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- Daniel Gordis, *God Was Not in the Fire* (1995), pp. 106-107.
- Judith Shulevitz, "Bring Back the Sabbath," *The New York Times* (March 2003).

Session I

Introduction – The Jewish Sabbath in Contemporary America

Readings:

- Herman Wouk, *This is My God* (1959), chapter 4.
- Joe Lieberman, *The Gift of Rest* (2011), chapter 3.

Guiding Questions:

- What is the contemporary American Sabbath experience for these authors?
- How do the authors understand the relationship between the restrictive laws of the Sabbath and the Sabbath's inner content?
- Which rituals do the authors find particularly meaningful and why?
- How is the Sabbath related to the creation of the world, and why is that important for contemporary Wouk?

Session II

The Biblical and Philosophical Roots of the Sabbath

Readings:

- Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath* (2005), Prologue, pp. 1-10.
Note: This reading can be found in the book, not in this reader.
- Genesis 2:1-3.
- Exodus 16.
Note: this is optional.
- Exodus 20:8-11.
- Deuteronomy 5:12-15.
- *Menucha V'simcha*, song for the night of the Sabbath.
- Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Halakhic Man* (1983), pp. 39-48.

Guiding Questions:

- How do you understand the idea that God blessed and sanctified a day?
- What is the relationship between the Sabbath of Exodus 20 and that of Deuteronomy 5?
- What is the relationship between space and time for Heschel?
- What does “*kodesh*” (“holy”) mean, and how is it related to the Sabbath?
- Optional: How does Heschel’s understanding of holiness as it relates to the Sabbath qualify and add to that of Soloveitchik?

Session III

Sabbath Joy, Peace, and Rest

Readings:

- Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath* (2005), pp. 13-24, 27-32.
Note: This reading can be found in the book, not in this reader. Also, pages 27-32 are optional reading.
- S.Y. Agnon, "Shabtai," in *Forevermore & Other Stories* (2016).
- S.Y. Agnon, "The Coin," in *Forevermore & Other Stories* (2016).
Note: this is optional.
- S.Y. Agnon, "Concerning Those Who Assemble in Laughter and Frivolousness," in *Forevermore & Other Stories* (2016).
- Amos 8.
- Isaiah 58.
- *Amidah* Prayer for Sabbath afternoon, selection.
- Yehuda Halevi, "Sabbath Peace," in *Selected Poems of Jehudah Halevi* (1974), pp. 141-142.
- Commentary of Franz Rosenzweig in *Ninety-Two Poems and Hymns of Yehuda Halevi* (2000), pp. 130-133.

Guiding Questions:

- What is the atmosphere of the Sabbath according to these texts?
- What is "rest?" How does that contribute to the atmosphere?
- What were the critiques of Amos and Isaiah in the 8th century BCE?
- How are those critiques reflected in Agnon in the 20th century?
- What, according to Halevi, is the relationship between the Sabbath and the work week?

Session IV

Love and the Spirit of the Jewish Sabbath

Readings:

- Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath* (2005), pp. 65-76.
Note: This reading can be found in the book, not in this reader.
- Mordechai M. Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization* (1994), pp. 431-439, 443-447.
- Yehuda Halevi, *The Kuzari* (Book III), 7-11.
- Yehuda Halevi, “Maiden Israel’s Sabbath,” and commentary of Franz Rosenzweig in *Ninety-Two Poems and Hymns of Yehudah Halevi* (2000), pp. 180-185.
- S.Y. Zevin, “And I Laughed Too,” in *A Treasury of Chasidic Tales on the Festivals* (1995), pp. 184-187.

Guiding Questions:

- What is the spirit of the Sabbath according to each of these texts? Compare and contrast.
- What does Yehuda Halevi think of the Khazar king’s rationale for the Sabbath? What do you think of it?
- What does Heschel mean by “Eternity utters a day” on page 67? Note that these are also the final words of his book.
- Which texts consider the Sabbath a human construct?
- How does Joe Lieberman’s universalist vision of the Sabbath compare to Halevi’s “Maiden Israel’s Sabbath?”
- Why did the Ba’al Shem Tov ask the bookbinder’s wife, and not Shabsai the bookbinder, whether they should have wealth or a son?

Session V

The Sabbath in Poverty and Wealth

Readings:

- Yaffa Eliach, “The Third Sabbath Meal at Mauthausen,” in *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust* (1982), pp. 172-176.
- Jonathan Sacks, “Shabbat and the Golden Calf: Reflections on the Great Crash of 2008,” in *Covenant and Conversation: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible. Exodus: The Book of Redemption* (2010), pp. 259-264.
- Daniel Gordis, *God Was Not in the Fire* (1995), pp. 106-107.
- Judith Shulevitz, “Bring Back the Sabbath,” *The New York Times* (March 2003).

Guiding Questions:

- What do you think is special about the third Sabbath meal?
- How can the Sabbath help us deal with these challenges of wealth and poverty?
- What are some of the challenges of our generation and how, according to these texts, can the Sabbath help us?