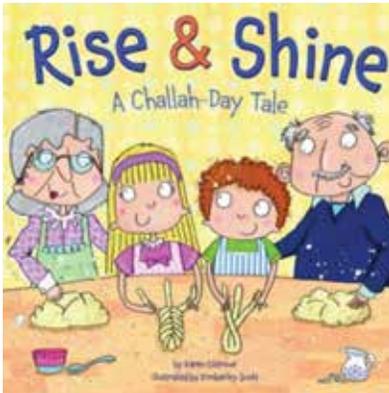


# Global Day of Jewish Learning

## Curriculum: Creating Together



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[www.theglobalday.com](http://www.theglobalday.com)

A Project of the Aleph Society



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## Introduction: Creating Shabbat (2 minutes)

Welcome to the Global Day of Jewish Learning. The very first story in the Torah is the account of God's creation of the world. When God completes the work of the six days of creation God rests, thereby creating something called Shabbat. This unit examines that moment of creation, and allows participants to reflect on how we, as individuals and as a community, create a Shabbat experience.

## Part 1: The Creation of Shabbat—God's role

### Text #1: The Biblical Source (10 minutes)

בראשית פרק ב

#### Genesis 2:1-3

1. The heaven and the earth were finished, and all their array.
2. On the seventh day God finished the work that He had been doing, and He ceased on the seventh day from all the work that He had done.
3. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation that He had done.

(א) וַיִּכְלֹוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל צְבָאָם:  
 (ב) וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבֹּת  
 בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְכַל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:  
 (ג) וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּו שְׁבֹת  
 מְכַל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

#### ► Ask:

1. According to this text, when did God finish the process of creation?
2. What did God do on the seventh day?
3. What do you think it means for a day to be “blessed” or “holy”? What would that feel like for you in your life?

Notice that although the first verse states that God finished creating the heavens and the earth (presumably, in the six day period that precedes these verses), the second verse records that it was only on the seventh day that God finished creating. This might lead one to conclude that God's act of creation on the seventh day was, in fact, the act of resting; creating a model of a day of rest for us to follow. The sanctification and blessing of the day, then, may be linked to the idea of having a special day set aside for rest; for pausing to contemplate all that we have accomplished, as well as contemplating God's creation.

### Text #2: Rashi's Commentary, Genesis 2:1-3 (8 minutes)

Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki) was an 11th Century Torah commentator who lived in France.

רש"י בראשית פרק ב

Another idea: What was the world missing? Rest. Shabbat came, and with it came rest. The work was completed and finished.

דבר אחר מה היה העולם חסר, מנוחה, באת שבת באת מנוחה, כלתה ונגמרה המלאכה.

#### ➤ Ask:

1. How is real rest created?
2. Is there a difference between simply doing nothing and real rest? What is the difference between Saturday and Shabbat?
3. How does rest, as time away from work, contribute to our day-to-day lives?

## Part 2: Joining with God in the Creation of Shabbat

### Text #3: Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz: *The Thirteen Petalled Rose* (8 minutes)

The Sabbath, with its severe prohibitions against all work, is actually connected with the process of Creation.

Just as the creation of the world took place in six stages, six days of forming the things that comprise the physical world, so are the six days devoted to working on the material world, repairing it, building it up, raising it to a higher level. The Sabbath that follows is again a return to the life within oneself—a return, like that of the Creator himself, to the higher worlds, the spiritual essences, the changeless source of all change.

For being in the image of God, man must continue to carry or to supplement and to repair the original Creation and then retreat into himself, withdrawing from physical creativity and renewing the holiness that comes from rest and complete peace.

The *Halakhah*, the formal structure defining the order of *mitzvot*, prescribes in great detail the many things one is forbidden to do on the Sabbath. All of them, however, are derived from the same basic idea: that the Sabbath is the day when one ceases to be a creator in the domain of the outer world and turns inward toward holiness...

#### ➤ Ask:

1. Building off the previous text, and our discussion of how to create rest, what is Rabbi Steinsaltz saying about what constitutes true rest?
2. Rabbi Steinsaltz describes two types of creativity. What are they? What experiences have you had with each type?

