



## Creating Jewish Encounters on Shabbat

### The Text...

"Remember the Sabbath to hallow it."

### ...And its application

**For a table discussion, or for one on one:** Ask someone what is so special about remembering someone and what is so hurtful about forgetting a person.

**At a Friday Night Dinner:** Each one of these sources emphasizes a different aspect of Shabbat. When facilitating a discussion, choose which source you find interesting and provocative. Think about why it appeals to you and use it as a vehicle for sharing something about yourself and why these Jewish Friday night encounters are important to you. Ask your students what drew them here?

Each source is accompanied with some questions you might ask yourself that will help you unpack the meaning of these voices and also help you share them with others.

### The Text...

Shabbat said before the Holy One: Every day was given a partner, but You did not give me one. The Holy One answered: Your partner is the community of Israel. And when Israel stands on Mount Sinai, the Holy One will say "Remember the Sabbath to hallow it" (Exodus 20:8) "Remember" I said to Shabbat that the community of Israel is your partner. (Midrash Genesis Rabba Parsha 11)

### ...And its application

In facilitating a group discussion, or a one on one conversation, ask what does it mean for you to have a partner, to claim exclusivity? What makes the partnership work? What does it mean to have an exclusive relationship with another person? What does it mean to have that same relationship with an idea? Shabbat starts as an idea that we as a people make into reality.

Should Shabbat be for anyone who wishes to observe, or is it our special legacy? Is it offensive to you when a Jew for Jesus claims to be Shabbat observant.

What is the purpose of making Shabbat the exclusive communal property of the Jewish people?

## **The Text...**

There was a Monarch who prepared a special wedding canopy. It was intricately carved and adorned, the only thing missing was the bride. So, too the world was created intricately and majestically, but the only thing missing was Shabbat. (Midrash Genesis Rabba Chapter 10)

## **...And its application**

This source sees Shabbat as an essential aspect of creation. What is essential to you for making your life worthwhile? What would be your Shabbat?

## **The Text...**

Resh Lakish said that on Shabbat Eve one is given an extra soul and when Shabbat leaves it is taken from him. (Talmud, Beitzah 16a)

## **...And its application**

The facilitator could open a discussion by asking people to describe their “soul.” What does it mean to get an extra soul? If we said that on Shabbat we were given extra “awareness” or “insight” what qualities would be lacking that the word “soul” gives us?

## **The Text...**

A teaching: It was said of Shammai, the elder, that all his days he would eat in order to honor Shabbat. If he would find a nice calf he would say, "This will be for Shabbat." If he found one that was nicer, he would set aside the second one and then eat the first one.

Hillel, however, behaved differently, for all his deeds were for the sake of heaven, as it is written, "Praised be God each day."

It was also recorded in later generations: The House of Shammai said: Each day should be for Shabbat. The House of Hillel replied: Praise be God everyday. (Babylonian Talmud, *Beitzah* 16a)

## **...And its application**

After relating this story, the facilitator might ask what makes a day special for you? Is a break in routine enough? How does one make a day special, and what is the value of ensuring that time is set aside each week?

## **The Text...**

Every person must carry the holiness of Shabbat to hallow the other days of the week. (Rebbe Nachman of Braslav)

## **...And its application**

The facilitator might share how she brings Shabbat into the rest of the week, and how that differs

from preparing for Shabbat. Maybe one could say, “I make sure to designate fifteen minutes of reflection before going to bed.” Or, “I commit to keeping a journal and taking fifteen minutes to write each day.” Or, “...some time designated each day for taking a walk, making time with a friend...” or any other activity one may engage in on a day that has less this-worldly structures.

## **The Text...**

Shabbat brings every creature back to its roots which is the will of God. (Sefat Emet, Famous Hasidic master, on the Torah)

## **...And its application**

**For those who are engaged in meditation** this is a wonderful source to ponder. Facilitate a session that would allow the circle to imagine returning to one's roots and then have them share what occurred to them.