

ENSOULING THE WORLD

SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS ABOUT SHABBAT AND SHMITA

A compilation of sources on healing the planet.

Integral Halachah Institute



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Preface: The Narrative

R. Hanna Tiferet and I were invited by B'nai Or of Boston to lead their annual retreat in the Spring of 2014. We knew that the coming year 5775, which is now in its last weeks, was a *Shmita* / sabbatical year and that we wanted to focus our Rosh haShanah and Yom Kippur services in some way on the sabbatical and jubilee years as they related to climate change and our relationship with the earth. My preparation began with a search for a Hasidic text for us both to learn.

On Yom Kippur and again in Montreal during Sukkot, I spoke about the problems we have facing the reality of climate change, using the Book of Jonah as my starting point.

In the Fall of 2014, I began learning with Esther Azar. We wanted to explore the theological and mystical underpinning of both the concept of the sabbatical year and its practices and so I shared with her the Hasidic text from the *Netivot Shalom* that I had found the previous spring. This in turn led us to the primary source on which the Slonimer had built his teaching, as well as to another Hasidic text from the *Mei haShiloach* of Mordechai Lainer of Ishbitz.

After nearly a full year of study and preparation, we are offering the fruits of our learning to you. What follows is an edited version of the talks I gave in Boston and Montreal, the full text of the Slonimer's teaching on the sabbatical year, the full text of his citation of the *Ohr haChayim* on the Shabbat of creation, and the text from the *May haShiloach*. We believe it is significant that we offer this not at the beginning of the *Shmita* year itself, but rather at the end of that year, as the next seven year cycle begins. Just as the consciousness which is the weekly Shabbat needs to influence the six days that follow, so also must the consciousness of the *Shmita* influence the way we live on this planet over the next six years. There is every indication that these will be the years that determine whether or not humanity will rise to the challenge of climate change. This is the time when the values inherent in the sabbatical year will be tested by our choices during the *chol* or normal time that follows the *kedushah* or holiness of the sabbatical, and that precedes the *kedushah* of the next. The Torah warns that if we fail to observe the sabbatical years while we live on the land, then the land will expel us so that it can have its rest. For us, now, the land is the planet itself. And so, we will find out whether we will be able to share the next sabbatical with a planet which is healing or whether we will be marginalized as a species so that the land can regenerate. The choice is ours, and it is our shared prayer that we will rise to this challenge now, before it is too late.

Rabbi Daniel Siegel
Founding Director: Integral Halachah Institute
The first yearzeit of Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi 5 Tammuz 5775

Introduction

As this *shmita* year comes to an end, it is time to prepare for the next seven years. In our learning over the past year we were blessed to encounter teachings that informed and enhanced our understanding of *shmita* and its effects on the world. We have compiled these teachings so that we could create a resource for the next cycle so that *shmita* and its blessings can be harnessed in order to create the changes we hope to see in the world.

If we read the biblical text we see that the weekly sabbath, the sabbatical year and the Jubilee are instituted as tools to create a balanced, just society. Today we are faced with major issues surrounding climate change. According to Pope Francis in his recent Encyclical, climate change is but a symptom of a much larger issue.¹ A society that emphasizes consumerism and development without concerns for the larger picture alienates its members and leads to a world of wealth for the few and extreme poverty for the many. This is not a new concept for the Jewish world. In fact three times a day we are asked to recite the Jewish mantra – The Shema. *Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad* / Hear O Israel YHVH our God YHVH is one. In the following chapter, *Parashat Ekev*, God speaks of a just world. The Israelites are instructed to remember their past – remember that they were strangers in a strange land. Now that they are saved, they are responsible for those hidden in society. The stranger, the orphan, and the widow, we are commanded to care for them. We are commanded to create a just society. And then we are shown the consequences of not creating a just society. The land will not produce for us – the land will spit us out. If we are not convinced by the biblical text all we need to do is look outside our windows.

We live in a society that values things more than people. We shop at stores that provide cheaper price tags yet pay inequitable wages, allowing consumers to acquire more things but not providing livable conditions for their employees. And companies that monopolize the farming industry to create cheaper forms of produce. They claim to the world they are feeding more people while at the same time putting family farms out of business and tainting our food supply. The desire to be the richest and the most powerful leads to a country where the top one percent are the loudest and the majority become hidden. Those with the most needs are unknown to us. We are living out the Shema in its lowest form. We are creating that which we were told to protect against. The land is clearly spitting us out and now is the time to make the change. We must begin to recognize that the mantra of Shema requires of us to recognize our God potential. We can no longer call out to a transcendent God and pray for redemption; we must reclaim the power that was given to us when we were created in God's image. Now is the time for our voices to be heard and our actions to be seen.

Esther Azar, ALEPH Rabbinic Student

¹ Pope Francis, *Laudato si'* (24 May 2015)

Translations and Formatting

Our earlier Rabbis had Torah at their fingertips. Torah, Talmud, Midrash, and Kabbalah were all part of their minds' lexicons. To fully grasp their work it is important for us to recognize when they reference another text and to study that text, this will enable us to see the progression of their thoughts and catch the hidden meaning of their words.

Our learning began with the *Netivot Shalom* and took us on a winding path through many sources. We have tried to include most of the *Netivot Shalom's* references. Nevertheless, it is clear that the work presented is only a small piece of the *Netivot Shalom's* knowledge base and therefore could never include all points of reference.

As we studied the primary sources, we recognized that the secondary texts held secrets we would have never gleaned without delving beyond the quotation. This led us deeper and deeper into a world of Torah that is infinite in its scope and wisdom. Sometimes we were surprised to find that the texts that we originally thought were the point of reference, were just the tip of the iceberg and in order to deeply understand the *Netivot Shalom* we had to be drawn further in. In order to take you with us on that journey we have included texts that went further than the quotes that were referenced in the *Netivot Shalom*. These texts are indicated as footnotes to the *Netivot Shalom* and are included beneath it. Although they are secondary to the *Netivot Shalom* their messages can stand on their own.

The May haShilo'ach was not analyzed as deeply as the other texts but we felt the Ishbitzer's teaching to be an important addition to the shmita conversation. Recognizing that God is the true owner of all material wealth reminds us that we must place our faith in God and not in the illusion of security that appears from acquiring things.

We have formatted the texts as a chart with the original Hebrew text on the left and our own English translation to the right. Please recognize that all translation comes with the interpretation of the author. The secondary sources can be found within the chart. We did this for two reasons; first to make the cited source accessible in context and second, to make a visual representation of the layers of the texts and therefore something of the Rabbi's thought progression.

We would like to give special thanks and appreciation to Rabbis Elliot Ginsburg and David Seidenberg for their gifts of time to help us with translation, editing, and formatting. Their suggestions have improved this offering, while all errors are our responsibility.

We offer this teaching as an opportunity to delve deep into the mysteries of Shmita. What, at first glance, might have seemed an antiquated concept is actually a foundational teaching for our lives not only as Jews but as humans living on this planet. We found this learning to be a gift, an opportunity to reach deeper and deeper into the well that is Torah. We hope that you take from it the lessons that are meant for you in this moment and that we all inspire a deeper understanding of the world around us through the lenses of our Master Teachers.

Running and Hiding: The Book of Jonah and Climate Change

(edited transcript of a talk given on Yom Kippur afternoon in Boston and on Sukkot in Montreal, 5775)

I've become aware of an interesting difference between Pesach and Sukkot. In Eliahu Kitov's *Sefer haToda'ah /The Book of Our Heritage*, he says that it's customary for each family to eat together during Pesach, because each family has its own special traditions about what's kosher and what's not kosher. Pesach is family time when one doesn't go out visiting for meals.² Of course this works better when families live closer together and have a shared tradition about food. Today, especially in North America, we tend to do the opposite. We like to invite people from beyond our immediate families to our seders, including and maybe especially people who are not Jewish. Nevertheless, looking at Pesach as a more private, internal time, is intriguing. It is, after all, the anniversary of our national birth. We left Egypt at this season, this is when we became a people, and we used to count years beginning with the month of Nisan. Thus, when Solomon begins the construction of the temple, the date given is: "In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites left the land of Egypt, in the month of Ziv – that is, the second month – in the fourth year of his reign over Israel, Solomon began to build the House of the YHVH."³ This is our internal time, the way we counted when we were focused on our own history and development. Its sign is the gathering of families in separate locations.

With Sukkot, there is the suggestion of the opposite. In the Israeli film *Ushpizin*, I remember noticing how all the sukkot were out on the street. Given the permeability of the sukkah and the close proximity of sukkot one to another, there was no privacy and families intermingled, overhearing each other and sharing food.

There is also another difference between the two holidays. Both Pesach and Sukkot are one week long (since *Shmini Atzeret* is actually a separate holiday). If you look at the list of sacrifices for Pesach, it's the same every day. But when you look at the list of sacrifices for Sukkot, every day is different. On the first day, 13 bulls were sacrifices, while on each subsequent day the number goes down by one. If you add them up, there were 70 sacrifices over the seven days of the holiday.⁴ Tradition has it that there are 70 nations or nation stocks in the world.⁵ The indication is that we offered a sacrifice in Jerusalem for each one of the nations of the world during Sukkot. And there is some evidence to suggest that during the second Temple period there were delegations that came to Jerusalem from the neighbouring peoples and

² Part II, page 46 (in the Hebrew edition).

³ I Kings 6:1.

⁴ Numbers 29:12-22

⁵ More or less the number of the first and second generation of children of Noah's three sons (Gen. 10).

that this was the holiday in which we fulfilled a basic part of our agreement with God: it says in Exodus that “I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Me...so that you could be a holy nation and a kingdom of priests.”⁶ A priest has to be a priest for somebody. If all of us are priests, then who are the people for whom we are the priests? The peoples of the world.

This is very important, because in truth there are two overlapping missions to which we agreed at Sinai. One of them is to develop ourselves as a holy nation and the other is to develop ourselves as a kingdom of priests. We are to be of service to the nations of the world and we are not just about ourselves. If we take seriously what is written in the Torah about the nature of our practice, then we cannot practice our Judaism in such a way that when people look at us they say, “What is the matter with them?” Rather, we are called to practice our Judaism in a way that attracts the response contained in these verses:

See, I have imparted to you laws and rules, as the YHVH my God has commanded me, for you to abide by in the land that you are about to enter and occupy. Observe them faithfully, for that will be proof of your wisdom and discernment to other peoples, who on hearing of all these laws will say, “Surely, that great nation is a wise and discerning people.” For what great nation is there that has a god so close at hand as is the LORD our God whenever we call upon Him? Or what great nation has laws and rules as perfect as all this Teaching that I set before you this day? (Deut. 4:5-8)

In other words, we need to practice who we are in such a way that people will see in us a manifestation of a relationship with God that they also desire.

