

Shabbat YITRO
 EXODUS 20:1-12

KEY KOSHI:

HOW does our "Remembering the Sabbath Day" keep it/us HOLY?
 WHY is the 4th commandment the foundation that empowers and elevates our faith?
 HOW does it help us find our place in Jewish Time?

P'SHAT...Entering the Timeless Text: HOW do we experience it this moment?....

20 God spoke all these words,⁴ saying:

²I the LORD am your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage:

³You shall have no other gods besides Me.

⁴You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image, or any likeness of what is in the heavens above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I the LORD your God am an impassioned God, visiting the guilt of the parents upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generations of those who reject Me, ⁶but showing kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love Me and keep My commandments.

⁷You shall not *b*-swear falsely by *b* the name of the LORD your God; for the LORD will not clear one who swears falsely by His name.

⁸Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy.

⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

¹⁰but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God: you shall not do any work—you,

or your son or daughter, your male or female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements. ¹¹For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them,

and He rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

כ וידבר אלהים את כל-הדברים האלה לאמר: ס

²*אנכל יהוה אלהיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים ³*לא-יהיה לך אלהים אחרים על-פני:

⁴לא תעשה-לך פסל וכל-תמונה אשר בשמים ממעל ואשר בארץ מתחת ואשר במים מתחת. לארץ: ⁵לא-תשתחוה להם ולא תעבדם כי אנכי יהוה אלהיך אל קנא פקד עון אבת על-בנים על-שלשים ועל-רבעים לשנאי: ⁶ועשה חסד לאלפים לאהבי ולשמרי מצותי: ס

⁷לא תשא את-שם-יהוה אלהיך לשוא כי לא ינקה יהוה את אשר-ישא את-שמו לשוא: פ

⁸זכור את-יום השבת לקדשו: ⁹ששת ימים תעבד ועשית כל-מלאכתך: ¹⁰ויום השביעי שבת ליהוה אלהיך לא-תעשה כל-מלאכה אתה ויבנה-ובתך עבדך ואמתך ובהמתך וגרף אשר בשעריך: ¹¹כי ששת-ימים עשה יהוה את-השמים ואת-הארץ את-הים ואת-כל-אשר-בם וינח ביום השביעי על-פני ברה יהוה את-יום השבת ויקדשהו: ס

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ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לעסוק בדברי תורה.
 Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'civvanu leasok b'divrei Torah.
 Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us to engage with words of Torah.

REMEZ...Living the Text's Truth: *HOW do we make meaning of Time....?*

v2 *I the Lord am your God who brought you out of the Land of Egypt, the house of bondage.*

IBN EZRA... Judah HaLevi, may he rest in peace, once asked me why God did not say here, "who created heaven and earth, and who created you." My reply, in brief, was that "I—Adonai" was enough for the enlightened; but the unenlightened need tangible proof of why they should serve.

v.8-10 *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: you shall do no work—you, your son or daughter, your male/female slave, your cattle, or the stranger within your gates.*

SARNA... The Sabbath is a wholly Israelite innovation. There is nothing analogous to it in the entire ancient Near Eastern world. This is surprising since seven-day units of time are well known throughout the region. Yet the Sabbath is the sole exception to the otherwise universal practice of basing all the major units of time—months and seasons, as well as years—on the phases of the moon and solar cycles. The Sabbath, in other words, is completely dissociated from the movement of celestial bodies. This singularity, together with Creation as the basis for the institution, expresses the quintessential idea of Israel's monotheism: God is entirely outside of and sovereign over nature.

ALTER... This sole ritual—or at least calendric—injunction among the Ten Commandments is the hinge that connects the two principal aspects of the deity already invoked: The God of Creation and the God of history. The observance of the Sabbath is a reenactment of the Creation of the World. At the same time, the liberation from labor, especially with the stipulation of one's male and female slaves...would have brought to mind the blessing of Israelite freedom.

MeCHILTA... "*Remember*" and "*Observe*" [Deut. 5:12] were spoken in a single utterance...This is a manner of speech impossible for creatures of flesh and blood, for it says, "God has spoken in a single utterance which we have heard as two." [Psalms 62:12] ...Eleazar ben Hananiah says: Remember...Keep it in mind from the first day of the week on, so that if something good happens to come your way, you can add it to the holiness of your Shabbat.

IBN EZRA...The Sabbath is symbolic of the fact that the world had a beginning in time. One must *remember* each day what day of the week it is in order not to forget when the seventh day comes, which one is obligated to keep holy... "*keep it holy*"...To give it a higher status than other days, doing no work on it, just as God did not work on it.

B'CHOR SHOR...It is easy for you to remember it now, because the manna tells you which day is the Sabbath; but once you enter the Land and the manna ceases, you will have to remember it for yourselves.