Rabbi Steinsaltz points to a role for humans in the process of creation, both in the work of the six days, and in the rest of the seventh. Explore what it means for humans to be involved in creation and in elevating the world in both of these ways.

### Text #4: Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 119b (10 minutes)

אָמַר רַבָּא וְאִיתִימָא רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי:  
אֲפִילוּ יַחֲדָא הִמְתַּפְּלִל בְּעֶרְבַּ שַׁבָּת צְרוּךְ  
לֵאמֹר "וַיִּכְוֹלוּ". דְּאָמַר רַב הַמְּנוּנָא: כֹּל  
הִמְתַּפְּלִל בְּעֶרְבַּ שַׁבָּת וְאָמַר "וַיִּכְוֹלוּ" –  
מַעֲלָה עָלָיו הַכְּתוּב כְּאִילוּ נַעֲשֶׂה שׁוֹתֵף  
לְהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּמַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית,  
שְׁנָאמַר "וַיִּכְוֹלוּ", אֵל תִּקְרִי "וַיִּכְוֹלוּ" אֱלֹא  
וַיִּכְוֹלוּ. אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: מִנֵּינן שְׁהַדִּיבּוּר  
בְּמַעֲשֵׂה – שְׁנָאמַר: "בְּדַבַּר ה' שָׁמַיִם נִעֲשֶׂוּ."

Rava said, and some say it was Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi who said: Even an individual who prays on Shabbat evening must recite the passage: "And the heavens and the earth were finished [vaykhullu]" (Genesis 2:1–3),<sup>n</sup> as Rav Hamnuna said: Anyone who prays on Shabbat evening and recites the passage of vaykhullu, the verse ascribed him credit as if he became a partner with the Holy One, Blessed be He, in the act of Creation.<sup>n</sup> As it is stated: "And the heavens and the earth were finished [vaykhullu]." Do not read it as: Were finished [vaykhullu]; rather, as: They finished [vaykhallu]. It is considered as though the Holy One, Blessed be He, and the individual who says this become partners and completed the work together. Rabbi Elazar said: From where is it derived that speech is like action? As it is stated: "By the word of God the heavens were made, and all of their hosts by the breath of His mouth" (Psalms 33:6).

#### Facilitator's Note:

Make sure that participants are aware that the verse quoted here (which comes from the passage in Genesis quoted above) is a part of the traditional version of the text of Kiddush, the sanctification of Shabbat that is recited on Friday night over wine.

#### ➤ Ask:

1. What reason does the Talmud give for the importance of even a single individual (let alone a congregation) reciting this verse on Friday night?
2. How does this partnership with God work? What have we accomplished by reciting this sentence?
3. What does man do for God when he rests? Does God need our rest?
4. How is this "Kiddush" itself an act of creation?

The Gemara says that by reciting Kiddush, we join with God in creating the world. By making a space for Shabbat, we are partners in creation. Speech is equated with action, and simply reciting these words is considered like an act of creation. By pausing to sanctify Shabbat; by recognizing that one needs to make space for rest; by stopping to appreciate what the world has to offer instead of moving forward relentlessly at every moment; we join with God in creating a day of rest. The implication is that without that moment of rest, without a time to sit back and contemplate, the work of the other six days would be rendered meaningless.

### Text #5: Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 69b (8 minutes)

אמר רב הונא: היתה מהלך (בדרך או)  
במדבר, ואינו יודע אימתי שבת –  
מונה ששה ימים ומשמר יום אחד.  
תניא בר רב אומר: משמר יום אחד  
ומונה ששה. במאי קמיפלגי? מר  
סבר: כברייתו של עולם, ומר סבר  
כאדם הראשון.

Rav Huna said: One who was walking along the way or in the desert, and he does not know when Shabbat occurs,<sup>NH</sup> he counts six days from the day that he realized that he lost track of Shabbat and then observes one day as Shabbat. Hiyya bar Rav says: He first observes one day as Shabbat and then he counts six weekdays. The Gemara explains: With regard to what do they disagree? One Sage, Rav Huna, held: It is like the creation of the world, weekdays followed by Shabbat. And one Sage, Hiyya bar Rav, held: It is like Adam, the first man, who was created on the sixth day. He observed Shabbat followed by the six days of the week.

