

Sharing Shabbat: Blessings Before the Meal



Lighting the Shabbat Candles

- We light two candles which remain burning until they go out.
- Some families have a candle for each member of the family so that each person gets to light one.
- After lighting the candles but before the blessing is said some people symbolically draw in the light from the candles with gentle circular hand motions over the flame. We then cover or close our eyes while reciting the candle lighting blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוֵּנוּ
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav,
v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who has sanctified us with commandments and commanded us to light the Shabbat candles.

Blessing the Grape Juice/Wine

- We mark Shabbat as holy by saying a blessing over wine or grape juice.
- On Friday night the Kiddush has four parts. The first part recalls the biblical account of the creation of Shabbat. The second part is the blessing over wine. The third describes the gift of Shabbat, its meanings and symbolism. And the fourth describes Shabbat as a sign of covenant between God and the Jewish people.

There was evening and there was morning. On the sixth day, the heavens and the earth and all their hosts were completed. And God completed, on the seventh day, God's work, which God had made, and God ceased on the seventh day, all God's work in which God had been engaged. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; because on it God ceased all God's work which God had created. [Genesis 1:31, 2:1-3]

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְרָצָה בְּנוֹ, וְשִׁבֵּת קִדְּשׁוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן הַנְּחִילָנוּ זְכוֹרוֹן לְמַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית, כִּי הוּא יוֹם תְּחִלָּה לְמִקְרָאֵי קִדְּשׁ, זִכָּר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם, כִּי בָנוּ בְּחֵרֶת וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים, וְשִׁבֵּת קִדְּשְׁךָ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן הַנְּחִילָתָנוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech Haolam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'ratzah vanu, v'Shabbat kodsho b'ahavah uv'ratzon hinchilanu, zikaron l'maaseih v'reishit. Ki hu yom t'chilah l'mikra-ei kodesh, zecher litziat Mitzrayim. Ki vanu vacharta, v'otanu kidashta, mikol haamim. V'Shabbat kodsh'cha b'ahavah uv'ratzon hinchaltanu. Baruch atah, Adonai, m'kadeish HaShabbat.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine. We praise You Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who hallows us with mitzvot and favors us with the holy Shabbat, lovingly and graciously bestowed upon us, a memorial of the act of creation, first of the holy assemblies, a remembrance of the going forth from Egypt. You have chosen us and hallowed us from among all peoples, by lovingly and graciously bestowing upon us Your holy Sabbath. We praise You, O God, who sanctifies Shabbat.

Blessing the Challah

- The challah remains covered while Shabbat is being sanctified with the blessing over the wine so as not to embarrass it [the challah]!
- The challah represents the abundance of food that so many of us are blessed to enjoy. We take this opportunity to express thanks for all that we have in our lives.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמּוֹצֵא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Baruch Atah, Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam ha motsi lechem min ha-arets.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

Enjoy Your Meal!

After the Meal

Some families recite blessings of gratitude after the meal. You might consider, instead, reflecting on this quotation from Rabbi Harold Kushner:

“Can you see the holiness in those things you take for granted—a paved road or a washing machine? If you concentrate on finding what is good in every situation, you will discover that your life will suddenly be filled with gratitude, a feeling that nurtures the soul.”