It is helpful to remember that God did not choose us to become a holy nation because we were better than everyone else. Rather, God chose us because if we could become holy then anyone could. Who were we? A bunch of stiff necked slaves who didn't know when they had it good. If we could be transformed from that into something better, then that's a model anyone can emulate.

This is an aspect of who we are supposed to be, an aspect that we have had a tendency to neglect, and for very good reasons. So much of what has happened to and around us during the 20th century has pushed us inward. In *My Promised Land*, Ari Shavit describes the early secular Zionist pioneers in Israel, those who set up the first kibbutzim, and the ones who began the Palmach, who first organized Jewish armed resistance. They could see that the Jewish people's time in Europe was coming to an end and this ending was going to be catastrophic. They didn't know what shape it would take, but they could see it coming. They also had a feeling that their experience in Palestine could equally well end up in catastrophe. They did things that had serious moral and ethical repercussions later but that seemed necessary at that

⁶ Exodus 19:4,6.

moment.⁷ Had we not responded to that premonition which became the holocaust by insisting that we had to have our own land, we might not be here today. We might have collapsed not so much because we had been killed, but from despair, from giving up in the face of such a momentous tragedy. What struck me is that Shavit does not condemn people in hindsight for making difficult choices at the time, even though it led to terrible consequences. What he does say is that we need to face and accept the outcomes of our choices without defending or justifying them.

That insight led me to another book and insight. George Marshall, a British environmentalist, wrote a book called *Don't Even Think About It: Why Our Brains Are Hardwired to Ignore Climate Change*. He was puzzled by how polls show that climate change is an important issue, yet we don't change our behaviour. He talked to researchers and to climate change deniers. He was really curious. What was most interesting to me is his recognition of how much environmentalists can learn from religious people about translating awareness into constructive behaviour.

Now, please hold this thought in mind while I go to one more place. Remember how God tells Jonah to go to Nineveh? Nineveh is the capital city of a non-Jewish nation. Jonah, unlike every other prophet in the Tanach, is told to go to non-Jews. Not only that but, as someone in B'nai Or in Boston pointed out, Nineveh is the capital city of the Assyrians, the nasty people who destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel and almost destroyed the southern kingdom of Judea too if it hadn't been for the reported miracle of all their soldiers dying as they besieged Jerusalem.⁸ Imagine that you get a call from God that says, "Listen, I need you to go to Mosul and tell the ISIS people that they have 3 days to repent." Would you want to go? Can you blame Jonah for not wanting to go? Jonah wants to run and hide. So he goes to Tarshish and gets on a boat and there is a huge storm and what does Jonah do? He goes to sleep in the belly of the ship. But if the ship goes down, it doesn't matter where he is, he's going to go down with it. So they are all praying to their gods and it's not working. They're looking around and they realize that there is one guy missing and he's got another god. Maybe that's the one who will get them out of this storm. So they get him and bring him up and what does Jonah tell them? It's my fault. Throw me overboard. The guys on the ship don't want to do it. In this story, all the way to its end, the good guys are all the non-Jews; the difficult character is the Jew. Finally they realize that there is nothing else they can do. They throw him overboard and he's swallowed by a big fish.

⁷ On a personal note, I remember a talk given by Prof. David Novak at Dartmouth College in which he argued that Jews did not have moral choices to make during the sho'ah. Every option was immoral (e.g. saving oneself could lead to the immediate slaughter of one's family while remaining behind meant that not only would your family still die, but so would you).

⁸ II Kings 17:5 and 19:35.

It is in the belly of this big fish that Jonah is able to face his fear. He finally sees that he has to look at his fear and face it. So he finally says, “Okay God. If you get me out of here, I’ll do it.” So he goes to Nineveh and tells them they have three days in which to repent and then he gets upset again, this time because they listen to him. Have you ever been in a situation where someone says, “That person is bad and will never change.” Then somebody helps him or her and there is a change, but you don’t want to believe that the change is real. Your relationship with that person depends on where they were, so you want to get them back to where they used to be. So it’s not so strange that Jonah doesn’t like it that the people of Nineveh repent. He goes outside the city and sits in the heat and is upset. God makes shade for him and then takes it away and he’s even more upset. God says you didn’t do anything to get this shade. Day before yesterday it wasn’t there, yesterday it was, and today it isn’t. But me, God, shouldn’t I care about all these people and animals that I actually created? And that’s the end of the book. It just ends.

I published a teaching of Reb Zalman’s called “Yom Kippur Kattan and the Cycles of T’shuvah.” Yom Kippur Kattan, the mini Yom Kippur, is the day before Rosh Chodesh and some people like to fast and treat it as a day for repenting. What Reb Zalman talks about is that in the dark moment before the new moon, the darkest moment, is when you can go inside and find the most difficult place inside of you. It’s best to do that with a friend because you need a friend to see it and to reassure you when you look at it. But you have to do that. What Mitchell points out in the climate change book is that this is one of those places for us. It’s not just somebody else who is creating climate change. We’re all doing it. We’re all a part of it. Everything we do contributes to it. So it’s very, very hard to face it as a reality and it shows you why, even to say “What about your children and grandchildren?” is not enough to get us to make changes. One of the reasons for this is that providing the information is not enough. He suggests one way to understand what effects change is to look at what makes religions successful. To learn this, it doesn’t matter whether their creeds are right or wrong; what matters is to pay attention to why religions are growing and becoming more powerful in our world.

What are those things which religion provides and which help make it so successful?⁹

- Community: We offer support, providing places for people to feel safe and cared for. Community also means shared experiences, particularly those of communal prayer and sharing food. Most of us know the short summary of Jewish holidays: “They tried to

⁹ This list is a combination of the examples found in Marshall’s book and what was generated by participants in the session in Montreal in the Fall of 2014.

kill us; we won; let's eat!" But this, in its way, is true even of Yom Kippur which, in so many of our communities today, ends with a shared breaking of the fast.

- Faith: We provide a connection to something beyond our limited selves and ideals to which we can aspire. Studies show, for example, that people in the military find that one of its attractions is that connection to an ideal which is larger than themselves. They are defending democracy, protecting loved ones at home, and totally dependent on the unit to which they belong. Religion offers much of the same though, in theory at least, without the frame of war and bloodshed. This identification with something bigger than ourselves provides a higher purpose for our lives.

- Explanations/Answers: While Judaism is more focused on refining the questions, we do provide some sense of grounding, a certainty that we are grounded in something. This in turn sustains hope for a better future.

- Community Standards, Feedback and Forgiveness: A participant in a religious community is expected to embody what that community holds as the ideal person. Recognizing the difficulties of actualizing this aspiration, community members will provide help and feedback. Further, one can "confess" the inevitable periodic failures and receive forgiveness from the community and in the eyes of God. Thus, while people are held accountable for their behaviour, they are also given second chances.

As I got older, I began to wonder what the meaning of Yom Kippur was. I realized that I was about to atone for the same sins I atoned for last year and the year before and the year before that. If I kept making the same mistakes, what was the purpose in atoning for them and promising never to do them again when I knew I would?¹⁰ Why don't I just surrender to the knowledge that I'm never going to stop this behaviour? And then I noticed that if I expanded the time frame to cover a ten year period, I could see little incremental changes. Something positive does happen when I acknowledge my shortcomings and am open to being forgiven. Each time I go through this exercise, I always get the feeling that I do get another chance.

If this were not so, then why do we plan the break fast in advance? If we are really acknowledging the severity of our mistakes, then being forgiven and getting another chance is not a guarantee. Yet we know, from long experience, that we will get at least some short time after Yom Kippur to put new ways of living into practice. I love that part of the *chatimah* / closure in the Yom Kippur amidah which reads, "YAH, forgiving and pardoning sovereign, **who yearly forgives our transgressions and those of all Israel**, allowing us to enter the new

¹⁰ Years ago, I learned from Reb Zalman that R. Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev used to have the following conversation with himself as he confessed before going to sleep: "Levi Yitzchak, that was a terrible thing you did today." "Levi Yitzchak knows this and promises never to do it again." "But Levi Yitzchak, that's what you said last night." "Levi Yitzchak knows this, but tonight he really means it!"

year with a clean slate.”¹¹ Every year God forgives our sins and we forgive each other. And without that forgiveness, how could we survive? As our tradition has taught, God originally wanted to create the world using only *middat ha-din*, the attribute of justice or simple cause and effect symbolized by Elohim, the name of God used exclusively in the first chapter of Genesis. But God saw that the world could never survive this way and, in chapter two, introduced the name YHVH which traditionally stands for the attribute of compassion. For if the world was founded only on justice or karma, then the moment I do something wrong I would have to suffer the consequences, since there can be no taking back of what has already left. If I hurt someone, then s/he will go and transfer that hurt onto someone else and the repercussions cannot be controlled or reversed. So of all the things that religion and religious communities offer, the most important is that of compassion and forgiveness. Even though forgiveness can't really change this objectively, nevertheless the offer and its acceptance somehow do affect reality, allowing us to rebuild our relationship in a way which can make it even closer than it was.

What follows is that the scientific and religious communities need to learn from one another. It is time to put an end to the conflict that has existed between them since the time of Galileo and for each to talk to the other from the most developed places within each community. Much of the difficulty from the side of the scientific community has been pitting the most sophisticated scientific understandings against the most simplistic understandings of religion and God. From my vantage point, it seems that astrophysicists, cosmologists, mathematicians, and other scientists experience the universe in ways that are similar to those of both pre-modern and contemporary mystics and a conversation between the two communities at that level of shared sophistication would bridge the gap between the scientific data and the moral imperatives which flow from them.

We Jews in particular have something to contribute to this conversation, because we have this conviction that we matter in the world even though there are so few of us. We have this very strong sense that each individual person really matters. This is a conviction that we have shared with other religions and which seems to be borne out by history. It matters less how many we are, it matters more what we do and the extent to which we are prepared to live out the ideals we profess in the details of our behaviour.

I heard this confirmed in an interview with Seth Godin. He said that the New York Times best seller list should be scrapped. What matters is not how **many** people read your book, but how many people read it **deeply**. It's not how many people come to your classes, it's how affected the people who come are. That's what really matters. We have to stop playing the game of numbers; we should start playing the game of significance.

¹¹ From *Machzor Kol Koreh*; translation mine.

