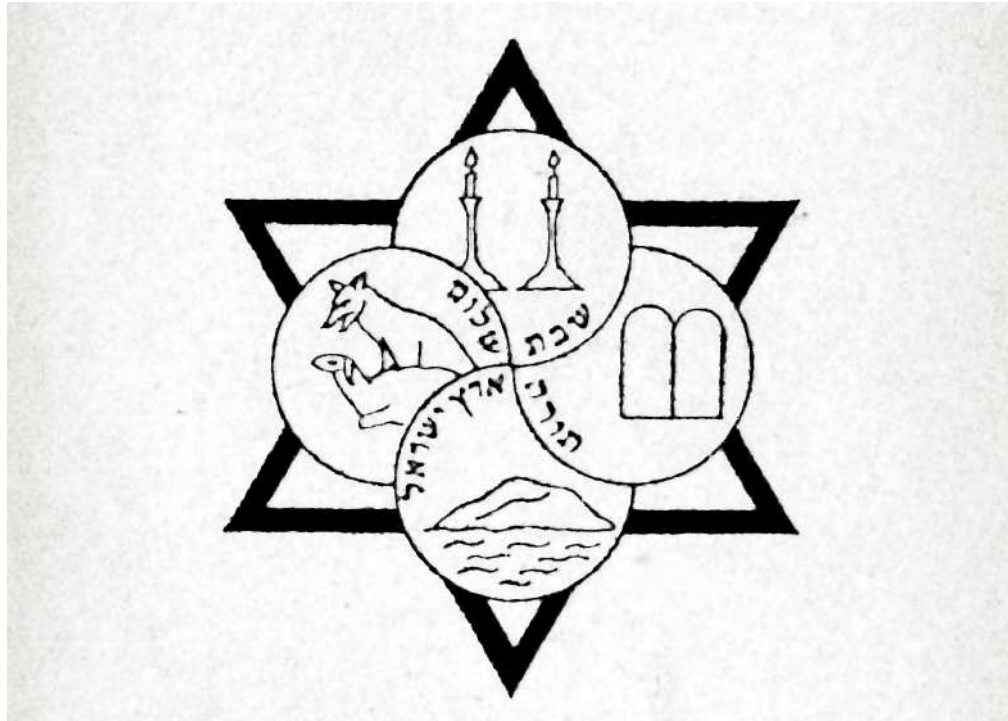


שבת המלכה - וגאולת ישראל

The Sabbath Queen and the Redemption of Israel



according to the Bible and Talmud popularly interpreted by

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לזכרון דור דורים

This work is dedicated in gratitude to my honorable friends, the brothers

Joseph and Georges Mandel
from Bistritz (currently Zürich and Geneva)

to commemorate their blessed parents

מורנו ר' יוסף יהודה ברך מאנדל זצ"ל
בן מורה מורנו ר' יצחק יעקב מאנדל זצ"ל
ואשתו יענטא בת מורנו ר' משה אברהם שפיטץ ז"ל

who breathed out their noble souls as sacred Jewish martyrs and Holocaust victims in the extermination camp of Auschwitz in 1944.

The family Mandel was one of the most distinguished families of Romanian Orthodox Judaism in Transylvania. As the father of a large family, Mandel was a zealous champion and standard-bearer of the unadulterated direction of our forefathers and has done a great deal as such, especially for the strengthening and promoting **שמירת שבת**.

Among the millions of holy martyrs he secured a worthy place before G-d's throne with his exemplary life. The sons, Joseph and Georges, currently residing in Switzerland, performed invaluable services for Klal Yisroel and have saved countless Jewish brothers, including **גדולים** **וצדיקים**, through their selfless and self-sacrificing activities.

With deep reverence

Zürich, Adar II 5706

The Author

שדה בוכים - על אלה אני בוכי

על אבידה יקרה איש חמודות אדם השלם
מו"ה יעקב בן משה אלטר ניימאן ע"ה
נפטר בחצי ימיו י"ז אדר ב' תש"ו בציריך

JAKOB NEUMANN s. A. ZÜRICH

ת נ צ ב ה

זכר צדיק לברכה
מו"ה אברהם צבי ראטה ע"ה
אשתו מ' נחמה פישער ע"ה
נתפסה בידי רשעים ועלתה נשמתה השמימה

Ermihalyfalva (Romania)

פטירת נפש יקרה יקרת הערך
ר"הודה בן ירוחם פישל ע"ה
מת בדמי ימיו ער"ח ניסן תש"ו בציריך

JULIUS REISS s. A. ZÜRICH

אך את שבתתי תשמרו כי אות הוא ביני וביניכם לדורותיכם
(שמות לא יג)

However, you must observe My שבתות , for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations (שמות לא יג).

