

SACRED SEVEN/TWO

Amichai Lau-Lavie/Shavuot 5774

We must see the way we enter into the palace – through the gate. The gate is the Godliness revealed in the world, the world in all its beauty and splendor, in every spirit and soul, in every animal and insect, in every plant and flower, in each nation and kingdom, in the sea and its waves... the higher Godliness, which we yearn to reach, to be swallowed up in it, to be gathered to its light, we are unable to come to this level of complete yearning, it itself descends towards us to the physical world and inside us,... Occasional, we are visited by higher sparks, from the higher glow from the highest light that is beyond all conception and thought. The heavens open up and we see visions of Godliness.

R.A.Y. H. Kook, Orot (Lights)

Six days a week we wrestle with the world, wringing profit from the earth; on the Sabbath we especially care for the seed of eternity planted in our soul... Six days a week we seek to dominate the world, on the seventh day we try to dominate the self.

A.J. Heschel, The Sabbath

The treasure of the nation, the Divine blessing that is implanted in it, the order of the world, the righteous and good life, lived in harmony with justice and honesty, peace and tranquility, grace and courage, permeated by the all-embracing contemplation of the Divine purpose, as it exists in the national soul—none can be activated in the day-to day life. The very nature of this life obfuscates the spiritual majesty of the Divine soul (which dwells in the nation) and prevents its bright and shining light from penetrating the profane reality.

Life can only be perfected through the affording of a breathing space from the bustle of everyday life. The individual shakes himself free from ordinary weekday life at short and regular intervals-on every Sabbath...What the Sabbath achieves regarding the individual, the *Shmitah* achieves with regard to the nation as a whole.

A year of solemn rest is essential for both the nation and the land, a year of peace and quiet without oppressor and tyrant...It is a year of equality and rest, in which the soul reaches out towards divine justice, towards God who sustains the living creatures with loving kindness. There is no private property and no punctilious privilege but the peace of God reigns over all in which there is the breath of life.

Sanctity is not profaned by the exercise of private acquisitiveness over all this year's produce, and the covetousness of wealth stirred up by commerce is forgotten. For food – but not for commerce.

R.A.Y. H. Kook,-Introduction to "The Sabbath of the Land"

'And the wolf shall lie down with the sheep' – this was how it was already in the time of Adam and at the beginning of the creation, and we also know very clearly that the earth is now cursed with thorns and thistles whereas it never used to be, and animals never used to tear each other up for food, etc. So as a reminder of the past and to serve as inspiration for the future, the Almighty has commanded the *mitzvah* of the *Shmitah* year which draws our attention to the time of the creation and the time of the coming Messiah... 'And for your cattle and for the beast which is in your land shall all the produce be to eat, etc.', it is in fact a kind of promise, that is to say, if you do all this, the time will come when cattle and beasts will eat together etc. For their abandoning everything in the year of the *Shmitah* to the cattle and the beasts is a sign of what was and will again be, for no longer will they eat bread by the sweat of their brow, and the wild animals will not harm the cattle. So therefore, whoever observes the *mitzvot* which signify this, will be privileged to experience all these things.

Giv'at Shaul, R. Shaul Mortera; 16th Century

*Don't go to sleep one night.
What you most want will come to you then.
Warmed by a sun inside, you'll see wonders.*

*Tonight, don't put your head down.
Be tough, and strength will come.
That which adoration adores
appears at night. Those asleep
may miss it. One night Moses stayed awake
and asked, and saw a light in a tree.*

*Then he walked at night for ten years,
until finally he saw the whole tree
illuminated. Muhammad rode his horse
through the night sky. The day is for work.
The night for love. Don't let someone
Bewitch you. Some people sleep at night.*

*But not lovers. They sit in the dark and talk to God,
who told David,
Those who sleep all night every night
and claim to be connected to us, they lie.*

*Lovers can't sleep when they feel the privacy
of the beloved all around them. Someone
who's thirsty may sleep for a little while,
but he or she will dream of water, a full jar
beside a creek, or the spiritual water you get
from another person. All night, listen
to the conversation. Stay up.
This moment is all there is.*

I'm through. Read the rest of this poem in the dark tonight.

Jelauddin Rumi