This is the way we Jews have actually played the game of life for most of our history. Who are we but people who have lived in community, who use ethical and moral aspirational teaching (Torah) to be the way in which we cement our relationships and which allows us to enjoy each other's company even when we see each other every week over a period of generations. Remember that most people didn't move around that much until recently. The issue is not about how many, but how intensely. We Jews are sitting on an amazing treasure chest of techniques, of practice, of history, of faith, of forgiveness, a huge treasure chest of things which can be so helpful if only we can renew, revitalize, and share them. And, while I don't know how that happens exactly, or even that it will happen, I do know that it's very important that we try. This is what Jewish Renewal has been trying to do from its beginning, namely the effort to renew our Judaism in a universal context. Instead of saying that if you're not going to be a good Jew in the sense of being halachically observant in the classical way, you're going to be punished for it, we're saying that the real reason to be a good Jew is that this is a wonderful way to be a good human being. And we need these wonderful kind of human beings in the world in order to help us play our part in moving through this difficult moment.

Remember how Ari Shavit pointed out that the people who started military training for the yishuv really did think that there was a good possibility that the Jewish people was going to be annihilated. The scenario was that Hitler was already in power and they took him at his word. They knew the Germans were fomenting Arab hatred of them. Therefore, if the Germans had come through North Africa, through Egypt, and then invaded Palestine and Arabs had joined them, it was possible that both the entire European Jewish community would disappear and so would the yishuv. Their response was to say that we are going to do whatever we can to avoid that reality. And if we can't, we're going to go down having made the best possible effort.

I take inspiration from that today. What we face today is not the same as before, because it's now not only about us but about everybody, including us. It's not about having to go and have an "us against them" war. But it is about saying that we are in a very precarious situation as human beings and what we need to do is figure out what are the possible choices and behaviours that might get us through this. They may not. But let's at least make an honest, strong effort to discover what possibilities there are, aspire to them, and change our lives so that we will actually start living them. And, as the passage in Deuteronomy says, we need to model those behaviours in public so that people will feel empowered to do the same. That's the inspiration we need to take from that dark time in the previous century. And, as both Shavit

and Marshall say in their different ways, we need to face that darkness squarely, recognize that climate change is already happening, draw the necessary conclusions, and change our priorities accordingly.¹²

The truth is that looking squarely at climate change is hard. While I can talk about it easily, I find it just as hard as anyone to change my behaviours and priorities. When I gave this talk, I had flown from Victoria, BC to Boston; from Boston to DC; from DC to Montreal; from Montreal to Regina; and from Regina back to Victoria. I said to a friend in Vancouver that at least I put four stops on this trip. He replied that this is true, but your carbon footprint is heaviest on the take off. I had seven takeoffs on this trip and six of them were jets, whose carbon footprint is greater than propellor planes. I can rationalize, hoping that by virtue of this trip there will be changes made in all of us that will make us stronger, more daring and thereby justify it. To be honest, I'm not sure that works. What I'm really saying to us all that I write not as the rabbi or priest from on high, but as one human being wrestling with the same issues as everyone else.

I hope that this helps us. Don't forget the forgiveness part. Don't forget it because we make mistakes, we do our best, we fall short, we ask for forgiveness. We pick ourselves up and we make another effort. That's one of the places that we need to go as a Jewish people and as a Jewish renewal community.

In the words of Psalm 27:

שְׁמַע ה' קוֹלִי אֶקְרָא וְחַנּוּנִי יַעֲנֵנִי

Listen, YAH, to the sound of my cry and, being kind, answer me.

¹² I am editing this talk in late June, 2015. As I write, the drought which now runs the entire length of the North American Pacific coast, is creating not only a water supply crisis. There are wildfires burning up and down the entire coast at a rate which is exhausting firefighting budgets months earlier than "normal." There is a growing chance that certain species of marine mammals will become extinct due to human activity and our food supply is at risk.

Netivot Shalom

<p>א ויִדְבַר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בְּהַר סִינַי לֵאמֹר: ב דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם כִּי תָבֹאוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אָנִי נֹתֵן לָכֶם וְשָׁבַתָּה הָאָרֶץ שְׁבֹת לַיהוָה: ג שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים תִּזְרַע שְׂדֶךְ וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים תִּזְמַר כְּרֶמֶךְ וְאָסַפְתָּ אֶת־תְּבוּאָתָה: ד וּבִשְׁנֵה הַשְּׁבִיעִית שְׁבֹת שְׁבֹתוֹן יִהְיֶה לָאָרֶץ שְׁבֹת לַיהוָה.</p> <p>When you enter the land that I assign to you, the land shall observe a Sabbath of the Lord. Six years you may sow your field and six years you may prune your vineyard and gather in the yield. But in the seventh year the land shall have a Sabbath of complete rest, a Sabbath of the Lord.</p>	
<p>נתיבות שלום: בהר</p>	<p><i>Netivot Shalom: Behar</i></p>
<p>ברש"י בשם תו"כ שבת לה' לשם ה' כמו שנאמר בשבת בראשית שבת לה'. ובזוה"ק (ח"ג קח.) איתא, ושבתה הארץ שבת לה', שבת לה' ממש, ויש לבאר הכוונה בזה. ובעצם הפסוק צ"ב מדוע בתחילה נאמר "כי תבאו אל הארץ ושבתה הארץ שבת לה', שהיל"ל (היה לו לומר) מקודם שש שנים תזרע שדך וגו' ואח"כ ושבתה הארץ שבת לה', שהרי כך הוא הסדר.</p>	<p><i>Rashi, citing Midrash Torat Kohanim,</i> says that “a Sabbath of the Lord” means for the sake of God’s name, as it says concerning the Sabbath in Genesis. Further, the Zohar says that this is a Sabbath for God, truly for God, and this needs explanation. In fact, the verse itself needs explanation, for why does it begin by saying, “when you come to the land, then the land should rest, a rest for God”. Shouldn’t it say first that six years you seed your field... and then talk about the Sabbath, which would be the actual progression?</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">ובזוה"ק (ח"ג קה).</p> <p>ת"ח כיון דעאלו ישראל לארעא לא אשתכחו בה דינין תתאין וכ"י הות בה בנייהא על כנפי דכרובים כמה דאתמר דכתיב (ישעיה א) צדק ילין בה, כדין הוות לה נייחא מכלא דהא ישראל לא ניימין עד דמקרבי קרבנא דבין הערבים ואסתליקו דינין, ועולה הוה אתוקד על מדבחה וכדין הוה לה נייחא מכלא ולא אשתכח אלא אתתא בבעלה הדא הוא דכתיב כי תבואו וגו', ושבתה הארץ נייחא ודאי; ושבתה הארץ שבת ליי', שבת ליי' ממש.</p>	<p>Zohar (3:108a)</p> <p>Come and See: After Israel entered the land, they did not find there the lower judgements.</p> <p>And the assembly of Israel (<i>Shekhinah</i>) was in her (the land) at rest on the wings of the cherubim. As it is written “justice rests upon her” (<i>Isaiah 1:21</i>)</p> <p>And it is then that she has rest from it all.</p> <p>For Israel did not sleep until they sacrificed the sacrifice at twilight, when judgments disappear and the <i>olah</i> is burning on the altar, and this is when she has rest from it all.</p> <p>And all you can find is a woman with her husband. This is written “when they enter the land...”</p> <p>the land rested- a real rest-</p> <p>“and the land rested...a rest for God” Rest for God — precisely.</p>
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<p>וכעין זה יש להקשות גם לגבי שבת, דכ' "זכור את יום השבת לקדשו ששת ימים תעבוד ועשית כל מלאכתך וביום השביעי שבת לה' אלקיך," שהקדים זכור את יום השבת לששת ימים תעבוד, ולכאורה הרי הסדר הוא להיפך מקודם ששת ימים תעבוד ואח"כ בא שבת היום השביעי .</p> <p>וכן צ"ב מה שחוזר ונשנה כאן ענין שבת, ובשנה השביעית שבת שבתון יהיה לארץ שבת לה', ומשמע שכל מצות שמייטה מיוסדת על ענין שבת ומה ענין זל"ז.</p>	<p>In this vein, we can also raise this concern with regard to Shabbat. It's written, “Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God.”</p> <p>It begins with remembering the Sabbath day and proceeds to working on six days, shouldn't the order be reversed; the six days of work precede the Sabbath rest.</p> <p>Further, we also need to clarify why the Shabbat day is linked to the sabbatical year implying a powerful connection between the two in which all of the sabbatical year depends on the Sabbath day and what is the connection between those ideas?</p>
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וי"ל הענין. והנה שבת היא תכלית הבריאה, כמ"ש בתפלה "אתה קדשת את יום השביעי לשמך תכלית מעשה שמים וארץ", והאור החיים הק' כתב (בפרשת בראשית) שכל קיום העולם הוא רק לששה ימים ובכל שבת מתחדשת הבריאה לששה ימים נוספים.

Here is an explanation. Shabbat is the purpose of creation, as we see in the Amidah, "You sanctified the seventh day to your name, the purpose of the creation of heaven and earth." The *Ohr haChayim* wrote that the very existence of the world is in six day intervals and every Shabbat the creation is renewed for another six days.

אור החיים בראשית ב:ג

Ohr haChayim Bereishit 2:3

אכן מצינו כי הקדוש ברוך הוא גילה הדבר במה שאמר (שמות כ) בעשרת הדברות
 "כי ששת ימים עשה ה' את השמים" וגו'
 הרי גילה כי בשעת הבריאה לא ברא ה' כח בעולם זולת לעמוד ששת ימים
 לטעם הנודע לו גם ידוע ליודעי אמת.
 ונתחכם ה' וברא יום אחד הוא ידוע לה' ובו ביום חוזר ה' ומשפיע נפש לעולם שיעור המקיים עוד ששת ימים.

We therefore find that the Holy Blessed One revealed the matter in what was said in the ten commandments:
 "Because in six days YHVH created the heavens..."
 What is revealed is that in the hour of creation YHVH did not create enough strength in the world apart from (the strength) to endure (for the first) six days for the reason that was known to God and to those who know truth.
And God cleverly created a special day known to God and on that very day God returns and showers the world with soul whose measure can sustain it another six days.

וכן על זה הדרך וזולת זה היום היה העולם חרב בגמר ששת ימים וחוזר לתוהו ובוהו וצריך ה' להכינו פעם ב' ובאמצעות שבת העולם עומד,

Therefore in this way and without this day the world would self-destruct at the completion of six days and would revert to chaos. And so God has to prepare it a second time and by means of Shabbat, the world can endure.¹³

¹³ Full Text for the Ohr Hachayim can be found on page 25

ועל ידה מגיע יהודי למדרגות הגבוהות ביותר,
כמש"כ בספה"ק שערי אורה, שכאשר אדם
שומר שבת כהלכתה נעשה כסא ומרכבה
להשי"ת.

