *holy*." There is no reference in the record of creation to any object in space that would be endowed with the quality of holiness...to the Bible it is holiness in time, the Shabbat, which comes first...

...The meaning of Shabbat is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week we live under the tyranny of space; on Shabbat we try to become attuned to the holiness in time. It is a day on which we are called upon to share what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world.

Text Four: Shabbat as a lesson in freedom Jonathan Sacks from Radical Then Radical Now

The Shabbat is a religious institution, a memorial to creation, the day on which God Himself rested. But it is also and essentially a political institution. Shabbat is the greatest tutorial in liberty ever devised. Passover tells us how the Israelites



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won their freedom. Shabbat tells us how they kept it. One day in seven, the Jews create a messianic society. It is a day on which everyone, master and slave, employer and employee, even animals, experience unconditional freedom. We neither work, nor get others to work, manipulate nor allow ourselves to be manipulated. We may neither buy nor be bought. It is a day on which all hierarchies, all relationships of power are suspended.

Shabbat was, of course, the antithesis of Egypt – the free society as opposed to the society of slaves. Slaves work without rest at the will of their masters. So the first mark of the Israelites' freedom was a day of rest for everyone...

But Shabbat was also a way of enacting, while on the way, the journey's end, the destination. Slavery was not immediately abolished...Even today there are lesser forms of servitude – insecurity, workaholism, the hundred stresses and anxieties of everyday life...So within time itself, everyone had to experience unconditional freedom so as never to lose the love of liberty, even though as yet it lasts only one day in seven.

- Which of these conceptions of Shabbat do you find most compelling?
- Do any of them speak to your experience of Shabbat.

Introduce the idea of the Shabbat Manifesto.

Way back 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.

Somewhere along the line, however, this mantra for living faded from modern consciousness. The idea of unplugging every seventh day now feels tragically close to impossible. Who has time to take time off? We need eight days a week to get tasks accomplished, not six.

The Sabbath Manifesto was developed in the same spirit as the Slow Movement, slow food, slow living, by a small group of artists, writers, filmmakers and media professionals who, while not particularly religious, felt a collective need to fight back against our increasingly fast-paced way of living. The idea is to take time off, deadlines and paperwork be damned.

In the Manifesto, we've adapted our ancestors' rituals by carving out one day per week to unwind, unplug, relax, reflect, get outdoors, get with



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loved ones and, if we're lucky, get some booty, too. The ten principles are to be observed one day per week, from sunset to sunset. We invite you to practice, challenge and/or help shape what we're creating.

Organization behind this is Reboot – a non-profit, largely web based group who seek to rebook Jewish cultures, traditions and rituals.

1. Avoid technology.
 2. Connect with loved ones.
 3. Nurture your health.
 4. Get outside.
 5. Avoid commerce.
 6. Light candles.
 7. Drink wine.
 8. Eat bread.
 9. Find silence.
 10. Give back.
- What do you think of, of these 10 principles?
 - Which do you connect with most? Which do you connect with least?
 - Would you come up with a different list of principles? Is anything missing off the list?
 - Interpret the principles – what do you think this means? What could it mean in your life?

Conclusion – the richness of Shabbat comes in that it doesn't have one purpose. We can interpret its meaning, and find meaning in it, in which ever way we like. If our Shabbat is traditional, or untraditional – the key is to "Remember the Shabbat day and Make it Holy". Truly we can then appreciate Shabbat as a gift to world.