

Notes: March 12 2016

Start: 10 AM

Order of service:

1. Meet and Greet
2. Introduction (if new people)
3. Ma Tov
4. Open in Prayer for service
5. Liturgy – Sh'ma +
6. Announcements
7. Praise and Worship Songs
8. Message
9. Aaronic Blessing
10. Kiddush
11. Oneg

Children's Blessing:

Transliteration: *Ye'simcha Elohim ke-Ephraim ve hee-Menashe*

English: *May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe*

Transliteration: *Ye'simech Elohim ke-Sarah, Rivka, Rachel ve-Leah.*

English: *May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.*

Introduction: The Essence of Shabbat

I have been reading a book that was originally published in 1951 by a gentleman named Abraham Joshua Heschel.

Abraham Joshua Heschel (January 11, 1907 – December 23, 1972) was a Polish-born American rabbi and one of the leading Jewish theologians and Jewish philosophers of the 20th century.

Heschel is a widely read Jewish theologian whose most influential works include *Man Is Not Alone*, *God in Search of Man*, *The Sabbath*, and *The Prophets*. At the Vatican Council II (October 1962 – December 1965), as representative of American Jews, Heschel persuaded the Roman Catholic Church to eliminate or modify passages in its liturgy that demeaned the Jews, or referred to an expected conversion to Christianity.

He was even quoted by the Pastor who oversaw Nancy Reagan's funeral service on Friday.

The book that I am reading is called *The Sabbath*.

I have just gotten through the first chapter and have found many of the things he has written regarding this unique day to be rather profound.

So, today, I want to share some of his words with you. Hopefully you will come away with a deeper and richer understanding of what Shabbat is truly all about.

“Three acts of God denote the seventh day: He rested, He blessed and He Hallowed the seventh day. To the prohibition of labor is therefore added the blessing of delight and the accent of sanctity. Not only the hands of man celebrate the day, the tongue and the soul keep the Sabbath. One does not talk on it in the same manner in which one talks on weekdays. Even thinking of business or labor should be avoided.”

Truly one can not half heatedly celebrate Shabbat.

“Labor is a craft, but perfect rest is an art. It is the result of an accord of body, mind and imagination. To attain a degree of excellence in art, one must accept its discipline, one must adjure slothfulness. The seventh day is a palace in time which we build...”

This palace's foundation is from Adonai, but we are the ones who construct it.

“What is so luminous about a day? What is so precious to captivate the hearts? It is because the seventh day is a mine where spirit's precious metals can be found with which to construct the palace in time, a dimension in which the human is at home with the divine; a dimension in which man aspires to approach the likeness of the divine.”

This is one way in which we truly approach Adonai in all ways.

It is in essence what Yeshua conveys to us as well...

Joh 14:1 "Don't let yourselves be disturbed. Trust in God and trust in me.

Joh 14:2 In my Father's house are many places to live. If there weren't, I would have told you; because I am going there to prepare a place for you.

Joh 14:3 Since I am going and preparing a place for you, I will return to take you with me; so that where I am, you may be also.

Joh 14:4 Furthermore, you know where I'm going; and you know the way there."

Joh 14:5 T'oma said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you're going; so how can we know the way?"

Joh 14:6 Yeshua said, "I AM the Way — and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through me.

Shabbat is in essence that temporary place in time, whereby we connect with Adonai, while awaiting this promise of Yeshua.

It is a moment in time, yet truly transcends time.

“For where shall the likeness of God be found? There is no quality the space has in common with the essence of God. There is not enough freedom on the top of the mountain; there is not enough glory in the silence of the sea. Yet the likeness of God can be found in time, which is eternity in disguise.”

“The art of keeping the seventh day is the art of painting on the canvas of time the mysterious grandeur of the climax of creation: as He sanctified the seventh day, so shall we. The love of Sabbath is the love of man for what he and God have in common. Our keeping the Sabbath day is a paraphrase of His sanctification of the seventh day.”

In essence, it is an image of our sanctification.