וזהו פ"י "לאל אשר שבת מכל המעשים
ביום השביעי נתעלה וישב על כסא
כבודו," שע"י הש"ק נהיה יהודי
בבחינת כסא כבודו והקב"ה ישב על כסא כבודו.
ונמצא שש"ק היא כל תכלית הבריאה
שבה מגיע יהודי למדרגות הגבוהות ביותר להיות
כסא ומרכבה לשכינה.

By means of the Shabbat a Jew reaches the highest heights as is written in the "*Shaarei Orah*," that when a person truly observes Shabbat then s/he becomes a vehicle for and the seat of God.

This is the meaning of "To the God who rested from all activity on the seventh day, was exalted and seated on the throne of honour." By means of the holy Shabbat a Jew becomes the honoured throne on which the Holy One sits. Thus the holy Shabbat is the purpose of the creation through which a Jew reaches the highest heights to become the throne and vehicle for the Shechinah.

ספר שערי אורה-שער השני-הספירה
התשיעית:

ודע כי האדם השומר שבת
כהלכה, נעשה אותו אדם כמו כסא
למרכבה לשם יתברך ולפיכך
נקרא השבת מנוח"ה,

Shaarei Orah¹⁴ - The Second Gate- The Ninth Sefira:
And know that the one who observes the Sabbath appropriately, this same person becomes like a seat for the chariot for the blessed name and that is why the Sabbath is called menuch"ah (mano'ach hashem) the resting place of God.

לכן נאמר ראשית כל "זכור את יום השבת לקדשו"
ללמד מהי התכלית,
שהש"ק היא תכלית הבריאה
והתכלית של כל יהודי,
ואח"כ נאמר הדרך לתכלית הזאת,
ששת ימים תעבוד וגו',
שע"י שעובד ומתייגע בעבודת ה'
בכל ימות השבוע הריהו מתקרב ומגיע
לתכלית של שבת לה' אלקיך.

This is why "remember the Shabbat day to make it holy" comes first, to teach us the purpose, namely that the holy Shabbat is the purpose of creation and of the Jew.

Afterwards we are told the path to this purpose, that is to work six days.

By virtue of serving and tiring oneself in the service of God during the days of the week, one draws close and reaches the purpose of "Shabbat for YHVH your God."

¹⁴ Full text of the Shaarei Orah can be found on page 36

<p>ועד"ז י"ל בענין שמיטה, שהיא ג"כ בחינת שבת כאמרו "ושבתה הארץ שבת לה", שבת לה' ממש, שמצות שמיטה היא ג"כ כל התכלית והקיום של ישיבת ארץ ישראל, וע"כ היא נקראת שבת.</p>	<p>In a similar way with regard to the sabbatical year, which is also like Shabbat when it says, "the land shall observe a Sabbath of the Lord," precisely a Sabbath of the Lord. The mitzvah of the sabbatical is also the purpose and sustainer of settling the Land of Israel, and therefore it's called a Sabbath.</p>		
<p>וכל הבחינות של שבת ישנן בשמיטה, ע"ד דאיתא בזוה"ק (ח"ב רה.) "שבת איהו יומא דנשמתא ולא יומא דגופא כלל", כך גם שמיטה היא נשמת האדמה, הנשמה שנתן הקב"ה באדמה של ארץ ישראל, דבשם שיש בחי' נשמה במדרגות העליונות כך יש במדרגות הנמוכות, ש"ק היא יומא דנשמתא במדרגות הגבוהות ביותר ושמיטה היא יומא דנשמתא של הבריאה, של אדמת ארץ ישראל, אשר כל קיומה הוא ע"י שמיטה.</p>	<p>All the essential qualities of Sabbath are also contained in the sabbatical, as the Zohar says, "The Sabbath is a day of the soul and not of the body at all." So also is the sabbatical the soul of the earth, the soul which the Holy One placed in the soil of the Land of Israel. Just as there is a soul on the higher levels so also in the lower. The Sabbath day is the soul of the higher level and the sabbatical is the soul of the creation, of the Land of Israel, whose entire sustenance comes through the sabbatical.</p>		
<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="394 1105 873 1430"> <p>בזוה"ק (ח"ב רה.): האי יומא יומא דנשמתין איהו ולא יומא דגופא בגין דשלטנו דצרורא דנשמתין איהו וקיימן עלאין ותתאין כלהו בזווגא חדא בעטרא דרוחא יתירא עלאה קדישא.</p> </td> <td data-bbox="873 1105 1688 1430"> <p>Zohar 2:205a This day, is a day of souls and not a day of the body because the rulers are bound up with the souls. And all those the highest and the lowest stand in one pair crowned with the extra spirit of the supernal holiness.</p> </td> </tr> </table>		<p>בזוה"ק (ח"ב רה.): האי יומא יומא דנשמתין איהו ולא יומא דגופא בגין דשלטנו דצרורא דנשמתין איהו וקיימן עלאין ותתאין כלהו בזווגא חדא בעטרא דרוחא יתירא עלאה קדישא.</p>	<p>Zohar 2:205a This day, is a day of souls and not a day of the body because the rulers are bound up with the souls. And all those the highest and the lowest stand in one pair crowned with the extra spirit of the supernal holiness.</p>
<p>בזוה"ק (ח"ב רה.): האי יומא יומא דנשמתין איהו ולא יומא דגופא בגין דשלטנו דצרורא דנשמתין איהו וקיימן עלאין ותתאין כלהו בזווגא חדא בעטרא דרוחא יתירא עלאה קדישא.</p>	<p>Zohar 2:205a This day, is a day of souls and not a day of the body because the rulers are bound up with the souls. And all those the highest and the lowest stand in one pair crowned with the extra spirit of the supernal holiness.</p>		

<p>וכמו שעל ש"ק נאמר בזוה"ק (ח"ב פה.) "כל ברכאן דלעילא ותתא ביומא שביעאה תליין," כך מצינו בשמיטה בחי' זו, שכל ההשפעה והברכה יורדת בשמיטה כמ"ד "וצויתי את ברכתי." עוד איתא ששמיטה ממתקת כל הדינים, وهוא כמו ש"ק, (תרומה קלד.) "שכל דינין מתעברין מינה... וכל שולטני רוגזין ומארי דדינא כולהו ערקין ואתעברו מינה." וזהו שבת לה' ממש, שכל הבחי' של ש"ק ישנן בשמיטה, וכמש"נ "שבת שבתון יהיה לארץ" ושמיטה היא בחי' שבת לה' בארץ.</p>	<p>Just as the Zohar says about Shabbat, "All blessings, supernal and those below, depend on the seventh day," so we find this quality in the sabbatical year, namely that all guidance and blessing descend during the sabbatical as it is said, "<i>I will command my blessing.</i>" We also learn that the sabbatical sweetens all judgements, which is like the Shabbat day in which "<i>All holders of wrathful power, all relentless condemners are totally confused and pass from Her.</i>" This is precisely a Sabbath for God and all the qualities of the Shabbat day are also present in the sabbatical. As it is said, "<i>A Sabbath of complete rest for the land</i>" and the sabbatical year is the quality of a Sabbath of God for the land.</p>
<p>וע"כ הקדים הכתוב בתחילה "כי תבואו אל הארץ ושבתה הארץ שבת לה'," ללמד שהתכלית של ביאת הארץ היא "ושבתה הארץ שבת לה'," שיקיימו מצות שמיטה שהיא בחי' שבת של הארץ, ובזכות זה תבואו אל הארץ, ואח"כ נאמר סדר קיום מצות שמיטה "שש שנים תזרע שדך וגו'."</p>	<p>Therefore, the verse begins with "<i>When you enter the land that I assign to you, the land shall observe a Sabbath of the Lord,</i>" to teach that the purpose of arriving in the land is that "<i>the land shall observe a Sabbath a Sabbath for YHVH</i>", that the people observe the mitzvah of the sabbatical which is the Sabbath of the land and that through the merit of this observance you will come to the land. Afterwards it provides the method of observing the mitzvah of the sabbatical, namely that you will "<i>plant your seeds for six years, etc.</i>"</p>
<p>ועפ"ז מבואר משאחז"ל (אבות פ"ה) "גלות באה לעולם על ע"ז ועל ג"ע ועל שפ"ד ועל שמיטת הארץ,"</p>	<p>Now we can also explain what the rabbis meant when they said "<i>exile comes to the world as a result of idolatry, sexual immorality, bloodshed, and for not observing the sabbatical</i>"</p>

<p>וקשה דבשלמא ג' עבירות החמורות מוכן שבעטיין באה גלות , אך שמיטת הארץ היא רק לאו ועשה ואינה מן החמורות ומדוע באה על זה גלות. אלא הענין בזה שכל אחיזתם וכוחם של ישראל בארץ ישראל היא בכח השמיטה בחי' שבת של הארץ, בה תלוי כל השפע בגשמיות וברוחניות, וע"כ בעון שמיטה באה גלות והם עוזבים את ארץ ישראל. ואין זה בגדר עונש אלא כיון שכל הקיום של ישראל בארץ ישראל וזכותם עליה היא בזכות שמיטה הרי כאשר אינם שומרים שמיטה ממילא ניטלת מהם ארץ ישראל, כמ"ד "אֲזַ תִּרְצֶה הָאָרֶץ אֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתֶיהָ כֹּל יְמֵי הַשָּׁמָּה וְאַתֶּם בְּאֶרֶץ אֹיְבֵיכֶם" (ויקרא כו:לד).</p>	<p>(Pirkei Avot 5). It makes sense that exile could be a result of the first three heavy sins, but the sabbatical is “just” one negative and one positive mitzvah and is not among the most serious, so why can it lead to exile? This is because the whole reason why Israel can possess the Land of Israel is through the power of the sabbatical year, on which depends all blessings both material and spiritual. Therefore, exile results for the sin of not observing the sabbatical and the Jews have to leave the land. Nor should this be understood within the framework of punishment. Rather, since the whole reason why Jews have any claim to the land is because of the sabbatical year, loss of the land is simply a consequence of failing to observe the sabbatical as it is written, “And then the land will enjoy its sabbaticals all the time that you are dwelling in the land of your enemies” (Leviticus 26:34).</p>
<p>ולכך הקדימה התורה בתחילת הפרשה "כי תבואו אל הארץ אשר אני נותן לכם ושבתה הארץ שבת לה", להורות שזו התכלית של ביאתם לארץ והיא זכות הקיום של ישראל בארץ ישראל.</p>	<p>Therefore the Torah starts with “When you enter the land that I assign to you, the land shall observe a Sabbath of the Lord,” to show that this is the purpose of coming to the land and (observing the sabbatical) is the merit which establishes the people Israel in the Land of Israel.</p>
<p>ב. והנה הרמב"ן האריך לבאר ע"פ סוד ענין שבת לה', וכתב שש ימי בראשית הם ימות עולם</p>	<p>2. Now, the Ramban explained, at length, the matter of the Shabbat for God from the perspective of the hidden. He wrote that the six days of creation are the days belonging to the world</p>

