

SHABBAT GUIDE

BERESHEET

ABOUT THE STORY OF BERESHEET

The purpose of the Beresheet reading is to eradicate the distance between ourselves and the Light. However, as in any endeavor, when we set our hearts upon a goal, there is always a process we must go through before we can realize our objective. It is this process (where we encounter challenges and turmoil) that creates an opening for negativity. We can immunize ourselves against this negativity by understanding thoroughly the Universal Law governing such processes of change.

MICHAEL BERG ON BERESHEET

The portion of Beresheet talks about the process of Creation, and about the Garden of Eden, which we know does not connote a physical place, but rather represents a place of spiritual connection. Within the middle of the Garden of Eden is the Tree of Life, which holds within it everything we need in order to bring about the End of the Correction. And Shabbat Beresheet is the Shabbat when the Light of the Tree of Life is revealed in its totality.

Rashi, the great kabbalist and commentator, says the Tree of Life was in the middle of the Garden. We have completed our connections—Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Simchat Torah—and so we begin this Shabbat in the middle of the Garden, meaning that all the assistance and blessings that we will need throughout the year, from the point that we are at now onwards, are coming. And it is from here, in the central point of the Garden of Eden, that all of our choices begin. From this moment on, every single negative action we do takes us one step away from the Tree of Life that is in the central point of that Garden, and every single positive action brings us one step closer to that central point. It is very simple.

To maintain that central point, remind yourself on

this Shabbat, "I am at the central point, I am at the point of the Tree of Life that has within it all the blessings, all the assistance that I am ever going to need. It is all shining directly on me." Remind yourself—today, tonight, tomorrow, next week—"I have choices."

We have the connection to the Tree of Life on this Shabbat. From this day on, the consciousness we want to awaken and strengthen is, "I do not want to leave it. I do not want to make those decisions to do those actions that are going to grab me and move me step after step away from where the blessings are going to come down." This awakening of consciousness is a gift that is available to us on Shabbat Beresheet, and hopefully, we will use it, because, truly, the entire purpose of our lives is to create a true and constant connection to the Tree of Life.



CONSCIOUSNESS FOR NEXT WEEK

The upcoming portion of Noach challenges us to be honest—sometimes painfully honest—about where we are in our spiritual journey. If we can reject feeling satisfied and instead yearn for even more spiritual work, we elevate our soul to another level. This is a great week to examine ways we can restrict our ego when engaging in acts of sharing.

CANDLE LIGHTING

We light candles at specific times and with pure intentions in order to establish a connection to the energy available. Like flipping the light switch upon entering a dark room, the simple act of lighting candles initiates a flow of energy.

EVENING CONNECTION (KABBALAT SHABBAT)

On Friday nights, we sing songs, recite kabbalistic prayers, and consume blessed wine and bread. These acts invite the energy of Shabbat into our lives and enhance our connection to the Light.

SHABBAT DINNER

The first of three meals, we bless the wine and bread before enjoying our Shabbat dinner. These kabbalistic blessings help us connect with our inner desire to share.

BIRKAT HAMAZON (PRAYERS AFTER EATING)

After eating the first meal, we engage in the Birkat Hamazon prayer. Reciting this prayer shows our appreciation for the food and our connection to the Light.

MORNING CONNECTION (SHACHARIT)

On Saturday mornings, we gather to recite prayers and meditate on our relationship with the Light. The energy awakened by the Morning Connection awakens the spiritual force of mercy, which helps keep chaos and judgment from our lives.

CONSCIOUSNESS LECTURE

In the Consciousness Lecture, we learn about the portion of the week that will be read during the Torah reading. This lecture helps us truly understand the forthcoming teachings and explains in detail the kabbalistic principles behind the stories.

TORAH READING

The Torah is read aloud, in Hebrew, by a Kabbalah Centre teacher. The stories of the Torah are actually codes that, when decoded, transmit energy and repel negativity for the week to come.

AFTERNOON CONNECTION

In the Afternoon Connection, we engage in prayers that strengthen our connection following the reading of the Torah.

SHABBAT LUNCH

During Shabbat Lunch, we sing a number of songs in Aramaic and Hebrew, many of which were written by history's greatest kabbalists. They help us manifest the Desire to Share aspect of the Morning Connection.

THIRD MEAL

The third meal is the highest point of Shabbat, known for its tremendous healing properties. This includes a blessing for hand washing, a connection with bread, and special prayers and meditations for creating positive change within ourselves and all of humanity.

EVENING CONNECTION

The Evening Connection consists of unique kabbalistic prayer and song. These recitations bring Shabbat to a close and help us determine our energy for the new week to come.

HAVDALAH

Havdalah refers to the verbal declaration made at the end of Shabbat that is recited once the sun sets on Saturday night. We say the Havdalah to demonstrate our appreciation for the Light, and to ask it for spiritual sustenance in the upcoming week.