Recently on a trip to the Netherlands, I learned a Dutch word. A word that in some ways is untranslatable because it is ingrained in Dutch culture. But here is what I learned:

The word is *gezellig* (he-zel-ich)*.* I understand this word to mean many things including: comfortable, cozy, enjoying time with friends, and a feeling of pleasantness and relaxation. It was only after spending a few days there that I began to understand this word.

In a town called Loenen, about 60 miles outside Amsterdam, I sat with my sister and my cousin. My father was born and raised in the Netherlands and this trip was a beautiful opportunity to connect with this part of my life. With warm candles illuminating the room, snacks on the table, and effortless conversation flowing between us, I suddenly felt it: *gezellig.* A feeling of total contentedness and spaciousness to be present in the moment and truly take in the people and comfort that enveloped me. It was a familiar feeling for me, a feeling that for my entire life has had a different name; Shabbat.

For me, Shabbat manifests when time becomes suspended in the air. Often while sitting at a table with delicious food, cheerful conversation, and Shabbat candles burning in the background. This feeling of complete rest and cessation from the worries of work. When I am truly submerged in the moment of Shabbat I feel warmth, coziness, and sacred time.

In this week's Torah portion, Ki Tisa, amidst commandments for the tabernacle and the dramatic crescendo of the Golden Calf, we are offered this reminder (Exodus 31:16-17):

וְשָׁמְר֥וּ בְנֵֽי־יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּ֑ת לַעֲשׂ֧וֹת אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּ֛ת לְדֹרֹתָ֖ם בְּרִ֥ית עוֹלָֽם׃

בֵּינִ֗י וּבֵין֙ בְּנֵ֣י יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל א֥וֹת הִ֖וא לְעֹלָ֑ם כִּי־שֵׁ֣שֶׁת יָמִ֗ים עָשָׂ֤ה יְ-ה-וָ-ה֙ אֶת־הַשָּׁמַ֣יִם וְאֶת־הָאָ֔רֶץ וּבַיּוֹם֙ הַשְּׁבִיעִ֔י שָׁבַ֖ת וַיִּנָּפַֽשׁ

“The Israelite people shall keep the sabbath, observing the sabbath throughout the ages as a covenant for all time:it shall be a sign for all time between Me and the people of Israel. For in six days Adonai made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day [God] ceased from work and was refreshed.”

For some, these Hebrew words might be familiar. We sing these words on Shabbat and for me this song fills my body with excitement and preparedness for the day. But it’s the last two words of these verses that I am always sitting with; *shavat v’yinafash*, to rest and be refreshed. In Dutch, *gezellig*.

I found an interesting overlap of the two halves that make me whole: being Jewish and Dutch. This concept of *gezellig* resonates deep within me for it’s a practice I have been exploring my whole life with Shabbat. And so this Shabbat I ask you, what brings you this feeling of *shavat v’yinafash,* of rest and renewal, or as the Dutch would call it: *gezellig*?