<p>ויום השביעי שבת לה' אלקיך כי בו יהיה שבת לשם הגדול. כמו ששנינו, "בשביעי מה היו אומרים? 'מזמור שיר ליום השבת' [מזמור שיר] לעתיד לבא [ליום] שכולה שבת (ו) ומנוחה לחיי העולמים" (תמיד ז:ד). והנה הימים רמז לאשר ברא במעשה בראשית, והשנים ירמזו לאשר יהיה בכריאת כל ימי עולם.</p>	<p>and the seventh day is the "Shabbat for YHVH your God" because on it will be the Shabbat for the great name. As we learned, "What did they say on the seventh day? 'A psalm, a song for the Shabbat day,' for the future which is altogether Shabbat and eternal rest" (Tamid 7:4). Now the "days" hint at what God created in the beginning and "years" hints at everything that will be for all time.</p>
<p>והיינו ששבת ענינה לזכרון מעשה בראשית ותחילת הבריאה, כמד"כ "כי ששת ימים עשה ה' את השמים ואת הארץ וינח ביום השביעי," ואילו שביעית היא זכרון לתכלית הבריאה ל"מזמור שיר ליום השבת" ליום שכולו שבת ומנוחה שיהיה בסוף הבריאה שאז ונשגב ה' לבדו.</p>	<p>Since the concern of the Shabbat is as a memory of the work of creation and the beginning of its unfoldment as it is written, "For in six days God made the heavens and the earth and rested on the seventh," and the seventh is also a reminder of the purpose of the creation, of "A psalm, a song for the Shabbat day," of the day which is completely Shabbat and rest which will be at the end of creation when God alone will be exalted.</p>
<p>וכמאמרם ז"ל "שית אלפי שנין הרי עלמא וחד חרוב... כשם שהשביעית משמטת שנה אחת לז' שנים כך העולם משמט אלף שנים לשבעת אלפים שנה שנאמר ונשגב ה' לבדו ביום ההוא, ואומר מזמור שיר ליום השבת — יום שכולו שבת" (סנהדרין צז).</p>	<p>As the rabbis said, "the world functions for 6000 years and will be desolate for 1000 ... Just as the the seventh year is a sabbatical once in seven, so the world is in sabbatical 1,000 years in every 7,000 as it is written, 'On that day God alone will be exalted,' and it says, 'A psalm, a song for the Shabbat day' – a day which is altogether Sabbath" (Sanhedrin 97a).</p>
<p>וזה שנאמר בשבת ובשביעית "שבת לה'", ששבת בראשית היא זכרון למעשה בראשית שמכרזת שהקב"ה ברא את העולם, ושביעית שהיא כנגד יום שכולו שבת ומנוחה לעתיד לבא מכרזת כי 'ונשגב ה' לבדו ביום ההוא' (ישעיהו ב:יא),</p>	<p>Both the Shabbat day and the sabbatical year are called "Shabbat for God." The Shabbat of creation is a reminder of the artistry of the creation, publicizing that it is the Holy One of Blessing who created the world. The sabbatical year represents the day which is altogether Shabbat and rest which is in the future, for on that day will God alone be exalted (Isaiah 2:11).</p>

<p>ע"כ הם נקראים שבת לה', שהם יסוד האמונה ומעידים שהקב"ה הוא ראשון והוא אחרון, הבורא ומנהיג לכל הברואים, ובסוף יהיה ונשגב ה' לבדו.</p>	<p>Therefore they are both called “Shabbat for God,” for they are both the foundation of faith and witness that the Holy One of Blessing is first and last, the creator and guide of all that is created and, in the end, will alone be exalted.</p>
<p>וכעין זה יש לומר עוד, דהנה בכלל אמונת ה' הוא שהקב"ה הוא הבורא וגם שהוא המנהיג, וכמו שאנו אומרים, שהבורא ית"ש הוא בורא ומנהיג לכל הברואים והוא לבדו עשה ועושה ויעשה לכל המעשים. ושבת היא יסוד האמונה שהבורא ית"ש הוא הבורא, שהשבת היא זכרון למעשה בראשית שהקב"ה ברא את העולם בששת ימים.</p>	<p>In this vein, there is more to say. Included in the principle of faith in God is that the Holy One of Blessing is the creator and the guide, as we say that the Creator whose name is blessed is the creator and guide for all that is created. Alone, God made, makes, and will make all that is made. The Shabbat is the foundation of the faith that the Creator, whose name is blessed is the creator, that the Shabbat is a reminder of the artistry of creation and that the Holy Blessed One created the world in six days.</p>
<p>וענין שביעית הוא שהבורא ית"ש מנהיג לכל הברואים והוא לבדו עשה ועושה ויעשה לכל המעשים, וכמו דכתוב ”וכי תאמרו מה נאכל בשנה השביעית הן לא נזרע ולא נאסוף את תבואתנו וצוית את ברכתי לכם בשנה הששית ועשת את התבואה לשלוש השנים.” (ויקרא כה:כ-כא).</p>	<p>The focus of the seventh year is that the creator whose name is blessed guides all that is created and God alone did, does, and will do all that is done, according to what is written: “And should you ask, ‘What are we to eat in the seventh year, if we may neither sow nor gather in our crops?’ I will ordain My blessing for you in the sixth year, so that it shall yield a crop sufficient for three years” (Leviticus 25:20-21).</p>

Ohr haChayim 2:2

<p>אור החיים בראשית ב:ב</p>	<p><i>Ohr haChayim Bereishit 2:2</i></p>		
<p>ב ויכל אלהים וגו'. פשט הכתוב הוא שבא ללמדנו שלא תחשוב שעשה מלאכה אחרת אחר כך ולא הוזכרה בתורה.</p> <p>לזה אמר ויכל אלהים פירוש "כלה" מה שעלה בדעתו יתברך לעשות.</p>	<p>“And God completed...”The simple meaning of this passage teaches us that we shouldn’t think that God did other work afterwards that wasn’t mentioned in the Torah.</p> <p>To this it says: "וַיִּכַּל אֱלֹהִים" and God completed” – the explanation of “completed” is that (God completed) all that arose in the Blessed Mind to do.</p>		
<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td data-bbox="426 581 919 829"> <p>בראשית ב:ב וַיִּכַּל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:</p> </td> <td data-bbox="919 581 1661 829"> <p><i>Genesis 2:2</i> On the seventh day Elohim completed all the work that was done; and rested on the seventh day from all the work that had been done.</p> </td> </tr> </table>		<p>בראשית ב:ב וַיִּכַּל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:</p>	<p><i>Genesis 2:2</i> On the seventh day Elohim completed all the work that was done; and rested on the seventh day from all the work that had been done.</p>
<p>בראשית ב:ב וַיִּכַּל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:</p>	<p><i>Genesis 2:2</i> On the seventh day Elohim completed all the work that was done; and rested on the seventh day from all the work that had been done.</p>		
<p>וכאן שלל גם כן שלא עשה מלאכה אחר השבת בו' ימים אחרים והבן.</p> <p>אלא שיש לתת לב לאומרו "אשר עשה", שלא היה צריך לומר, אלא ויכל אלהים וגו' מלאכתו.</p> <p>עוד יש להעיר אומרו ביום השביעי משמע כי ביום השביעי עשה מלאכה וכלה אותה ואינו כן כי ביום הו' הוא שכלה.</p>	<p>And here we are rejecting any thought that work was done after Shabbat on the six days that followed – and understand.</p> <p>Rather we need to focus on the words “אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה/that was done” that appear unnecessary – It could have just said ויכל God completed, God’s work.</p> <p>Furthermore we must explain the words “ביום השביעי/the seventh day”, meaning (one might think) that God performed work on the seventh day and completed it, and this was not so. It was on the sixth day that God completed the work.</p>		

והגם שרבותינו ז"ל הרגישו לתקן זה ואמרו (ב"ר י ט)
וזה לשונם רבי שמעון [בן יוחאי]
אומר בשר ודם שאינו יודע וכו'

And also our Rabbis z"l felt that they need to clarify this ambiguity- "These are the words of **Rabi Shimon who said** "A being of flesh and blood that does not know".

בראשית רבה: בראשית י
ט רבי שאליה לרבי ישמעאל
ב"ר יוסי א"ל שמעת מאביך,
מהו ויכל אלהים
ביום השביעי?
אתמהא, אלא כזה שהוא מכה בקורנוס על
גבי הסדן,
הגביהה מבעוד יום
והורידה משתחשך,

אר"ש בן יוחאי בשר ודם
שאינו יודע
לא עתיו ולא רגעיו ולא שעותיו, הוא מוסיף
מחול על הקודש,
אבל הקב"ה שהוא יודע רגעיו ועתיו
ושעותיו, נכנס בו
כחוט השערה.

גניבא ורבנן,
גניבא אמר משל למלך
שעשה לו חופה וציירה וכיירה,
ומה היתה חסרה כלה
שתכנס לתוכה,
כך מה היה העולם חסר
שבת.

רבנן אמרי משל

Bereishit Rabbah 10:9

Rabi Yehuda asked R'' Yishmael the son of R' Yosi: I heard from your father-

What is (What does it mean) "God stopped on the 7th day"

it is puzzling. It is like he struck the hammer on the side of an anvil.

He lifted it up in the day

and brought it down when it darkened.

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai said – A human who does know

(the exact time) down to a millisecond will add from the profane (of the week) to the holiness (of Sabbath).

But the Blessed Holy One who knows time down to its minutest will enter(Shabbat) within a hairsbreadth.

Gnivah and the Rabbi's:

G'nivah says it is like an allegory of a king who created a bridal canopy drawing it and sculpting it and what was missing- the kallah (the bride) that would enter into it.

in this way what was missing for the world was Sabbath. (ie and God created the bride on the 7th day)

Our Rabbis taught that this is an allegory of a

<p>למלך שעשו לו טבעת מה היתה חסירה חותם, כך מה היה העולם חסר שבת ...</p>	<p>king who created a ring. But what was missing from that ring? Its seal. Just as, what was missing from the world was Sabbath.</p>
<p>ע"כ, עם כל זה תיבת "ביום" אינה מדוייקת. ולפי דבריהם פירושו הוא כאילו ביום, ובאמת כי דבריהם דברי אמת אלא עוד יש לאלוה מילין "וכפטיש יפוצץ:"</p>	<p>If this is so,¹⁵ the word “on this day” is not precise, and according to their words the explanation is “as if” it was in that day? In truth, since their words are words of truth (we have a problem). But we also have the (idea) that when God speaks – it is like a “hammer that sparks”.¹⁶</p>
<p>ונראה שיכוין הכתוב לומר על דרך אומרם ז"ל כי העולם היה רופף ורועד עד שבאה שבת ונתקיים העולם ונתיסד. והכוונה הוא כי ביום שבת ברא ה' נפש העולם והוא סוד אומרו (שמות לא יז) וביום השביעי שבת וינפש. (שמות לא:יז)</p>	<p>And it appears the intention of the verse should be understood along these lines, “because the world was unstable and trembling until the Sabbath came and strengthened and rooted the world on its foundation”. The intention here is that, on Sabbath God created the soul of the world and this is the secret of “on the seventh day God rested and ensouled” (<i>Exodus 31:17</i>)</p>

¹⁵ If the explanation of R' Shimon Bar Yochai is so, there is a problem.

