**Title:** Conclusion of Shabbat, later nineteenth century

**Location:** Europe – Western

**Short description**

A postcard from the late nineteenth century of a Jewish German

**Detailed description**

​This is a postcard from the end of the nineteenth century with a picture of a family saying *Havdalah*, the ceremony at the conclusion of Shabbat. The family consists of a grandfather sitting in a chair, a father leading the prayer, and a mother, two daughters, and a son gathered around. The father is holding a wine goblet and spice box. The son is holding the lit *Havdalah* candle. A bottle of wine is sitting on the table along with a prayer book. The picture was painted by the German artist Hermann Junker.

The family seem to be affluent Jews as can be seen from their home and their clothing. The members of the family are dressed in clothing typical of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: breeches, long coats, pointed hats, and elegant dresses. The grandfather is dressed in what seems to be more traditional clothing and is wearing a *kippa* (a yarmelka); the standing man seems to be dressed in a more up-to-date fashion. The room is decorated with heavy wooden furniture, pictures on the wall, a mirror, and even what seems to be a sink with a small water tank. From the ceiling hangs a Shabbat lamp, also called a Judenstern (the Jewish Star), which was a traditional item found in the homes of Jews in Germany and central Europe at the time. This lamp included small receptacles for oil and a wick and a small bowl that drained the oil.

**Would You Like To Know More?**

**Shabbat**– Shabbat is the Jewish name for Saturday, the Jewish day of rest. According to Jewish tradition, this day commemorates the final, seventh day of God’s creation of the world. Shabbat is observed from just before sunset on Friday night until the appearance of three stars on Saturday night. The Talmud devotes an entire tractate to the rules of Shabbat and derives 39 types of forbidden activities. These include using electricity, writing, and other actions that are considered forms of creating. Shabbat is, instead, a day for family, community, prayer, and reflection. Traditionally Shabbat is ushered in by lighting candles, reciting the blessings over wine, *Kiddush*, and over the two loaves of special Shabbat bread, challah, and enjoying a festive meal. Shabbat is marked in the synagogue by a special additional prayer, known as *Musaf,* and the reading of the weekly Torah portion. The end of Shabbat is marked by the *Havdalah* ceremony. In Israel, secular Jews also enjoy Shabbat by eating Friday night dinner with their family and friends and spending time together in the countryside or on the beach. Most workplaces are closed on Shabbat.

**Havdalah** – *Havdalah*(separation) is the ceremony that separates Shabbat from the rest of the days of the week. It takes place on Saturday night after three stars are visible in the sky. Three objects are used during the ceremony: a cup of wine, a box of sweet spices, and a multi-wick candle. The *Havdala* ceremony includes blessings which relate to distinction: Shabbat from the rest of the days, the Jewish people from the rest of the world, and day from night. Blessings are also said over the wine, the spices, and the candle; participants smell the spices and often raise their hands to the candle, curling their fingers in order to create a shadow. *Havdalah*marks the separation between Shabbat, a time when people refrain from creating, and the rest of the week, and the shadow marks the first act of creation in the new week. At the end of the ceremony songs are often sung, including a song about the prophet Elijah who will announce the coming of the Messiah, and people wish each other a good week. Spice boxes have long been a favourite for artists. The Israel Museum has a wide selection of spice boxes from many countries over the years.

**Hermann Junker**– Hermann Junker (1838–1899) was a German painter who followed in the footsteps of his teacher, Moritz Oppenheim. Junker strived to show German Jews as an integral part of the overall society. He was less interested in showing the reality of German Jews of the time but rather in portraying an idealized and nostalgic version of Judaism.

**German Jews in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries** – After many centuries of oppression, segregation from the general population, and poverty, the German Jewish community went through major changes. Germany, together with other European countries, began to adopt liberal ideas about religious equality and civil emancipation. This was also the time of Enlightenment, and many German Jews received a secular education and began to integrate into general German society. The late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries mark the transition of the Jews to modernity and the integration of many into Germany’s cultural, scientific, and financial elite. Moses Mendelssohn is an example of an Enlightenment thinker who aspired to bringing secular culture into Jewish life. These social changes also brought about a transformation in the identity and practices of the German Jews, as exemplified in a famous saying of the time: “Be a man abroad and a Jew in your tent.” Due to these changes, this period saw both the foundation of Orthodox Judaism and the birth of the Reform Movement in Germany, a movement that aimed to adapt traditional Judaism to modern times. This period did not, however, see an end to the discrimination or riots against the Jews, as can be seen by the 1819 Hep Hep riots, tax legislation against Jews, severe limitations on marriages, dismissals from public office, anti-Semitic literature and preaching, more. This discrimination led to many Jews emigrating, in particular to the United States.

**Teaching Suggestions**

​​​**​**​**​​​​​Jewish Studies** teachers can use the postcard when teaching about the *Havdalah* service.

**Jewish History** teachers can use the resource when talking about the German Jewish community in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In **Art** lessons teacher can use the painting when discussing nineteenth-century Jewish German artists such as Junker and Oppenheim.

**Discussion Points**

**Observation**

* What objects do you see in the picture?
* Describe the people in the picture.  
  What are they wearing?  
  What are they doing?
* Describe the room's furnishings.

**Reading Between the Lines**

* This picture shows the *Havdala*ceremony.  
  What is Havdalah?  
  When is it performed?  
  What are the blessings?  
  What objects are used?
* This picture depicts a nineteenth-century German Jewish family.  
  What elements in the picture prove this?
* Following the Emancipation, German Jewish artists used their artwork to glorify the Jewish family.  
  Do you think that the artist, Hermann Junker, did that in this painting?  
  If so, in what way?

**Connections**

* Do you think this painting has a message? If so, what is it?
* Have you ever participated in a *Havdalah* ceremony?  
  Were songs sung?  
  Describe the ritual objects used.  
  What was the atmosphere during the ceremony?
* Look at the variety of spice boxes on the [Israel Museum's website](http://bit.ly/2rqhp8J).  
  Which are your favourites? Explain your choice.

**Creative Ideas**

* Take a photograph of a *havdalah* ceremony and share it with your class.  
  Do all families perform the same ceremony?
* Plan a *havdalah* ceremony.  
  Check the internet for various melodies for the ceremony.  
  What melody will you use?
* Make your own ritual objects.

**NLI Links**

[Time Travel Ephemera Collection](http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/digitallibrary/time_journey/Pages/default.aspx)

[Jewish woman cooking on Friday, Alphonse Levy, 1886](http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/digitallibrary/pages/viewer.aspx?docid=EDU_XML_ENG700344060&presentorid=EDU_XML_ENG&searchurl=http%3A%2F%2Fweb.nli.org.il%2Fsites%2Fnlis%2Fen%2Feducation%2Fpages%2Fresults.aspx%23%3Fquery%3Dlsr16%2Cexact%2CPrimary+Source%26query%3Dany%2Ccontains%2Cshabbat%26institution%3DNNL%26vid%3DEDU_XML_ENG%26loc%3Dlocal%2Cscope%3A(EDU_XML_ENG)%26sortField%3Dlso04%26indx%3D1%26bulkSize%3D10)  
[Hermann Junker, Sabbath postcard](http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/Hebrew/digitallibrary/pages/viewer.aspx?presentorid=NNL_Ephemera&DocID=NNL_Ephemera700343999&_ga=2.102055938.246469811.1531636705-2000630805.1528698667)