#### Ask:

1. How do you understand the idea of almost randomly picking a day and designating it as Shabbat? Why and how does this work?
2. The two models presented at the end represent two different ways of experiencing a day of rest. One takes place at the end of a week's worth of days, and can be seen as a restorative time ceasing from the creativity of the week. The other occurs before the week begins, and offers Shabbat as a starting point from which all other moments follow. Which would you prefer? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

Notice that this source indicates that people have the power to create Shabbat anytime and anywhere. The implication is that our own subjective experience can be enough to create Shabbat, at least in dire circumstances. This can be understood from God's point of view—it is so important to stop and recognize God's creation of the world, that we must do so even if it is objectively the wrong day of the week. It can also be understood from a more human point of view—we need a day of rest, and it is so crucial to our existence that we must set aside such a day even if it is not the correct day.

### Text #6: Pachad Yitzchak (12 minutes)

Rabbi Isaac Hutner was a 20th Century rabbi and thinker (Poland and United States) who incorporated philosophical and mystical elements into his writings.

We are now ready to learn and fully understand the words of the rabbis, who explained the blessing of the Sabbath (and God blessed it), that “God blessed it with the light of a person's face” (Midrash Genesis Rabbah 11:2)...the face is the only place in all of a person's body where one can really see the nullification of a person's physicality and see the light of a person's character...

...The light of a person's face is created because one's character shines with force in rays of light, to the extent that it breaks through the “flesh-sinews-bones” structure of the body...and therefore, this place merits being called “panim” (face, but literally: that which is internal)...

ונכונים אנו עכשו ללמוד טוב טעם ודעת בדברי חכמים  
שפירשו ברכתה של שבת (ויברך אותו) ש"ברכו במאור  
פניו של אדם" (בראשית רבה פרשה יא סימן ב)...הפנים  
הם המקום היחידי בכל גופו של אדם אשר בו ניכרת היא  
במדה ידועה התבטלות חומרותה של הגוף לגבי אורה של  
הדעת...

זיו הפנים נעשה על ידי זה שהדעת מזריחה בתוקף את קו  
אורה, עד כדי כך שהם בוקעים את ה"בשר גידים  
ועצמות" של הגוף...ולכן זכה מקום זה להקרא בשם  
פנים...

...And from this we can consider the power of rest on Shabbat in the creation of the light of a person's face. Resting on Shabbat is the revelation of the power of the character to break through the physicality of the world and show its light...just as a person's character breaks through, by way of the rest on Shabbat, the "externality" of the world in order to reveal the internal "face" of the world, so too, by way of rest on Shabbat, a person's character breaks through that which is "external" to a person, in order to reveal the internal "face" of the person.

ועומדים אנו מתוך כך על כוחה של שביתת שבת ביצירת מאור פניו של אדם. שביתת שבת היא גילוי כח הדעת לבקוע את גופו של עולם בכדי לעמוד על אורו...כשם שדעתו של אדם בוקעת היא על ידי שביתת שבת את ה"חוץ" של העולם לשם גילוי הפנים של העולם, כמו כן בוקעת היא דעתו של אדם על ידי שביתת שבת את ה"חוץ" של האדם עצמו, לשם גילוי הפנים של האדם עצמו.

### ► Discuss:

1. Rabbi Hutner speaks about seeing past that which is external and having internal qualities shine through. Is this an experience that resonates with you? When, if ever, does this occur in your life?
2. How do you think Shabbat, or the experience of rest, allows a person to better appreciate and develop that which is internal?
3. Do you think it is possible to unplug?

This is a complex passage; it may be necessary to read it over more than once.