אם תשיב משבת רגלך עשות חפצך ביום קדשי
וקראת לשבת ענג לקדוש ה' מכבד וכבדתו
מעשות דרכיך ממצוא חפצך ודבר דבר
אז תתענג על ה' והרכבתיך על במותי ארץ
והאכלתיך נחלת יעקב אביך כי פי ה' דבר

(ישע' נ"ח יג)

If you restrain your foot because of the שבת , refrain from accomplishing your needs on My holy day; if you proclaim the שבת , a delight, and the holy day of the Lord honourable; and you honour it by not engaging in your own affairs, not pursuing your business, nor speaking thereof; then you will delight the LORD, and I will mount you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and I will provide you with the heritage of your forefather Jacob; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken. (Isaiah 58,13)

זכרו תורת משה עבדי אשר צויתי אותן בחורב -
הנח אנכי שולח לכם את אליה הנביא

(מסורה ז' רבתי) (מלאכי ג כג)

Remember ye the law of Moses My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb ... Behold, I will send you Elijah. (Malachi 3, 23)

רבי חנינא אמר בואו ונצא לקראת שכת המלכה
רבי ינאי אמר בואי כלה בואי כלה

(שבת קי"ט,א)

R. Chanina used to say: Come, let the שבת המלכה go to meet us! R. Janai used to say: Come, O bride, Come, O bride! (שבת א119).

FOREWARD

By the infinite grace and mercy of the Almighty I was rescued, with wife, daughter, daughter-in-law and grandchild, from the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, and on the 2nd of Ellul 5704 (August 21, 1944), we were able to happily cross, the free borders of Switzerland, thanks to the humanity of its government.

ממות לחיים ומאפלה לאור גדול

From death to life and from darkness to bright light.

After months of anxiety and worry, the joyful news, delighting the the caring parents heard, reached me unexpectedly on a שבת, that my only son, Rabbi Yehuda Zvi Glasner, serving as a conscript in a labor camp in the Russian theatre and exposed to unspeakable dangers, suffering and torment, was rescued by the protective hand of G-d and returned to his home town of Cluj.

I consider it as a נס בתוך נס, as a potentates miracle that Providence brought me exactly here to my children, Esther and Daniel Lewenstein, with whom I found a second home and whose love and devotion enabled me since then, in quiet seclusion, to devote all my time to Torah study.

Yet the great Jewish tragedy did not spare me. My 24 year-old daughter Naomi, her husband and only son, were deported to the Auschwitz extermination camp. The tragedy and the wonderful grace the Allmighty bestowed upon me, aroused the desire in me to write this little work in order to memorialize my offspring לזכרון דור דורים.

Our Sages teach us: כל הקרבנות בטלים חוץ מקרבן תודה, when transgressions will dwindle all the sacrifices will fall away except for the thanksgiving offering; the קרבן תודה will never cease.

חסד ומשפט אשירה לך ה' אזמרה, I sing of kindness and justice; unto Thee, O Lord, I sing praises.

The Almighty punished me with one hand, with the other he gave me in a wonderful way grace and mercy. According to old Jewish custom, I wish to simultaneously call out **ברוך דיין האמת** "Blessed be the true Judge" and **ברוך הטוב והמטיב** "Blessed be the good and the benefactor".

Gratitude to G-d can and must however not merely expressed in simple humble words. Gratitude should create lasting values. Today, since we have neither Bet Hamikdash nor Misbeach, we should, according to our sages, place on the Jewish altar instead of animal sacrifices, time, money, effort, work activities and dedication to Kalel Yisrael. The Thanksgiving offering, which will never cease to be the most G-d pleasing offering, will make our unfortunate people good and useful.

Therefore it would have given me no satisfaction to advance my studies in quiet seclusion only for my good. Where would that leave my Thanksgiving offering to G-d? **על משכבי בלילות** , after dark hours of brooding my conscience was called in a commanding voice **קום קרא** . Contribute towards strengthening and consolidation of the Torah, towards spreading **אמונה** and **בטחון** , towards faith and trust in G-d, towards the education and rescue of youth with shattered religious conviction!

The religious strengthening of youth, after two thousand years of wandering in Galut and after suffering a tragedy beyond imagination, is essential in order to bring to fruition the promises and assurances made by our Holy Prophets and Talmud scholars concerning the redemption of the Jewish people **גאולת ישראל** .

Following the startling voice of my conscience, I wish to venture to contribute a little towards my obligation of Thanksgiving.

I hope this book "The Shabbat Queen - and the Salvation of Israel". will inspire the general Jewish public about the content of **שבת** and to inform, in a folksy way, about its content and nature. It seems that a dense shell over **שבת** prevents an inward, happy confident, fiery and enthusiastic devotion to it. I wish to attempt to light up this darkness; perhaps I will succeed by introducing wider layers into the profound idea of **שבת** and thereby inspiring a greater eagerness to sanctify it. The salvation of the Jewish people is contingent upon a sanctification of **שבת** , as will be seen from subsequent discussions in this work.

