

## FRIENDSHIP

### HOST INSTRUCTIONS:

- This guide is intended to be served on Shabbat.
- The language used for participants is guests. This is intentional. The deep questions asked assumes that the host is a friend and that the participants trust the Host and are treated as guests in their home.
- Likewise, the language used for the person leading the Shabbat is host rather than facilitator or leader. Yes, you are to guide the conversation but you should be as much a part of the conversation as you are guiding it.
- The conversations intended are intense and deep. It is up to the host to ensure that the atmosphere is casual but safe and encouraging towards participation.
- Questions posed are a suggestion. Not all questions need to be asked, nor do each set of questions need to be asked. However, the questions set with the main are connected to the theme.
- The host should encourage guests to open up facilitation and ask questions to the group as well.
- There are no time limits for conversation once the Shabbat dinner begins. Conversation should flow freely and not be impeded by time limits. Likewise, If there is silence after a question, that is okay. Some of these texts and questions may take time to process and it's okay to embrace this silence.
- Not all conversation should be centered on the guide. It is ok to veer off-topic. This dinner should be as social as it is educational and introspective.

**Serves 5 - 10 guests**

## Conversation 1 – To be served with the pre-dinner schmooze

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Start question once two guests have arrived. Continue asking the question to new guests/ inviting new guests into the conversation. Allow talking about the question to continue until max 10 minutes after the final guest arrives.

- **Who is your oldest friend?**

### **Setting the atmosphere – to be served with the pre-dinner rituals (Candle-lighting; Shalom Aleichem; Kiddush; Washing; Hamotzi etc. as per your custom)**

Inform/ remind guests that this dinner is not a normal Shabbat dinner - that it is meant to inform deep conversation about beliefs that many hold personal and can only be successful if people both share what is personal, and respect the personal that is shared. Further, that conversation is to be free-flowing and that questions are only a guide – guests are encouraged to ask their own questions based off of rituals, question stimuli, and the answers of others so long as it is a question for the whole table and not just individuals. Additionally, guests should also be encouraged to empower and make space for softer and more introverted voices without singling anyone out.

## Conversation 2 – To be served with Challah and Appetizers

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**Instructions:** *Allow a different person to read each text first then follow with the questions. Allow conversation to continue until the vibe peaks.*

**Stimulus 1** – *More than the Jews have kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jews.* – Quote by Secular Jewish thinker and cultural Zionist Ahad Ha'am

**Stimulus 2** – Edgar Bronfman – Secular Jewish Philanthropist

*'Shabbat, above all, underscores the idea that 'being' is as important as 'doing'.*

**Stimulus 3** – 'The Sabbath Lie' by Yahuda Amichai - Secular Jewish Writer

*On Friday, at twilight of a summer day  
While the smells of food and prayer rose from every house  
And the sound of the Sabbath angels' wings was in the air,  
While still a child I started to lie to my father:  
"I went to another synagogue."*

*I don't know if he believed me or not  
But the taste of the lie was good and sweet on my tongue  
And in all the houses that night  
Hymns rose up along with lies  
To celebrate the Sabbath.*

*And in all the houses that night  
Sabbath angels died like flies in a lamp,  
And lovers put mouth to mouth,  
Blew each other up until they floated upward,  
Or burst.*

*And since then the lie has been good and sweet on my tongue  
And since then I always go to another synagogue.  
And my father returned the lie when he died:  
“I’ve gone to another life.”*

## Suggested Questions

- What did you connect to in these texts?
- What did you find troubling?
- These three writers were secular Jews, meaning they didn’t necessarily believe in the G-d described in the Torah. Can you really appreciate Shabbat without believing in G-d or the story of creation?
- What do you appreciate about Shabbat?