Based on a midrashic source that seeks to define the "blessing" with which God imbues Shabbat, Rabbi Hutner develops a theory about the power of resting on Shabbat. According to Rabbi Hutner, Shabbat allows people to focus internally. Shabbat is a time to develop one's character, and it is this character that animates a person's face and shines through in their eyes and expression. So too, Shabbat is a time to focus on the "internality" of the world; to see past the physical and appreciate the internal meaning of the world. Resting on Shabbat, then, gives us this unique opportunity to appreciate and develop the internality of people and of the world.

## Conclusion (2 minutes)

Conclude by summarizing the different messages that have emerged from the texts:

- God's creation of Shabbat brought rest into the world.
- We have the chance to emulate God and shape the world as well, not only by being creative, but also by instituting meaningful rest in our lives and our societies.
- Rest allows us to reflect, regroup, and potentially discover something deeper in our selves and in our world.

## Part 1: The Creation of Shabbat – God’s role

### Text #1: The Biblical Source

בראשית פרק ב

#### Genesis 2:1-3

- 1) The heaven and the earth were finished, and all their array.
- 2) On the seventh day God finished the work that He had been doing, and He ceased on the seventh day from all the work that He had done.
- 3) And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation that He had done.

(א) וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל צְבָאָם:  
 (ב) וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבֹּת  
 בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:  
 (ג) וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת  
 מִכָּל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

### Text #2: Rashi's Commentary, Genesis 2:1-3

רש"י בראשית פרק ב

Another idea: What was the world missing? Rest. Shabbat came, and with it came rest. The work was completed and finished.

דבר אחר מה היה העולם חסר, מנוחה, באת שבת באת מנוחה, כלתה ונגמרה המלאכה.

## Part 2: Joining with God in the Creation of Shabbat

### Text #3: Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz: *The Thirteen Petalled Rose*

The Sabbath, with its severe prohibitions against all work, is actually connected with the process of Creation.

Just as the creation of the world took place in six stages, six days of forming the things that comprise the physical world, so are the six days devoted to working on the material world, repairing it, building it up, raising it to a higher level. The Sabbath that follows is again a return to the life within oneself—a return, like that of the Creator himself, to the higher worlds, the spiritual essences, the changeless source of all change.

For being in the image of God, man must continue to carry or to supplement and to repair the original Creation and then retreat into himself, withdrawing from physical creativity and renewing the holiness that comes from rest and complete peace.

The *Halakhah*, the formal structure defining the order of *mitzvot*, prescribes in great detail the many things one is forbidden to do on the Sabbath. All of them, however, are derived from the same basic idea: that the Sabbath is the day when one ceases to be a creator in the domain of the outer world and turns inward toward holiness...

## Text #4: Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 119b

אָמַר רַבָּא וְאִיתִימָא רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי:  
אֲפִילוּ יַחֲדָא הַמַּתְפַּלֵּל בְּעֶרְבַת שַׁבָּת צְרִיךְ  
לֵאמֹר "וַיִּכְוֹלוּ". דְּאָמַר רַב הַמְנוּנָא: כָּל  
הַמַּתְפַּלֵּל בְּעֶרְבַת שַׁבָּת וְאָמַר "וַיִּכְוֹלוּ" -  
מַעֲלָה עָלָיו הַכְּתוּב כְּאִילוּ נַעֲשֶׂה שׁוּתְרָא  
לְהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּמַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית,  
שְׁנַאמַר "וַיִּכְוֹלוּ", אֵל תִּקְרִי "וַיִּכְוֹלוּ" אֵלָּא  
וַיִּכְלוּ. אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: מַנִּיין שְׁהַדְיָבוּר  
בְּמַעֲשֵׂה - שְׁנַאמַר: "בְּדַבַּר ה' שָׁמַיִם נַעֲשׂוּ".

Rava said, and some say it was Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi who said: Even an individual who prays on Shabbat evening must recite the passage: "And the heavens and the earth were finished [vaykhullu]" (Genesis 2:1-3)," as Rav Hamnuna said: Anyone who prays on Shabbat evening and recites the passage of vaykhullu, the verse ascribed him credit as if he became a partner with the Holy One, Blessed be He, in the act of Creation." As it is stated: "And the heavens and the earth were finished [vaykhullu]." Do not read it as: Were finished [vaykhullu]; rather, as: They finished [vaykhullu]. It is considered as though the Holy One, Blessed be He, and the individual who says this become partners and completed the work together. Rabbi Elazar said: From where is it derived that speech is like action? As it is stated: "By the word of God the heavens were made, and all of their hosts by the breath of His mouth" (Psalms 33:6).

