

Harvesting Your Shabbat Practice: What is Shabbat? How might an understanding of Shmita influence our conception of Shabbat?

Stage 1: Desired Results	
<p>Established Goals:</p> <p><i>This activity will bring alive the dual concepts of work and rest demonstrating that while creative work changes the world around us, the Jewish ideal is that it should be balanced by reflection and restraint. Students will explore how Hazon's "Core Shmita Principles" can add to our conception of Shabbat rest.</i></p>	
<p>Understandings:</p> <p>Creation was made for the purpose of shabbat/rest/completion. The "work" we are commanded to do during the week is <i>malechet machshevet</i> - "workmanship" - deliberate, productive creative acts that improve one's world. Inherent in the Jewish understanding of labor is an integration of will and of restraint. Shabbat, rest and reflection are opportunities to withdraw from continuous growth, consumerism, etc. As modern Jews, we welcome a wide range of reflection modes including traditional prayer & study, shomer shabbat leisure activities as well as contemporary reflective practices (which can include knitting, writing, playing music, etc). Shmita is called <i>shabbat shabbaton</i> - "Shabbat of Shabbats" (Leviticus 25:4). As such it is on some level epitomic for Shabbat itself, and can deepen our understanding of Shabbat rest and release.</p>	<p>Essential Questions:</p> <p>What does farm work have to do with shabbat? What is the value of harvesting and processing all this wheat by hand? What does the Torah have to say about our lives today? If you really value growing food and working hard, and you have a short growing season, why stop one day a week? What is the value in stopping? How do I integrate will and restraint? Is there a point to Shabbat other than physical rest? What does it mean to reflect? What are traditional and contemporary modes of reflection? Can I still reflect during shabbat if I am not strictly <i>shomer shabbat</i>? How can my understanding of Shmita add to my conception of Shabbat rest?</p>
<p>Students will know:</p> <p>Judaism values the opportunity to break from work and reflect on Shabbat (a communally designated day). The origin of the first 11 <i>melachot</i> are derived from steps of harvesting grain from seed to bread (Mishna Shabbat Ch. 7). The opportunity to observe shabbat goes beyond physical rest and "dos and don'ts". Hazon's Core Shmita Principles.</p>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <p>Perform the first 11 melachot in the form of processing wheat into flour. Discuss Biblical and Rabbinic sources addressing the meaning and purpose of Shabbat. Creatively apply Core Shmita Principles to Shabbat.</p>
Stage 2 - Assessment Evidence	
<p>Performance Tasks:</p> <p>-Wheat harvest activity: Perform the first 11 melachot in the form of processing wheat into flour. -Text study: Discuss sources addressing Shabbat. -Small group work: Creatively apply Core Shmita Principles to Shabbat.</p>	<p>Other Evidence:</p> <p>-Each student writes down ways in which Core Shmita Principles might apply to Shabbat.</p>
Stage 3 - Learning Plan	
<p>Outline of lesson/timeline:</p> <p>0:00 Demonstration and participatory harvest: threshing to sifting (using pre-reaped, pre-bound, dried stalks). Discussion: How do we know what <i>not</i> to do on Shabbat? (<i>Melachot</i>, which are derived from wheat harvest - Melachot handout)</p> <p>0:20 How do we know what <i>to</i> do on Shabbat? (Chevrutah text study and discussion): Find a partner. Each pair discusses one text with provided questions. (~ 10 minutes) Back in full group. Pairs read their text aloud and share what responses/insights they had. (~10 minutes)</p> <p>0:40 How might Core Shmita Principles influence our conception of Shabbat? (Small group discussion): Form groups of 3-4 people. Depending on number of groups, each group considers 1 or more Core Shmita Principles. (~10 minutes) Back in full group. Small groups read the principle they discussed and how it might be applied to Shabbat.</p> <p>0:60 (If time permits) Share out loud with the group one intention for rest and reflection on <u>this Shabbat</u>, which is influenced by the thinking you have just done.</p> <p>Materials list:</p> <p>Shmita/Shabbat handouts 2-3 small yogurt containers Pens 1 electric fan Melachot handouts VitaMix or coffee grinder or flour mill Sieve Text sheets</p>	

Six Days Shall You Labor...and what shall I do on shabbos?

Genesis 2:2-3

ב ויכל אלקים ביום השביעי, מלאכתו אשר עשה; וישבת ביום השביעי, מכל-מלאכתו אשר עשה. ג ויברך אלקים את-יום השביעי, ויקדש אתו: כי בו שבת מכל-מלאכתו, אשר-ברא אלקים לעשות

2. And on the seventh day G-d completed His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. 3. And G-d blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it He rested from all His work which G-d created to do.