Through acceptance of Yeshua we are brought near to Adonai.

“What would be a world without Sabbath? It would be a world that knew only itself or God distorted as a thing or an abyss separating Him from the world; a world without the vision of a window in eternity that opens in time.”

“For all the idealization, there is no danger of the idea of the Sabbath becoming a fairy-tale. With all the romantic idealization, the Sabbath remains a concrete fact, a legal institution and a social order. There is no danger of it becoming a disembodied spirit, for the spirit of the Sabbath must always be in accord with the actual deeds, with definite actions and abstentions. The real and the spiritual are one, like body and soul in a living man. It is for the law to clear the path; it is for the soul to sense the spirit.”

In other words there is a oneness associated with Shabbat in terms of conduct and essence.

“The glorification of the day, the insistence upon strict observance, did not, however, lead the rabbis to a deification of the law. The Sabbath is given unto you, not you unto the Sabbath (Mekilta 31:13)”

Mekhilta ([Hebrew](#): middah) is a rule of [scriptural exegesis](#) in Judaism,

The Sabbath is a time where we truly demonstrate our oneness with Adonai as conveyed through Yeshua...

[Mar 2:27](#) Then he said to them, "Shabbat was made for mankind, not mankind for Shabbat;

[Mar 2:28](#) So the Son of Man is Lord even of Shabbat."

A similar passage appears in the Mekhilta, Shabbata I:1 on [Exo_31:12-17](#), where the saying is attributed to Rabbi Shim'on Ben-Menasya.

It may be, therefore, that Yeshua's comment in [Mar_2:28](#), that **the Son of Man is Lord of Shabbat**, does not refer only to himself but to everyone, since Hebrew *ben-adam* (literally, "son of man") can mean simply "man, person," with no Messianic overtone: "people control *Shabbat*" and not the other way round.

“...The ancient rabbis knew that excessive piety may endanger the fulfillment of the essence of the law (Genesis Rabba 19:3)”

“There is nothing more important, according to Torah than to preserve human life...Even when there is the slightest possibility that a life may be at stake one may disregard every prohibition of the law” (with the exception of idolatry, adultery and murder)”

“One must sacrifice mitzvot for the sake of man rather than sacrifice man for the sake of mitzvot”

“The purpose of Torah is to bring life to Israel, in the is world and in the world to come”

Likely not knowing Messiah, Heschel wrote this...

“The Sabbath is the most precious present mankind has received from the treasure house of God. All week we think: The spirit is too far away, and we succumb to spiritual absenteeism, or at best we pray: Send us a little of Thy spirit. On the Sabbath the spirit stands and pleads: Accept all excellence from me...”

“Yet what the spirit offers is often too august for our trivial minds. We accept the ease and relief and miss the inspirations of the day, where it comes from and what it stands for. This is why we pray for understanding.”

In not having an intimate relationship with Yeshua, the Spirit of Adonai appears to be external and separate as Heschel alludes to in his writing, yet when we do have this relationship and His Spirit is internal and inclusive.

From the house of God, there is no greater treasure mankind can receive than Yeshua. With that treasure, man things come with that, including the treasure of Shabbat, for which is a treasure given to Israel, unlike anything any other nation has received to this day. Its essence and characteristics are the embodiment of Adonai.

“To celebrate the Sabbath is to celebrate the coronation of a day in the spiritual wonderland of time, the air of which we inhale when we “call it a delight””

“Call the Sabbath a delight: a delight to the soul and a delight to the body. Since there are so many acts which one must abstain from doing on the seventh day, “you might think I have given you the Sabbath for your

displeasure; I have surely given you the Sabbath for your pleasure". To sanctify the seventh day does not mean: Thou shalt mortify thyself, but on the contrary, Thou shalt sanctify it with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy senses. "Sanctify the Sabbath by choice meals, by beautiful garments; delight your soul with pleasure and I will rewarded you for this very pleasure" (Deuteronomy Rabbi 3.1)

"Unlike The Day of Atonement, the Sabbath is not dedicated exclusively to spiritual goals. It is a day of the soul as well as of the body; comfort and pleasure are an integral part of the Sabbath observance. Man in his entirety, all his faculties must share its blessing."