## Text #5 Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 69b

אָמַר רַב הוּנָא: הִיָּה מֵהַלֵּךְ (בַּדְרֶךְ אוֹ)  
בַּמַּדְבָּר, וְאִינוּ יוֹדְעֵי אֵימְתֵי שַׁבָּת -  
מוֹנְהַ שְׁשֵׁה יָמִים וּמְשִׁמְרֵי יוֹם אֶחָד.  
תְּיָאֵי בְּרַב אֹמְרֵ: מְשִׁמְרֵ יוֹם אֶחָד  
וּמוֹנְהַ שְׁשֵׁה. בְּמַאי קָמִיפְלְגִי? מִן  
סִבְרַ: כְּבָרִיתָו שְׁל עוֹלָם, וּמִן סִבְרַ  
כְּאָדָם הָרֵאשׁוֹן.

Rav Huna said: One who was walking along the way or in the desert, and he does not know when Shabbat occurs,<sup>NH</sup> he counts six days from the day that he realized that he lost track of Shabbat and then observes one day as Shabbat. Ḥiyya bar Rav says: He first observes one day as Shabbat and then he counts six weekdays. The Gemara explains: With regard to what do they disagree? One Sage, Rav Huna, held: It is like the creation of the world, weekdays followed by Shabbat. And one Sage, Ḥiyya bar Rav, held: It is like Adam, the first man, who was created on the sixth day. He observed Shabbat followed by the six days of the week.

## Text #6: Pachad Yitzchak

We are now ready to learn and fully understand the words of the rabbis, who explained the blessing of the Sabbath (and God blessed it), that "God blessed it with the light of a person's face" (Midrash Genesis Rabbah 11:2)...the face is the only place in all of a person's body where one can really see the nullification of a person's physicality and see the light of a person's character...

...The light of a person's face is created because one's character shines with force in rays of light, to the extent that it breaks through the "flesh-sinews-bones" structure of the body...and therefore, this place merits being called "panim" (face, but literally: that which is internal)...

ונכוננים אנו עכשו ללמוד טוב טעם ודעת בדברי חכמים שפירשו ברכתה של שבת (ויברך אותה) ש"ברכו במאור

פניו של אדם" (בראשית רבה פרשה יא סימן ב)...הפנים הם המקום היחידי בכל גופו של אדם אשר בו ניכרת היא במדה ידועה התבטלות חומרותה של הגוף לגבי אורה של הדעת...

זיו הפנים נעשה על ידי זה שהדעת מזריחה בתוקף את קוי אורה, עד כדי כך שהם בוקעים את ה"בשר גידים ועצמות" של הגוף...ולכן זכה מקום זה להקרא בשם פנים...



## Creating Shabbat: Rest as a Creative Act

...And from this we can consider the power of rest on Shabbat in the creation of the light of a person's face. Resting on Shabbat is the revelation of the power of the character to break through the physicality of the world and show its light...just as a person's character breaks through, by way of the rest on Shabbat, the "externality" of the world in order to reveal the internal "face" of the world, so too, by way of rest on Shabbat, a person's character breaks through that which is "external" to a person, in order to reveal the internal "face" of the person.

ועומדים אנו מתוך כך על כוחה של שביתת שבת ביצירת מאור פניו של אדם. שביתת שבת היא גילוי כח הדעת לבקוע את גופו של עולם בכדי לעמוד על אורו...כשם שדעתו של אדם בוקעת היא על ידי שביתת שבת את ה"חוץ" של העולם לשם גילוי הפנים של העולם, כמו כן בוקעת היא דעתו של אדם על ידי שביתת שבת את ה"חוץ" של האדם עצמו, לשם גילוי הפנים של האדם עצמו.



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