



The Shabbat Meal -

Dvar Torah and Zemirot

The Friday night meal is normally eaten after the Synagogue service (Kabbalat Shabbat). The meal typically includes some kind of fish, soup and chicken or meat.



During the meal someone usually will offer a commentary on the weekly Torah portion (i.e., the Torah portion that will be read in the Shabbat morning service). Such discussions are called *Divrei Torah*.

Often *Zemirot*, or Shabbat table songs, are sung during the meal as well.

Some of the more common Shabbat table songs (*zemirot*) include:

- *Shalom Alechem*
- *L'cha Dodi*
- *Etz Chayim*
- *Kol HaOlam*
- *Lev Tahor*
- *Shabbat Shalom!*

Shalom Aleichem

This song of praise is based on the Talmudic passage which teaches that a good angel and an evil angel accompany every man home from synagogue on Friday evening. If they find the house in good order with the Shabbat table set festively bedecked with glowing candles and the family dressed in their best, the good angel says, "May the next Shabbat be like this one," and the evil one must respond, "Amen." If, on the other hand, they find that the house is not fit for the welcoming of royalty (the Shabbat is likened to a queen), the evil angel says "May the next Shabbat be like this one," and the good angel must answer, "Amen."

The Jewish sages teach that the *Shekhinah* (Divine Presence) does not rest on a person sunk in sadness or laziness, but comes only with the joy of doing mitzvot. Therefore, when a Jew prepares to invite God's presence to his Shabbat table, he must prepare for it by elevating the level of spiritual joy which can be done only by means of holy pursuits, such as praising God, studying Torah, and performing good deeds.



שַׁבָּת שְׁלוֹמִים

S h a b b a t S h a l o m !