¹⁶ גור אריה שמות פרשת שמות - וארא פרק ו

God speaks and the words break up into many pieces and continue to create even though God's part is complete.

<p>שמות לא:יז בִּינִי וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אוֹת הוּא לְעֵלָם כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבַת וַיִּנְפֹשׁ:</p>	<p><i>Shemot 31:17</i> Between Me and all of the children of Israel, a sign for eternity, six days YHVH created the sky and the earth and on the seventh day was Sabbath and God rested.</p>
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<p>הגם שחז"ל דרשו כיון שיצא שבת וי נפש (ביצה טז), אין זה אלא דרך דרש שדרשו מאומרו וינפש ולא אמר ונפש. דרשו כי נתכוון הכתוב לרמוז כיון שיצא שבת וי שאבדה הנפש.</p>	<p>Even though our teachers (in Beitzah) explained that when Sabbath went out we said - oy (we are losing a) soul. This is only a non-literal meaning since the pasuk uses the word וינפש rather than נפש. They explain that when Sabbath went out oy! the soul has been lost.</p>
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<p>ביצה טז. דאמר ר' שמעון בן לקיש: נשמה יתירה נותן הקב"ה באדם ערב שבת ולמוצאי שבת נוטלין אותה הימנו שנאמר שבת וינפש כיון ששבת ווי אבדה נפש:</p>	<p><i>Beitzah 16a</i> ...Reish Lakish said: God gives humans an additional soul on the eve of shabbat and when Sabbath ends the right hand grasps her (so she won't leave us)- as it is written שָׁבַת וַיִּנְפֹשׁ because after Sabbath “(oy) vey we lose a soul”</p>
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<p>אבל משמעות פשט הכתוב אינו יוצא ממנה שנתכוין לומר כיון ששבת פירוש בא שבת, וינפש פירוש נשפע שפע החיוני בכל הנבראים כי קודם השבת לא היה נפש לכל הנבראים.</p>	<p>But the simple meaning of the verse does not refer to the Sabbath going out. Its intention refers to when Sabbath comes in. The meaning of וינפש is an essential flowing abundance in all of the creations, because before Sabbath there was no soul for all of the creations.</p>
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וכן מצאנו לרבותינו ז"ל בספר הקדוש
 זוהר התורה (תזריע מד.)
 שנתנו טעם למצות ה'
 למול ביום השמיני
 ושלא לקרב קרבן לה' עד יום הח',
 כי הטעם הוא עד עבור
 עליו יום השבת
 ויהיה בעל נפש.

And so we find with our Rabbi's Z"l in the holy book
 The *Zohar on Tazria 44a*.

They give a reason for the commandment of God to
 circumcise on the 8th day,
 and not to sacrifice an animal to God until the 8th day¹⁷,
 the reasoning is that it is not until the
 Sabbath has passed over
 that he has a soul.

זוהר תזריע מד.

וְקָרְבָּנָא דָּא,
 כְּגוֹנוֹנָא דְקָרְבָּנָא דְבְעִירָא,
 דָּא לְה' יוֹמִין,
 וְדָא לְה' יוֹמִין,
 דְכָתִיב
 "וּמִיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי וְהִלָּאָה יִרְצָה",

בְּמַאי יִרְצָה.
 בְּמַעַבְרַ עֲלִיָּה חַד
 שַׁבָּתָא,
 כִּיּוֹן דְּאֶעְבְּרַ עֲלִיָּה חַד שַׁבָּתָא,
 כְּדִין יִרְצָה דָּא לְקָרְבָּנָא,
 וְדָא לְקָרְבָּנָא. אָמַי.
 בְּגִין דְּאֶתְדַבְּק וְאֶזְדַּמֵּן לְגַבֵּי הַהוּא
 שַׁבָּת,
 רָזָא דְּבְרִית קְדִישָׁא,
 וְעַל דָּא פְּלָא
 בְּרָזָא עֲלָאָה אִיהוּ.

Zohar Tazria 44a

This sacrifice (circumcision)
 is, like the sacrifice of an animal,
 this one (comes) after eight days
 and this one (comes) after eight days.
 As it is written:
 "And from the **eighth day** and beyond
 it is desired for a sacrifice"

(*Vayikra 22:27*)

And why is it desired?

Since it has passed through one
 Shabbat.

Since one Sabbath has passed over,
 now this is desired for a sacrifice. And
 this for sacrifice. To what end?
 Since he cleaved to and made ready
 on the same Shabbat,
 this is the secret of the sanctified
 covenant (circumcision).

And by means of this, all is in the
 supernal secret.

¹⁷ An animal may not be sacrificed until it is 8 days old.

<p>והוא שאמר הכתוב ויכל אלהים וגו' פירוש שכלה ה' באמצעות יום השביעי מלאכתו</p> <p>וחזר ופירש מה הוא מלאכתו שכלה, לא שהיה חסר דבר מעשותו ועליו הוא אומר ויכל, אלא הכוונה היא "אשר עשה" פירוש המלאכה שכבר עשה עדיין היתה חסרה דבר המעמיד ובאמצעות יום השביעי בו נגמר הענין, ובזה נתיישב מה שדקדקנו.</p>	<p>And given that it says ויכל אלהים וגו' the explanation is that by means of the seventh day God completed the work. (The completion happens through the creation of the seventh day.)</p> <p>Now the verse goes back and explains, what is, the work that was finished? It wasn't that some thing was missing from God's making creation, and concerning that thing God said "(God) completed". Rather the intention of אשר עשה-that was done the explanation is, the work that was already done was missing that thing that holds it all together up , and by means of the seventh day (the creation of the seventh day) the matter (of the work that was done) is fully completed.</p> <p>And this resolves the problem we were analyzing...¹⁸</p>
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¹⁸ Why does it say that God completed the work on the seventh day, we thought the work was supposed to be completed on the sixth day? (Shabbat itself becomes the insertion of that element that completes creation)

Ohr Hachayim 2:3

<p>אור החיים בראשית ב:ג</p>	<p><i>Ohr haChayim Bereishit 2:3</i></p>
<p>כי בו שבת וגו'. צריך לדעת כוונת הכתוב במאמר זה. ונראה לפרש לפי מה שכתבנו למעלה כי העולם היה חסר הקיום עד שבאתה שבת ועמד העולם. ויש להעיר בזה שאותם ימים קודם שבאה שבת במה היה העולם עומד וכשם שהספיק לחיות באותן ימים בלא נפש השבת היה מתמיד והולך:</p>	<p>Because the Shabbat came... We need to understand the intention of the Torah saying this. It seems appropriate to explain this according to what was written above. The world was missing the ability to endure until the arrival of the Sabbath provided its foundation. And we must comment on this: For what to do we make of the days that led up to Shabbat – what was the world’s foundation then? And if it was adequate for life on those days without the soul of Sabbath, why couldn’t it continue that way indefinitely?</p>
<p>אכן מצינו כי הקדוש ברוך הוא גילה הדבר במה שאמר (שמות כ) בעשרת הדברות "כי ששת ימים עשה ה' את השמים" וגו' הרי גילה כי בשעת הבריאה לא ברא ה' כח בעולם זולת לעמוד ששת ימים לטעם הנודע לו גם ידוע ליודעי אמת. ונתחכם ה' וברא יום אחד הוא ידוע לה'</p>	<p>We therefore find that the Holy Blessed One revealed the matter in what was said in the ten commandments: “in six days YHVH created the heavens...” What is revealed is that in the hour of creation YHVH created only enough strength in the world to endure for (the first) six days for the reason that was known to God and to those who know truth. And God cleverly created a day known to God</p>

<p>ובו ביום חוזר ה' ומשפיע נפש לעולם שיעור המקיים עוד ששת ימים. וכן על זה הדרך וזולת זה היום היה.</p> <p>העולם חרב בגמר ששת ימים וחוזר לתוהו ובוהו וצריך ה' להכינו פעם ב' ובאמצעות שבת העולם עומד,</p>	<p>and on that very day God returns and showers the world with soul whose measure can sustain it another six days. Therefore because of this way and the endurance of this the day existed. (and without this day) the world would self-destruct at the completion of six days and would revert to chaos. And so God has to prepare it a second time and by means of Shabbat, the world can endure.</p>
<p>והוא אומרו כי בו פירוש באמצעות יום זה</p> <p>"שבת מכל מלאכתו" ופירש מה הוא המלאכה - היא הבריאה עצמה. כי לא מהתיקון שהוא המעשה לבד שְׁבַת אלא גם מהבריאה וכבר כתבתי למעלה שהבריאה היא יש מאין והוא מה שנברא ביום ראשון בדיבור אחד והמעשה הוא התיקון אשר תיקן דבר יום ביומו ובאמצעות יום שבת משפיע בכללות העולמות רוח המקיימת עוד ששת ימים.</p>	<p>And God said (In six days...), because the explanation that through the means of this day (God) "rested from all God's work." What is the explanation of "that work"? It is the creation itself, For it is not from the establishment alone that God rested but also from the creation. And I've already explained above that the creation is something from nothing and this is what was created on day one with one word. And the action was that which was established day by day and by means of Shabbat God infuses all the worlds with the spirit that sustains them for another six days.</p>
<p>ולפי פירושינו זה מצאנו נחת רוח במאמר אחד שאמרו ז"ל (שבת קיט ב) כל המקדש וכו' ואומר ויכלו וגו' כאילו נעשה שותף להקב"ה במעשה בראשית ע"כ.</p>	<p>And according to this interpretations of ours, we find pleasure in a particular teaching in the Talmud (Shabbat 119b), "Anyone who sanctifies and says 'And completed...' It is as if they are partnering with The Holy Blessed One in the act of creation."</p>