"The Sabbath is a reminder of the two worlds- this world and the world to come; it is an example of both worlds. For the Sabbath is joy, holiness and rest; joy is part of this world; holiness and rest are something of the world to come."

"To observe the seventh day does not mean merely to obey or to conform to the strictness of a divine command. To observe is to celebrate the creation of the world and to create the seventh day all over again, the majesty of holiness in time – a day of rest, a day of freedom, a day which Is like "a lord and king of all other days – a lord and king of the commonwealth of time"

"How should we weigh the difference between the Sabbath and the other days of the week? When a day like Wednesday arrives, the hours are blank, and unless we lend significance to them, they remain without character. The hours of the seventh day are significant in themselves; their significance and beauty do not depend on any work, profit or progress we may achieve. They have the beauty of grandeur"

From the Afternoon Prayer for Shabbat:

"Beauty of grandeur, a crown of victory, a day of rest and holiness...a rest in love and generosity, a true and genuine rest, a rest that yields peace and serenity, tranquility and security, a perfect rest with which Thou are pleased."

Shabbat is not dependent upon anything we do, nor is it beholden to us.

"The seventh day is like a palace in time with a kingdom for all. It is not a date but an atmosphere."

In other words Shabbat transcends time and space, yet exists for us in time and space as what I had quoted earlier, a connection between the world now and the world to come.

"How precious is the Feast of Booths! Dwelling in the booth even our body is surrounded by the sanctity of the mitzvah" said once a rabbi to his friend. Whereupon the latter remarked: "The Sabbath Day is even more than that. On the Feast you may leave the Booth for a while, whereas the Sabbath surrounds you wherever you go"

"The difference between the Sabbath and all other days is not to be noticed in the physical structure of things, in their spiritual dimension. This is only a difference in the dimension of time, in the relation of the universe to God. The Sabbath preceded creation and the Sabbath completed creation; it is all of the spirit the world can bear."

"The words: "on the seventh day God finished His work (Genesis 2:2) seem to be a puzzle. Is it not said: "He rested on the seventh day? In six days the Lord made heaven and earth: (Exodus 20:11)? We would surely expect the Bible to tell us that on the sixth day God finished His work. Obviously, the ancient rabbis concluded there was an act of creation on the seventh day. Just as heaven and earth were created in six days, menuha was created on the Sabbath"

"After six days of creation, what did the universe still lack? Menuha. Came the Sabbath, came menuha, and the universe was complete."

What is menuha?

“Menuha which we usually render with “rest” means here much more than withdrawal from labor and exertion, more than freedom from toil and strain or activity of any kind. Menuha is not a negative concept but something real and intrinsically positive. This must have been the view of the ancient rabbis if they believed that it took a special act of creation to bring it into being, that the universe would be incomplete without it.”

What was created on the seventh day?

Gen 2:2 On the seventh day God was finished with his work which he had made, so he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

Tranquility, serenity, peace and repose – Genesis Rabba 10.9

Adonai is speaking to Isaiah, and conveying a message for Israel, a people who did not honor the treasure given them, thus leading to expulsion from the land, a message that is one of hope, inspiration and restoration, that should they heed these words would result in protection.

Isa 58:13 "If you hold back your foot on Shabbat from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call Shabbat a delight, Adonai's holy day, worth honoring; then honor it by not doing your usual things or pursuing your interests or speaking about them.

Isa 58:14 If you do, you will find delight in Adonai — I will make you ride on the heights of the land and feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Ya`akov, for the mouth of Adonai has spoken."

The mitzvah is...

Exo 20:8 **7** "Remember the day, Shabbat, to set it apart for God.