## Conversation 3 – To be served with the Main

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### Stimulus 1 – Taanit 23a:15-17

*One day, he (Choni the Circle-maker) was walking on the road and saw a certain man that was planting a carob tree. He said to him, ‘How many years until this [tree] will be laden [with fruit]?’ He said to him, ‘Until seventy years.’ He said to him, ‘Is it obvious to you that you will live [another] seventy years?’ He said to him, ‘That man found the world with carob trees. In the same way as my fathers planted for me, I will also plant for my children.’ He sat and wrapped bread (ate his meal). Sleep came to him and he fell asleep. A boulder encircled him and he was shielded from the eye [of others] and he fell asleep for seventy years. When he got up, he saw a certain man that was plucking [the fruits of the carob tree]. He said to him, ‘Are you the one that planted it?’ He said to him, ‘I am the son of his son.’ He said to him, ‘It is understood from this that I fell asleep for seventy years.’ He saw that his donkey had given birth to several generations. He went to his home and he said to them, ‘Is the son of Choni the Circle-maker alive? They said to him, ‘His son is not, but the son of his son is.’ He said to them, ‘I am Choni the Circle-maker.’ They did not believe him. He went to the study hall and he heard the rabbis who were saying. ‘Our discussions are as clear as in the years of Choni the Circle-maker. Since when he would come to the study hall, he would answer all the questions that the rabbis had.’ He said to them, ‘I am he.’ They did not believe him and they did not give him the respect that was appropriate. His feelings were upset and he prayed for mercy and died.” Said Rava, “That is what [is meant by that which] people say, ‘Either companionship or death.’” Give me havruta or give me death*

**Stimulus 2** – *Best Friends, Right?* By Amy Winehouse – Secular Jewish singer songwriter

*I can't wait to get away from you  
Unsurprisingly you hate me too  
We only communicate when we need to fight  
But we are best friends right?  
You're too good at pretending you don't care  
There's enough resentment in the air  
Now you don't want me in the flat  
When you're home at night  
But we're best friends right?  
You're Stephanie and I'm Paulette  
You know what all my faces mean  
And it's easy to smoke it up, forget  
Everything that happened in between  
Nicky's right when he says I can't win  
So I don't wanna tell you anything  
I can't even think about  
How you feel inside  
But we are best friends, right?  
I don't like the way you say my name  
You're always looking for someone to blame  
Now you want me to suffer just cause  
You was born wide  
But we are best friends right?  
You're Stephanie and I'm Paulette  
You know what all my faces mean  
And its easy to smoke it up, forget  
Everything that happened in between  
So I had love for you when I was 4  
And there's no one I wanna smoke with more  
Someday I'll buy the Rizla, so you get the dro  
'Cause we are best friends right, right, right, right?  
Because we are best friends right?  
Because we are best friends right?*

**Stimulus 3** – Gloria Steinem – Secular Jewish feminist writer and activist

*"A good friendship is a conversation that never ends"*

## **Stimulus 4 – Ben Sira – Sage of the second temple period**

*“Question a friend: perhaps he did not say what you think, or if he did, so that he will not say it again.”*

### **Suggested Questions**

- Which one of these views of friendship do you connect most with? Why?
- What is the hardest thing about friendship?
- What do you value most in friends?
- Have you ever ended a friendship?
- Do you think the Jewish view of friendship is different to the secular view or any other view?

## **Conversation 4 – To be served with Dessert**

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### **Stimulus 1 – Edgar Bronfman**

*‘Questioning, arguing, and even outright rebellion is integral to Judaism...Even when the perpetrator is G-d himself, we are invited to stand up, to challenge, to question and even chastise’*

### **Stimulus 2 – Stephen Jay Gould- Secular Jewish Scientist**

*“Nothing is more dangerous than a dogmatic worldview - nothing more constraining, more blinding to innovation, more destructive of openness to novelty.”*

### **Suggested questions:**

- What are these quotes trying to say?
- Do you agree with Bronfman – Does Judaism allow G-d to be questioned, challenged and even chastised?
- What troubles you about Judaism and why?
- In what ways do you wrestle with your Jewish identity?
- What does it mean to you to be Jewish?

**Compulsory question – Did you find this Shabbat dinner helpful in articulating your Jewish connectivity?**