<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת שבת דף קיט:ב</p> <p>אמר רבא ואיתימא רבי יהושע בן לוי: אפילו יחיד המתפלל בערב שבת צריך לומר ויכלו. דאמר רב המנונא: כל המתפלל בערב שבת ואומר ויכלו - מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו נעשה שותף להקדוש ברוך הוא במעשה בראשית, שנאמר ויכלו, אל תקרי ויכלו אלא ויכלו.</p>	<p><i>Talmud Bavli Masechet Shabbat 119b</i></p> <p>Rabba says Rabi Yehoshua son of Levi: Even if one were to pray alone on Friday night he must say “<i>veyachulu</i>” Rav Hamnuna said – anyone who prays on Friday night and says “<i>va-yechulu...</i>” the Torah considers him/her as becoming a partner with The Holy Blessed One in the act of creation. It says “<i>va-yechulu</i>”– Don’t read <i>vayechulu</i> but rather “<i>Va-y’chalu</i>” (and they, God and the person praying, completed)</p>
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<p>ודבריהם רחוקים ודחוקים לפי הנראה. מי שמע כזאת שיבא אדם וישתתף בדבר שכבר נגמרה מלאכתו? אין אחר מעשה כלום ובמה יעשה שותף. עוד, מה היא הפעולה הגדולה הזאת שבאמצעותה ישיג השגה זו:</p> <p>ועוד לו יהיה שיהיה מעשה זה גדול עד מאוד. מנין להם לומר דבר זה שהוא נעשה שותף.</p>	<p>At first glance, these words seem distant and forced. Who has heard of a thing like this, that a person comes and partners in something that has already been completed? There is nothing once the work is done – how can this person become a partner? And also what is this big act through which one can achieve this awareness.</p> <p>And also, if only it could be that this act is so great that s/he would become [a partner with God]? On what basis do they get to say that s/he becomes a</p>
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ואם לצד הגדלת השכר
היה להם להגדיל שכרו

"לחלק לו ברבים" (ישעי' נג)
ואורך ימים וגבורה ועושר וכו'
ומנין מצאו להאריך
לשון לצד עילאה
להשתתף עמו במעשה בראשית.
ולמה שפירשתי אמת,
יהגה חכם ודבר ה'
בפיהם אמת בטעם צודק
כי להיות שהשבת הוא המקיים העולם
כל ששת ימים
ואחר עבור ששת ימים
יבא שבת אחרת ויחייהו ויקיימהו
עוד ששת ימים אחרים,
ולך לדעת כי מציאות השבת
בעולם הוא קיומו
שמקיימים אותו כי אם אין מקיימים
שבת אין שבת,
ותמצא שאמרו ז"ל (שבת קנא ב)
**חלל עליו שבת אחד כדי
שישמור שבתות הרבה**
ואם אין שומר שבת
מה זאת עושה.

ולזה כל המקדש את השבת וכו'

פירוש מקיים ושומר קדושת ובאמצעות זה
ישנו לשבת
ומאמצעותו מתקיים העולם.

partner [with God].

And if this is about the greatness of the reward
they should have increased the reward
(as it is written, "*My righteous servant makes the many
righteous...assuredly, I will give him
the many as his portion*" (Is. 53:11-12)

and long life, strength and wealth...

So how did they decide to use such expansive and
supernal language to say

that the person becomes a partner in creation itself?

And the way I explained it shows that it is true:

A wise person gives expression and the word of God is in
their mouth with a reason that is correct.

Since the Shabbat is that sustains the world
for the entire six days

and after another six days pass

another Shabbat comes and rejuvenates and sustains it for
another six days,

and it is for you to know that the presence of Shabbat
sustains the world

when it (the Shabbat) is observed for if we don't keep the
Shabbat then there is no Shabbat (and therefore the
existence of the world is endangered).

And so we find (in *Masechet Shabbat* 151b),

**"We desecrate for him one Shabbat, in order that he will
be able to observe many."**

And if one was not to observe Sabbath, what would this
do?

(To this we bring the pasuk what we cited above)

"All who sanctify the Sabbath..."

The explanation is – by means fulfilling and observing its
holiness there is Shabbat.

And by means of Shabbat the world is sustained.

<p>מסכת שבת קנא ב תניא, רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר :תינוק בן יומו חי- מחללין עליו את השבת, דוד מלך ישראל מת- אין מחללין עליו את השבת. תינוק בן יומו חי מחללין עליו את השבת. אמרה תורה: חלל עליו שבת אחד, כדי שישמור שבתות הרבה.</p>	<p><i>Masechet Shabbat 151:a</i> A braita comes to teach: Rabban Shimon Ben Gamliel said: for a baby who is one day old- we desecrate for him the Sabbath, When David the King of Israel died- we did not desecrate the Sabbath. “For a child but one day old we desecrate the Sabbath”. The Torah says: we desecrate for him one Sabbath, in order that he will be able to observe many.</p>
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<p>הראת לדעת כי הוא המקיים העולם ואין לך שותף גדול מזה כדין וכהלכה. ולך לדעת כי מיום ברא אלהים אדם לא חסר העולם דבר המעמיד צדיק יסוד עולם שהוא שומר שבת...</p>	<p>Now you have been shown that this person (who sanctifies Shabbat) sustains the world there is no greater partner than this, truthfully. And it is for you to know that from the day God created Adam the world was never missing this foundational piece. The righteous one is the foundation of the world, when s/he observes the Shabbat.</p> <p><i>(The Ohr haChayim concludes with a chronology that demonstrates that there were righteous people from the time of Adam and Eve who observed Shabbat and thus sustained the world, even prior to the giving of the Torah.)</i></p>
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Shaarei Orah

<p style="text-align: center;">ספר שערי אורה - שער השני - הספירה התשיעית:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Shaarei Orah – The Second Gate – The Ninth Sephira:</p>
<p>ודע כי המידה הזאת נקראת זכרון, ובמקום הזה נזכרים כל בני העולם לכל מעשיהם, לטוב ולמוטב...</p> <p>וכנגד המידה הזאת נתן י"י יתברך לישראל סוד השבת, ויש לי להודיעך כיצד.</p> <p>דע כי שלושת הספירות העליונות, שהם כת"ר חכמ"ה ובינ"ה, מתאחדות למעלה,</p> <p>ובהיות הספירות נקשרות אלו באלו מתאחדת בינה עם שש ספירות שתחתיה עד ספירה זו הנקראת אל ח"י ונקראת שבת.</p> <p>ועל עיקר זה היתה בריאת העולם ששת ימים וביום השביעי שב"ת.</p> <p>והנה השבת הוא כנגד ספירת יסוד שהיא ספירת א"ל ח"י, ולפיכך נקרא יום השבת מקור הברכות והקדושות,</p> <p>כאמרו: ויברך אלהים את יום השביעי ויקדש אותו כי בו שב"ת (בראשית ב, ב).</p> <p>נמצא יום השבת מקור כל הברכות והמשכת הקדושה למטה.</p>	<p>And know that this attribute is called Remembrance, and in this place all of humanity's actions are remembered, the good and the worthy...</p> <p>As a counterbalance to this attribute God, the blessed one, gave Israel the hidden meaning of Sabbath, and I can explain how.</p> <p>Know that the three supreme Sefirot, which are Keter, Chochmah and Binah are united above.</p> <p>When these three Sefirot are tied together then Binah is unified with the 6 Sefirot that are below, until the sefira of El Chai, which is called Sabbath.</p> <p>And to actualize this principle, creation was 6 days and on the 7th day, shabb'at (God rested).</p> <p>And Sabbath is in relationship to the sefira of Yesod which is the sefira of El Chai.</p> <p>Therefore we call the day of Shabbat the source of blessings and holiness.</p> <p>As it is written “And Elohim blessed the seventh day and sanctified it” (Gen. 2:2)</p> <p>Within it is Sabbath, from all of his work, which elohim created (his goal was) to produce (Sabbath)”.</p> <p>And within the Sabbath we find the source of all blessings that draws the holiness down below.</p>

ודע כי האדם השומר שבת
כהלכה, נעשה אותו אדם כמו כיסא
למרכבה לשם יתברך ולפיכך
נקרא השבת מנוח"ה,

וכתיב:

"זאת מנוחתי עדי עד" (תהלים קלב:יד),
כאילו י"י יתברך נח על בני אדם ושוכן
עליו כמלך על כסאו,
וסימן: וינח ביום השביעי (שמות כ:יא),
הוא בעצמו נ"ח.

נמצא כל שומר את השבת כהלכה,
כאילו מקיים את התורה כולה.
ואמר הנביא: אשרי אנוש יעשה
זאת ובן אדם יחזיק בה
שומר שבת מחללו ושומר ידו מעשות
כל רע (ישעיהו נו, ב).

**And know that the one who observes the Sabbath
appropriately, this same person becomes like a seat for
the chariot for the blessed name and that is why the
Sabbath is called menuch"ah (mano'ach hashem) the
resting place of God.**

As it is written in psalms:

"This is my resting place for eternity" (*Psalms 132:14*)

It is as if The Blessed God rests on humanity and resides
on it like a king on his throne,

And a sign for this is: 'and he rested on the seventh day'
(*Exodus 20:11*) He, himself rested.

(meaning both: God rested on the seventh day, but
kabbalistically, divinity reached perfect balance in *Yesod*)

All who observe Sabbath according to the path,
it is as if they fulfill the whole Torah.

and the prophet proclaims: "*Happy is the one who does
this, and the person who holds on to it, (who will) guard
the Sabbath from the profane and guard the hand
from all evil.*" (*Isaiah 56:2*)

What does Shmita, the Sabbatical year, have to do with Mt. Sinai?

This question was famously asked by one of the oldest *midrashim* (Sifra Behar 1), and it has been pondered over for centuries. The question arises from the way the portion about the Sabbatical year is introduced in the Torah: "YHVH spoke to Moshe in Mount Sinai saying: Speak to Israel's children and say unto them: When you come to the land which I give you, the land will rest, a Sabbath for YHVH ... In the seventh year, it will be the Sabbath of Sabbaths for the land, a Sabbath for YHVH" (Leviticus 25:2-4). If all the commandments were given at Sinai, the midrash wonders, why is Mt. Sinai only mentioned here?

And the answer that we can give today is deceptively simple: the whole purpose of the covenant at Sinai is to create a society that observed *Shmita*. It is in a land where *Shmita* is observed that human beings will learn to respect the Earth herself, by remembering that none of us can own her. "For the land is mine," God declares, "and you are strangers and settlers with me" (Leviticus 25:23).

And if none of us can own the land, cannot sell it and buy it, then what we do own is ultimately not ours, then the difference between rich and poor is not "just the way things are," then a person cannot be owned and the difference between slave and master is not real and not loved by God. In the Sabbatical year debts are canceled, and the land is ownerless. In the seventh sabbatical year, the Jubilee, all slaves are freed (including those who did not exercise their right to go free after the sixth year of their own service) and every family returns to its *achuzato*, its original landholding, becoming equal to every other family.