This is the parameter:

Exo 20:9 You have six days to labor and do all your work,

Exo 20:10 but the seventh day is a Shabbat for Adonai your God. On it, you are not to do any kind of work — not you, your son or your daughter, not your male or female slave, not your livestock, and not the foreigner staying with you inside the gates to your property.

These are the reasons...

Exo 20:11 For in six days, Adonai made heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. This is why Adonai blessed the day, Shabbat, and separated it for himself.

On the first occurrence, Adonai conveys this day that He has established for himself and has brought in the children of Israel to partake in this blessed time.

Exo 31:17 It is a sign between me and the people of Isra'el forever; for in six days Adonai made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day he stopped working and rested.' "

On the second occurrence it is mentioned as a commandment, Shabbat is established as a sign between Adonai and Israel.

Deu 5:15 You are to remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Adonai your God brought you out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore Adonai your God has ordered you to keep the day of Shabbat.

On the third occurrence it is mentioned as a commandment, Shabbat is conveyed as a memorial to the Exodus from Egypt, whereby freedom enables one to rest without fear.

Not only is Shabbat connected to creation but it is also connected with Adonai delivering Israel from slavery in Egypt and thus making it a sign of this Covenant. All are to be remembered.

I quoted this earlier...

“The purpose of Torah is to bring life to Israel, in this world and in the world to come”

There is no better representation of this foundational truth than Proverb 3:

Pro 3:1 My son, don't forget my teaching, keep my commands in your heart;

Pro 3:2 for they will add to you many days, years of life and peace.

Pro 3:3 Do not let grace and truth leave you — bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart.

Pro 3:4 Then you will win favor and esteem in the sight of God and of people.

Pro 3:5 Trust in Adonai with all your heart; do not rely on your own understanding.

Pro 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge him; then he will level your paths.

Pro 3:7 Don't be conceited about your own wisdom; but fear Adonai, and turn from evil.

Pro 3:8 This will bring health to your body and give strength to your bones.

Pro 3:9 Honor Adonai with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your income.

Pro 3:10 Then your granaries will be filled and your vats overflow with new wine.

Pro 3:11 My son, don't despise Adonai's discipline or resent his reproof;

Pro 3:12 for Adonai corrects those he loves like a father who delights in his son.

Pro 3:13 Happy the person who finds wisdom, the person who acquires understanding;

Pro 3:14 for her profit exceeds that of silver, gaining her is better than gold,

Pro 3:15 she is more precious than pearls — nothing you want can compare with her.

Pro 3:16 Long life is in her right hand, riches and honor in her left.

Pro 3:17 Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace.

Pro 3:18 She is a tree of life to those who grasp her; whoever holds fast to her will be made happy.

Pro 3:19 Adonai by wisdom founded the earth, by understanding he established the heavens,

Pro 3:20 by his knowledge the deep [*springs*] burst open and the dew condenses from the sky.

Pro 3:21 My son, don't let these slip from your sight; preserve common sense and discretion;

Pro 3:22 they will be life for your being and grace for your neck.

Pro 3:23 Then you will walk your way securely, without hurting your foot.

Pro 3:24 When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.

- Pro 3:25** Don't be afraid of sudden terror or destruction caused by the wicked, when it comes;
- Pro 3:26** for you can rely on Adonai; he will keep your foot from being caught in a trap.
- Pro 3:27** Don't withhold good from someone entitled to it when you have in hand the power to do it.
- Pro 3:28** Don't tell your neighbor, "Go away! Come another time; I'll give it to you tomorrow," when you have it now.
- Pro 3:29** Don't plan harm against your neighbor who lives beside you trustingly.
- Pro 3:30** Don't quarrel with someone for no reason, if he has done you no harm.
- Pro 3:31** Don't envy a man of violence, don't choose any of his ways;
- Pro 3:32** for the perverse is an abomination to Adonai, but he shares his secret counsel with the upright.
- Pro 3:33** Adonai's curse is in the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the righteous.
- Pro 3:34** The scornful he scorns, but gives grace to the humble.
- Pro 3:35** The wise win honor, but fools win shame.