Should my unpretentious work find its way to the heart of my readers, then my merciful salvation from the extermination would have achieved purpose and aim. May this booklet be received by all my Jewish brethren in the countries of the diaspora and in the country of our promise and hope with the same love as I have for it

This work originally published in German is just a small selection of the larger, written in the Hebrew language book **נר שבת וגאולת ישראל** "The Shabbat Candle und the Salvation of Israel", which organizes Halacha as well as Agada in coherent unit. With the help of G-d, the latter should appear in Eretz Israel when I am granted the grace to realize the dream of my youth, to be in the sacred land of our fathers and to achieve my goal in life: to serve Him, Israel, and his Holy Torah in the genuine traditional spirit, as my Holy forefathers and ancestors have instilled in me.

Zürich, Nissan 5706

The Author

שבת המלכה and the Redemption of Israel

The magic word גאולה , Redemption, seizes every Jewish heart that feels solidarity with Klal Yisrael. After all that we have experienced and endured, after the world's disaster in general and the Jewish people's Holocaust in particular, the magic word Redemption cheers and invigorates every Jewish mind, spirit and soul.

The sad common history of the two thousand years of exile that have befallen us removes all barriers between individuals in our community. But before we are finally redeemed, the unity of Israel and its adherence to the Torah must manifest themselves as once happened at מתן תורה . The description of the divine revelation at Sinai states: The entire people of Israel encamped before the mountain, united in mind and purpose, were carried by the single objective to receive from G-d's hand His commandments. So also the people of Israel in Eretz Israel as well as in the Galut are motivated by one wish: to secure for שארית הפלטה , the tormented and decimated Jewish people, a גאולת ישראל , a secure and dignified future.

גאולת ישראל does not depend on the decisions of the leaders of the people. It depends on two factors: on the one hand, on the wish of the people to rebuild a genuinely Jewish, Torah spirited community life in Eretz Israel, and on the other, on the will of G-d, because he alone is able to put an end to our suffering.

The rulers of the people with all their resolve are nothing more than tools available to the hand of G-d. G-d is the Creator of the world and also the driver of all world events. This creed is the first of the thirteen articles of faith of Maimonides: The Almighty is the בורא ומנהיג לכל הברואים Creator and leader of all Creatures!

It is our most profound conviction that before our Redemption, Israel must for its part demonstrate, by great and Holy deeds, an open manifestation of

unswerving loyalty to G-d, the Creator and the Leader of the world, and to his holy Torah entrusted to us. An inner voice tells us that an entrance into the mysterious circle of thoughts of the holy שבת - which is intrinsically related to the Redemption of Israel, even a precondition, as the following discussions will show - would be a major step forward on the path leading to גאולת ישראל. Bright light should be poured over the “שבת idea with a mysterious veil”, in order to fully illuminate it, openly, clearly and transparently for each man, woman and child of Israel.

Our sages have expressed the view with the support of a number of biblical passages in the Talmud, the Midrash and the Zohar that there is a close causal connection between the sanctification of the שבת and the Redemption of Israel. There are primarily two chapters in Tanach, where this idea emerges particularly memorably. The first is one of the sharpest rebukes of the prophet Ezekiel in which he specifically mentions the profanation of the שבת commandment no less than six times among all the general words accusing Israel of idolatry and Torah laws (see Ezekiel 20). This demonstrates the incalculable importance the Prophet places on the שבת. And the other place is the two verses from Isaiah (נח יג"ד) that we heard in the haftarah of Yom Kippur: אם תשיב משבת רגלך עשות חפצך ביום קדשי וקראת לשבת עונג לקדוש ה' מכובד וכבדתו מעשות דרכיך ממצוא חפצך ודבר דבר אז תתענג על ה' והרכבתך על במותי ארץ והאכלתיך נחלת יעקב אביך כי פי ה' דבר

"If you restrain your foot because it is the שבת, refrain from accomplishing your own needs on My Holy Day; if you proclaim the שבת 'a delight,' the holy day of G-d 'honored,' and you honor it by not engaging in your own affairs, or discussing the forbidden – then you will delight in G-d, and I will mount you astride the heights of the world; I will provide you the heritage of your forefather Jacob, for the mouth of G-d has spoken."

So we face the problem of determining what sort of internal connection exists between the שבת and the Redemption of Israel. Before we proceed to solve this problem, two basic questions will be discussed.

