

## BJ Pre-Kabbalat Shabbat Meditation

Rabbi Sam Feinsmith – [sam@jewishspirituality.org](mailto:sam@jewishspirituality.org)

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### I. Kabbalat Shabbat, Psalm 95

אל תקשו לבבכם כְּמֵרִיבָה...

Don't harden your hearts as at Meribah...

### II. Rabbi Yehudah Leib Alter of Ger, *Sefat Emet, Noach, Rosh Chodesh Marcheshvan* (1872)

ושבת קודש כמו תיבת נח, שבימות החול טרוד כל אחד בעסקי עולם הזה, ובשבת קודש יש מקום לבני ישראל לברוח ולהניח כל זאת להסתופף תחת צל כנפי השכינה. והיא פריסת סוכת שלום (תפילת ערבית של שבת), כמו שהיה נסתר נח בתיבה, והוא הביטול לשורש החיות. שכל העולם חרב והיה צריך לקבל חיות חדש משורש החיים. וכן בכל שבת קודש...

The holy Sabbath is like Noah's ark. For we are all preoccupied with worldly business during the week. But during the holy Sabbath there's enough spaciousness to retreat and let go of our preoccupations in order to take refuge under the shade of the wings of the *Shekhinah* (loving divine Presence), which spreads a *sukkat shalom* (shelter of peace) over us. This is like Noah, who was hidden away in the ark, an act of *bittul* (lit. nullification, but connotes ego surrender) to the divine Root of our *hayut* (life force). For the whole world was being destroyed and needed to receive new vitality from the Root of life. And so too every holy Sabbath...

### III. Barbara Eve Breitman, "Spiritual Transformation: A Psychospiritual Perspective on Jewish Narratives of Journey", in Jewish Spiritual Direction: An Innovative Guide from Traditional and Contemporary Sources, ed. Breitman and Addison, 2006.

[The relationship between the weekday and Shabbat] has to do with the tension or balance between effort and effortlessness, willfulness and willingness... Willfulness involves the assertion of the individual to achieve personal mastery and autonomy; it involves the effort to plan, strategize, even attempt to control, and negotiate the complexities of living through assertion of the individual will over the mystery of life. Willingness involves a receptive attitude or stance, a letting-go, an opening to the Mystery, or, in the words of the Kotzker Rebbe, "letting God in." Rather than striving for the autonomy of the separate self, an attitude of willingness enables us to realize our rootedness in God and relatedness in creation.