1. How do you understand verse 2? If God rested on the seventh day, how is it that on the same day He “completed His work”? Wasn’t it already completed before sunset on the sixth day?
2. What does it mean that the seventh day was “blessed...and sanctified *because* on it [God] rested”? What does one have to do with the other?
3. Why is it written, “to do” (some read “to make”) at the end of verse 3? Is the “to do” redundant? Why not write it without the “to do”, like this: “...because on it He rested from all His work which God created.” ??

Genesis Rabbah 10:9 (Midrash)

רבי שאליה לרבי ישמעאל ב"ר יוסי א"ל שמעת מאביך מהו ויכל אלקים ביום השביעי אתמהא אלא כזה שהוא מכה בקורנוס על גבי הסדן הגביהה מבעוד יום והורידה משתחשך

Rabbi [Yehudah haNasi] asked Rabbi Yishmael the son of Rabbi Yosi, saying to him, "Did you hear from your father the meaning of the verse, AND ON THE SEVENTH DAY G-D COMPLETED [HIS WORK WHICH HE HAD MADE]?" He answered, "It is like a man striking the hammer on the anvil, raising it while it is yet day and bringing it down after nightfall."

- A. How does the metaphor of a blacksmith striking a hammer on an anvil relate to the verse, “AND ON THE SEVENTH DAY GOD COMPLETED HIS WORK WHICH HE HAD MADE”?
- B. How does your understanding of the relationship between the metaphor and the verse affect your thinking about the meaning of the week/shabbat balance?

Kidushat HaYom Shabbos evening Amidah (siddur)

אתה קדשת את יום השביעי לשמך, תכלית מעשה שמים וארץ

You sanctified the seventh day for Your Name's sake, the conclusion/purpose [Hebrew: *tachliss*] of the creation of heaven and earth. (Siddur - Kidushat Hayom, Shabbos evening Amidah)

What is our ordinary use of the word *tachliss*? What does it mean to you that in this prayer, the seventh day is called “the purpose of creation”?

for your consideration...

[T]he theology embodied in the Sabbath is based on an integration between the active and the passive, between will and restraint, in which a rhythmic balance is preserved between the two. Through the will, man acts as one created in the divine image, capable of reaching beyond his natural abilities and fashioning the world according to his own lofty designs. Through the counterpoise of restraint, man learns to recognize the consequence of his creation, to renew his appreciation for the sublime, and to adjust his designs accordingly. Judaism stresses the necessity of a balance between these two elements, attained through their proper integration in time, in imitation of the primordial model of creative effort. Without such a balance, man becomes alienated from himself and from the world in which he lives, and, consequently, also from the God who has assigned him a role on earth.

...

In the Jewish view, neither achievement nor passive unification with nature is seen as ideal. Rather, it is through the kind of creative activity that results from the combination of the two that man achieves great things, in imitation of the Creator. By focusing exclusively on his achievements, man works for the sake of his own aggrandizement, without regard for the higher meaning of his creations, and in the end takes God's place instead of imitating him. By surrendering his will to nature's own dynamic, however, man sacrifices the "image of God" within each individual, for the sake of which he was put on earth.

The individual will thus lies at the basis of the Jewish conception of creativity. And like Western culture after the Renaissance, Judaism therefore views positively the enjoyment of labor and its fruits. But in contrast to the ceaseless purposiveness of Western rationalism, the Sabbath teaches about the rhythm of all true creativity, human and divine. By directing himself to this rhythm, man learns to cast his desires into the fundamental mold of Creation. He learns to work and to rest, to go forth from himself and to return to himself.

(from "Secret of the Sabbath" by Yosef Yitzhak Lifshitz
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Personal Shabbat Intentions Roadmap

	This Shabbat	Goals for Future Shabbats
<p>How will I make Shabbat different from the rest of the week?</p> <p>“AND HE RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORK”</p> <p>How will you “rest”?</p>		
<p>How will I create space in order to reflect on the previous week and what form will my reflection take?</p> <p>“GOD COMPLETED HIS WORK”</p> <p>How will you “complete” your week by reflecting on it?</p>		
<p>What aspects of myself and my week will I reflect upon?</p> <p>“AND GOD SAW ALL THAT HE HAD MADE, AND BEHOLD...”</p> <p>What types of things, out of all you’ve experienced this week, will you notice?</p>		