

THE GIFT OF SHABBAT

Out of a vast and formless mass,
You, O God, did fashion a world.

*You brought light into darkness,
Order where there was confusion,
And living creatures to inhabit the earth.*

You created us in Your own image,
Giving us dominion over all Your works.

*Then you rejoiced in Your creation;
You beheld Your work and it was good.*

You who have given us Shabbat to remember creation,
Implant within us a spark of Your spirit,

*That we may share with You the joy of creation,
And you may find our efforts good.*

May we, also, bring light where there is darkness,
Ennobling thus the human heart and mind.

*Sovereign of all creation, God most high,
Your power is manifest in the destiny of people and nations.*

You delivered Israel from bondage in Egypt,
For it is Your will that we should be free.

*You have given us Shabbat to commemorate that freedom,
To teach us that no one shall be master and no one a slave.*

Help us to break every shackle asunder,
Hastening the day when the strong will be just,
And the weak will no longer know fear.

*You, our Creator, are mindful of Your handiwork;
Your ordinances are all conceived in wisdom.*

You commanded us to cease from our labor,
That we may find joy and peace in Shabbat rest.

*For we were not made only to labor;
We must pause and reflect and commune with You.*

We thank You, our Creator, for the gift of Shabbat,
Your gift to Israel that blesses all mankind.

ETERNITY UTTERS A DAY

On Shabbat we share the holiness at the heart of time.
Eternity utters a day.

*We celebrate Creation;
we celebrate the sacredness of time.*

We sanctify Shabbat with all our senses;
body and soul partake of Shabbat.

*Struggle and dissonance are forgotten;
we are embraced by peace and by wholeness.*

Eternity utters a day.
Shabbat is a temple in time.

*Shabbat is holiness in time, the presence of eternity,
a moment of majesty, the radiance of joy.*

We are reminded of our royalty,
raised to nobility by our exalted Sovereign.

*Shabbat ennobles, enhances; it nourishes
the seed of eternity planted in our soul.*

Shabbat is a gift of dignity and rest,
of holiness, splendor, and delight.

*Eternity utters a day.
We bask in the radiance of redemption.*

Shabbat is a taste of the world to come,
a time of peace, tranquility, harmony, and joy.

*In time to come the promise of paradise will be restored,
a messianic covenant of peace to bind all creatures.*

We are grateful for the gift of this Shabbat
as we anticipate the time when all will be Shabbat.

— adapted from Abraham Joshua Heschel