Only in such a society, where "property" does not designate the right to use up what one owns, but rather a kind of fleeting relationship to what one cares for, can people learn the true meaning of justice. Only in such a society can people learn to share their wealth, nurture the poor alongside everyone else, relieve debts, end hunger and respect the fundamental human right to be free. The Sabbatical year was the guarantor and the ultimate fulfillment of the justice that Torah teaches us to practice in everyday life, and it was a justice that embraced not just fellow human beings, but the land and all life. The Sabbatical year was the ultimate meaning of rest, which we practice every week in the observance of Sabbath. It was the Sabbath of Sabbaths, *Shabbat Shabbaton*...

Rabbi David Seidenberg ¹⁹

¹⁹ Shmita: The Purpose of Sinai http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rabbi-david-seidenberg/shmita-the-purpose-of-sinai_b_3200588.html

The May haShilo'ach

ספר מי השילוח — פרשת בהר	May haShiloach – Behar
<p>”וידבר ה' אל משה לאמור כו' כי תבואו כו' ושבתה הארץ שבת לה'; והוא שהבטיח הש"י לישראל כשיבואו לארץ ישראל יהי לבם בנייחא כי ארץ מורה על הלב, וזה ושבתה הארץ, שיהי' לבם בנייחא: דבר אל בני ישראל כו' ושבתה הארץ שבת לה',</p>	<p>“God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai: When you enter the land (that I assign to you) the land shall observe a Sabbath to YHVH.” This means that God is promising that when the people come to the Land of Israel, their hearts will be at rest. Land indicates the heart, that the land will rest means that the people’s heart will be at rest. “Speak to the Israelite people and say to them... (When you enter the land that I assign to you) the land shall observe a Sabbath to YHVH.”</p>
<p>ענין שלש פרשיות הנאמרות כאן פרשת שמיטה ופרשת דרור עבדים ביובל ופרשת ריבית, והוא שהש"י מזהיר לישראל שלא ישימו בטחונם בשום דבר הנראה לעיני האדם שיוכל לבטוח בו, ואלו השלשה דברים שמיטה ויובל וריבית. הם בעולם, ושנה ונפש, כי קנין שדות וכרמים הוא קנין שיש לאדם בעולם אשר יוכל לבטוח בו,</p>	<p>There are three units here, one concerning the sabbatical year, a second about freeing slaves in the jubilee year, and a third concerning interest. God is warning Israel not to trust in anything visible to the human eye which appears trustworthy. For these three, the sabbatical, jubilee, and interest each inhabit space, time, and soul. Acquisition of fields and vineyards seems to be trustworthy in space.</p>
<p>וצוה הש"י נגד זה מצות שמיטה היינו שלא ישים האדם בטחונו בהם ויראה כי לה' הם, כי בשנת השמיטה אין לאדם שום הכרת קנין בקנינו, ויראה כי לה' הארץ. ונגד הבטחה שיש לאדם בזמן,</p>	<p>God set the sabbatical to show that this is not the right place for trust since during the sabbatical year the owner has no claim on his/her acquisition and it is clear that the land belongs to God. Corresponding to the trust a person places in time,</p>

היינו שיש לו מבטח שיאסוף הון מחיר הזמן היינו
 שיקח ריבית, אמרה תורה לא תקח מאתו נשך
 כי עיקר ריבית הוא שלוקח מחיר הזמן
 כמאמר הגמ' "כללא דרביתא
 כל אגר נטר לי" —
 אסור" (ב"מ סג:).
 ונגד קנין שיש לאדם
 בנפשות עבדים
 ויכול לבטוח בהם שישתמש בהם לכל צרכיו
 נגד זה צוה הש"י מצות דרור עבדים
 ביובל,
 היינו שיראה האדם שאין לו קנין בגופם
 וצריך לשלחם לחפשי
 וגם בעת היותם עבדים צוה הש"י שלא ירדה בו
 בפרך היינו שיבין שאין גופו
 שייך לו.
 וצוה הש"י אלו שלשה המצות
 היינו שנראה, שהעולם
 והשנה והנפש אין שום מבטח להאדם בהם
 רק ה' הוא מבטח האדם,
 ולזה סיים אחר פרשיות האלו "אני ה'
 אלקיכם אשר הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים לתת לכם את
 ארץ כנען",
 והוא שלא ידמה האדם בנפשו שנתמעטו השפעותיו
 במה שנאסרו לו כל הדברים האלה,
 לזה נאמר "אני ה' אלקיכם אשר הוצאתיך
 מארץ מצרים"
 פירו' הטובות שאינם בקדושה
 הם במצר וצימצום,
 לתת לכם את ארץ כנען היינו הטובות שהש"י
 ישפיע לנו יהי' בקדושה
 ונוכל להתפשט בהם
 כי הש"י ינחיל טובה

namely the certainty that of receiving full profit from a
 sale by charging interest, the Torah forbids this charge.
 The essence of interest is the taking of profit over time as
 the G'mara explains, "The principle of interest is that
 anything added to the purchase price to be paid later is
 forbidden" (BM 63b).
 And juxtaposed with the acquisition that a person has with
 the persons of servants, the confidence that they will serve
 all his/her needs,
 the Blessed Name commanded the liberation of slaves in
 the jubilee.
 Thus a person sees that s/he cannot acquire another's body
 and is obligated to set servants free
 and even while they are servants they cannot be treated
 harshly, thus being reminded that another's body never
 belongs to him/her.
 All three of these mitzvot were instituted
 so that it will be obvious that in all the realms of space,
 time, and soul there is no security other than that which
 comes directly from God.
 This is why these units conclude with "*I am YHVH your
 God who took you from the Land of Egypt to give you the
 Land of Canaan*" (Lev. 25:38).
 Thus a person should never imagine that his/her influence
 is in any way diminished by these prohibitions
 and this is why it is said "*I am YHVH your God who took
 you from the Land of Egypt.*"
 Goodness which is outside the realm of holiness
 comes in a limited way (Egypt);
 Canaan stands for the goodness which the Blessed Name
 sends within the realm of holiness
 and from which there is expansiveness
 for the Blessed Name will bestow goodness

<p> בקדושה נחלה בלי מצרים: ושבתה הארץ שבת לה', ענין שמיטה הוא אות לישראל כי לה' הארץ ומלואה וכמו דאית' בזוה"ק שיש אתוון רברבין ואתוון זעירין, אתוון זעירין הוא שבת כי שבת הוא אות לישראל כי הש"י הוא הפועל כל דבר ומפעולות אדם לא יעשה שום דבר, ואתוון רברבין הוא שמיטה כי כאשר יעברו שבע שנים יכרח להיות שנה שלימה שיתראה בה כי לה' הארץ, ואין לשום אדם כח פעולה רק לה' לבדו: </p>	<p> within holiness as an inheritance without limitations. <i>"The land shall observe a Sabbath to YHVH."</i> The sabbatical year is a sign for Israel to remember that the earth and its fullness is God's, as we learn in the Zohar that the Torah has large and small letters. Shabbat is small since the Shabbat is a sign for Israel that God is the only One who does everything and ultimately human activity amounts to nothing. The large letters are those of the sabbatical, for after seven years have passed there is a need for a full year in which to manifest that the earth is God's and a person's works are not really sustainable, only those of God. </p>
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Afterword

As we have learned, observing Shabbat and Shmita ensouls humanity, the earth and God. Without them, creation loses its purpose and we are left with an empty shell; a world that seems void of hope and hellbent on destruction. Although most of us do not live in agricultural societies, we too can reclaim Shmita for our technological lives by embracing ancient ways of thinking about the world. Recognizing that this earth is a gift and we are but visitors, is the first step. Rather than stripping the planet of its vital resources, it is about finding ways to give back. Whether it be returning seed to the earth through composting, lessening our carbon footprint by switching over to Green Energy, or simply air drying our hands rather than using a paper towel. As individuals we are fractals of the cosmos, even our small conscious changes can lead to planetary shifts.

Through his recent encyclical Pope Francis brought the religious significance of climate change to global attention. We, like Pope Francis, recognize that this is a religious issue. In his references to the biblical tradition The Pope reinforces the teachings of our Rabbis:

“...The biblical tradition clearly shows that this renewal entails recovering and respecting the rhythms inscribed in nature by the hand of the Creator. We see this, for example, in the law of the Sabbath. On the seventh day, God rested from all his work. He commanded Israel to set aside each seventh day as a day of rest, a *Sabbath*, (cf. *Gen* 2:2-3; *Ex* 16:23; 20:10). Similarly, every seven years, a sabbatical year was set aside for Israel, a complete rest for the land (cf. *Lev* 25:1-4), when sowing was forbidden and one reaped only what was necessary to live on and to feed one’s household (cf. *Lev* 25:4-6). Finally, after seven weeks of years, which is to say forty-nine years, the Jubilee was celebrated as a year of general forgiveness and “liberty throughout the land for all its inhabitants” (cf. *Lev* 25:10). This law came about as an attempt to ensure balance and fairness in their relationships with others and with the land on which they lived and worked. At the same time, it was an acknowledgment that the gift of the earth with its fruits belongs to everyone. Those who tilled and kept the land were obliged to share its fruits, especially with the poor, with widows, orphans and foreigners in their midst: “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field to its very border, neither shall you gather the gleanings after the harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner” (*Lev* 19:9-10).”

The *Netivot Shalom* and the *Ohr haChayim* recognize that the cycles of seven are a healing for the soul and a renewal for the next cycle. This message although largely ignored contains the secret to our ultimate healing as individuals and as a planet. Kabbalah teaches us that our goal is to unite the attributes of God to create balance. For Jews this happens through cycles of seven. 7th day of Shabbat. 7 weeks leading up to Shavuot. 7 months leading up to the High Holidays. 7 years leading up to Shmita and 7 times 7 years leading to the Yovel. As the *Sha'arei Orah* explains, on Shabbat divinity reaches the perfect balance in Yesod and it is then, that there is, a true rest.

With the end of the Shmita year approaching we must recognize that this is really a beginning. Just as each day of the week anticipates Shabbat, the next six years anticipate Shmita. This is the time to set the infrastructure so that in 5782 we can create that moment of pure balance so that all of divinity rests in Yesod, and all of creation rests in Shmita.

Reading the Pope's Encyclical, we can recognize that the world we live in today, guided by consumerism and disregard for the earth, is only a symbol of the deeper difficulties we face. Shmita calls forth a deeper justice and we must be its torchbearers. Let's make changes, speak loudly, and act consciously so that our next *Shmita* can truly reflect the Torah's vision.

כן יהי רצון