S'FORNO...Remember the Sabbath day all week so that you take care of your affairs well enough to forget about them on Shabbat.

SARNA...With Creation as its rationale, the seventh day of each week is invested with blessing and holiness. It is an integral part of the divinely ordained cosmic order, existing independent of human effort. Thus its "*a sabbath of the Lord your God.*"

v.11 *For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and God rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it.*

HERTZ... "VaY'KaD'SHeYHu"...Endowed it with sanctifying powers. The sanctity of the Sabbath is seen in its traces on the Jewish soul..."The Sabbath planted a heaven in every Jewish home, filling it with blissfully-greeted peace; making each home a Sanctuary, the father a priest, and the mother who kindles the candles an angel of light...The spiritual effect of the Sabbath is termed by the Rabbis as "neshama yeteyra—the extra Sabbath soul" which fills the people Israel through that day.

MECKLENBURG...I believe there is another meaning of the word SHABBAT as a "day of Return," seeing that the word is closely related to SHUV...By calling the Sabbath a Day of Return, we express the thought that the Jew recharges his spiritual batteries on the Sabbath, returning as it were to his spiritual roots, something from which he may have become distanced through the days of the week....Perhaps an appropriate translation of Shabbat could be "day for religion,"...which means a return to the serenity of the soul.

DRASH... Decoding the Message: *WHICH Way in the direction of Redemption...?*

Rabbi ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL...

Judaism is a religion of time aiming at the sanctification of time. Unlike the space-minded-man to whom time is unvaried...to whom all hours are alike, empty shells, the Bible senses the diversified character of time....Judaism teaches us to be attached to holiness in time, to be attached to sacred events, to learn how to consecrate sanctuaries that emerge from the magnificent stream of a year. The Sabbaths are our great cathedrals...Jewish ritual may be then characterized as an architecture of time...

One of the most distinguished words in the Bible is KADOSH—Holy; a word more than any other is representative of the majesty and the mystery of the Divine. Now what was the first holy object in the history of the world? Was it a mountain? Was it an Altar? It is, indeed, a unique occasion at which the word Kadosh is used for the first time: “And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy.” This is a radical departure from accustomed religious thinking. The mythical mind would expect that, after heaven and earth have been established, God would create a holy place...whereupon a sanctuary is to be established. Yet, to the Bible, it is holiness in time which comes first...

The meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to the holiness in time. It is a day on which we are called upon to share what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world.

JUDITH SHULEVITZ...

So WHY Remember the Sabbath? Because the Sabbath comes to us out of the bodies of our mothers and fathers, out of our own dreams—to train us to pay attention. And why do we need to be trained? Consider the mystery surrounding God’s first Sabbath. Why did God stop anyway? In the 18th century, Rabbi Elijah of Vilna [The VILNA GA’ON] ventured this explanation: God stopped to show us that what we create becomes meaningful only once we stop creating it and start remembering why it was worth creating it in the first place. Or...why it wasn’t worth creating, and why it should be created anew. After all, God contemplating His first Creation, decided to destroy it in a flood. We could let the world wind us up and set us to working, like dolls that go until they fall over because they have no way of stopping. But that would make us less than human. We have to remember to stop because we have to stop to remember.

[[The Sabbath World](#), pg. 217]

SOD... Embodying the Mystery: HOW is The Tree sustaining/re-cycling/sanctifying Life?

Rabbi ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL...

TIME is the process of creation, and things of space are the results of creation. When looking at space we see the products of creation; when intuiting time we hear the process of creation. Things of space exhibit a deceptive independence...a veneer of limited permanence. Things created conceal the Creator. It is the dimension of time wherein man meets God, wherein man becomes aware that every instant is an act of Creation, a Beginning, opening new roads for ultimate realizations. Time is the Presence of God in the world of space, and it is within time that we are able to sense the unity of all beings.

A world without time would be a world without God, without renewal...A world without time would be...a reality without a realization. To witness the perpetual marvel of the world's coming into being is to sense the Presence of Giver in the given, to realize the source of time is Eternity...We cannot solve the problem of time through the conquest of space...We can only solve the problem of time through the sanctification of time... All week long we are called upon to sanctify life through things of space. On the Sabbath it is given to us to share in the holiness that is in the heart of time. Even when the soul is seared, even when no prayer can come out of our tightened throats, the silent rest of the Sabbath leads us to a realm of endless peace...It is not a different state of consciousness but a different climate; it is as if the appearance of all things somehow changed. The primary awareness is one of being within the Sabbath rather than of the Sabbath being within us...The Sabbath preceded Creation and completed Creation; it is all of the Spirit that the world can bear...Eternity utters a Day.

[The Sabbath, pgs 100-101]