



# The Shabbat Effect: Jewish Wisdom for Growth and Transformation

Alan Morinis. Bloomsbury Academic, \$30 (192p)  
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Morinis (*With Heart in Mind*), head of the Mussar Institute, which provides educational resources on Mussar, a 1,100-year-old “Jewish personal and communal spiritual tradition,” explores in this actionable manual how keeping Shabbat can spark spiritual growth. Morinis sees the holiday neither as a day devoted exclusively to rest nor a “rote performance” of ritual; instead it’s a chance for believers to enrich their spirituality by cultivating virtues, or “middot,” such as joy and trust. For example, readers can hone their sense of “sufficiency,” or, loosely, contentment (the Hebrew *histapkut*), by identifying “one activity in your routine that you tend to pursue with relentlessness” but that “really does not address any kind of basic need” and stopping it on Shabbat. As the habit slowly “loses its grip,” one’s spirit is freed up to connect with God. Elsewhere, Morinis details how readers can cultivate joy by approaching physical pleasures—like eating or sex—with an intentionality that recognizes the sanctity in the mundane. Bolstering the narrative with valuable prompts to help believers track their progress, the author meaningfully frames Shabbat as a lens through

which readers can zoom in on what matters, “scrutinize” their spiritual challenges, and carry the resulting lessons into their daily lives. It’s a lucid guide to reinvigorating an ancient religious practice. *(Nov.)*