



# SHABBAT HICCUPS

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*Jonah got the hiccups – and it’s Shabbat! How can he get his hiccups to quiet down? Everyone has a remedy...*

## JEWISH CONCEPTS

The word *Shabbat* (Sabbath) comes from the Hebrew root that means “to rest” or “to cease.” Shabbat is distinguished from the other six days of the week by taking a joyful break from the activities of daily life. It is meant to be a time of pleasure, a day when families and friends can set aside both their work and their weekday concerns, and spend time together in peaceful rest and relaxation.

In this story, Jonah’s prolonged case of the hiccups provides an amusing contrast to the family’s observance of Shabbat. Hiccups are completely involuntary—a sudden muscle spasm contracts the diaphragm, which causes a rapid intake of breath, which is stopped by the abrupt closing of the vocal cords. Together, these automatic actions cause the uncontrollable sounds of hiccups.

Observing Shabbat, on the other hand, is anything but automatic. Taking a break from ordinary life requires clear intention, as well as planning and preparation. But if you are determined to create a special time to rest and connect with the people you love, an extended spell of the hiccups cannot get in your way!

## USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Some of the rituals in *Shabbat Hiccups* may be familiar to your family, and others may not. All of these actions can be enjoyed in your home or community with children of any age. On Friday night, you can make your Shabbat dinner meaningful by:

- Setting the table with flowers in a vase and braided challah on a special plate
- Lighting a pair of candles at the table
- Expressing a spirit of gratitude through speech or song.

On Saturday, take a break from the world of work! Instead, spend the day resting, reading books, and playing games with your children. Then, as the sun begins to set on Saturday evening, your family might enjoy:

- Going outside to watch for the three stars that signal the end of Shabbat
- Inhaling the fragrance of cinnamon and cloves to remember the sweetness of Shabbat
- Lighting a special candle to signify the separation (*havdalah*) between Shabbat and the rest of the week.