The first, most obvious and most puzzling question is: what circumstance lifts the שבת day high above all other Jewish holidays, even higher than the Day of Atonement, considered by many to be the most holy? The day of Atonement is generally considered to be the most solemn day of the year and is respected by most Jews, even by those who lead otherwise practically no

religious life. However, this popular ranking is incorrect. It is already stated in the Torah that the profanation of the Day of Atonement by eating or work activity receives karet, execution applied by G-d's hand, while the sharpest and most painful type of punishment, namely סקילה, stoning, is applied for the non-compliance with the prohibition of work on the שבת. And the Rambam (Sanhedrin 14) ranks סקילה in first place among the different types of punishment. We also find in the Torah a short report about a case of שבת desecration, which was even punished by people's justice (stoning by the entire community) - a cautionary example that will draw our attention for perpetuity on the outstanding importance of the שבת commandment.

Also Isaiah, in his prophecies about our future redemption, places respect for and compliance with religious and ethical laws in general as the essential precondition for the salvation of Israel. However, like Ezekiel, Isaiah pointedly emphasizes not less than three times, the sanctification of the שבת day in the above cited Chapter of Isaiah. From this our Talmud Sages (118b שבת) derive the doctrine: "If Israel would observe only two שבתות according to halacha, then they would be redeemed immediately." The question now is: what is the most fundamental meaning of the שבת commandment?

In Midrash Rabba Ch. 11 we are told that Turnus Rufus, a Roman ruler, once addressed the following question to Rabbi Akiva: Why is the שבת day an exception? Actually on what is its preferred position in relation to all other days of the week based? This question, which the Roman ruler also posed to the greatest scholars of that era, was by no means such a naive question, as the מנה זאת of the simpleton תם in the Hagada. Rather, we believe that Turnus Rufus wanted to raise, using a few words, a profound philosophical question. With the words "other days", over which שבת has an inherent advantage, Turnus Rufus meant not the first Six Days of Creation, but the countless days since then. Turnus Rufus asked why just the first day of rest after the completion of the G-d's Six Days of Creation is highlighted more than all the countless other days that follow where G-d also "rests"; does this mean he creates nothing more?

The question of Rufus can be justified and understood by assuming that he meant the six creation days preceding the first שבת. The question of the Roman Tyrant would then be interpreted as: Why did G-d designate to be a day of holiness and celebration, the seventh day which is to be a day of rest, a day of quiet, a day when nothing occurs? Rather, should he not have as-

signed a day of labor, a day of creation, one of the days of grandiose creation to be the holy day. Such an assignment would have celebrated the great value and importance of the work, the work activity and the Creation. It seems that designating שבת as the seventh day would justify ethically the sanctification and glorification of a day of inactivity, which is followed by no further work, no further creation. Turnus Rufus' question may have indicated deep wisdom, and, his perspective also harmonizes with the opinion of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai quoted in the above section of the Midrash: The שבת came to G-d with the following claim: all other days have a partner only I, the שבת, have no equal. The meaning of this complaint by the שבת is interpreted by our commentators in various ways. The most meaningful and enlightening explanation is that absence of content led the שבת to complain to G-d, the world creator, saying: all days have acquired their "partner", that is to say that each day has received its meaning, its content through some part of Creation which was accomplished on it. However, the שבת day remains without "Partner", without a corresponding valuable content; it is distinguished only by silence and inaction; nothing has been accomplished on it; the שבת day was not part of the grandiose and sublime work of Creation; it is orphaned, scattered and disconnected from the positive actions of world Creation.

The same theme can be discerned in שבת's complaint before the divine Throne and in the quite legitimate question of Turnus Rufus (see the comment by the Malbim on the section ויכולו whose understanding was completely consistent with ours).

What did the learned Rabbi Akiva answer? He replied briefly and aptly: "G-d wanted to honor this day." At first glance Rabbi Akiva's short answer seems evasive, and only after deeper contemplation of the meaning of the short answer, we find that it is completely solved by Turnus Rufus' question. The purpose of the following paragraphs of our explanations is to reveal this.

The following is another, no less important question and has not yet been raised by any of the Bible, Talmud or Midrash commentators.

In the parlance of חומש it appears, that two other holidays besides the seventh day of the creation week are referred with the name "שבת", The reason for the naming of the seventh day is in the text:

ויכל אלקים . . וישבת . . ויברך את יום השביעי ויקדש אתו כי בו שבת מכל מלכתו אשר ברא אלוקים לעשות

"G-d blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He abstained from

all His work which G-d created to make,”

The Hebrew word **שבת** means “stop”. Thus the historical occasion is already expressed in the name of **שבת** for its consecration.

Curiously, however in the Torah the first day of Passover and the Day of Atonement given the name “ **שבת** “. In the parsha **אמר** in the section describing the Festivals, the Passover rules say: **ממחרת השבת** “on the day following the **שבת** ” which we understand to mean the first day of Passover.

It is well-known that this verse was the subject of one of the most violent conflicts between our traditions and the Sadducees, who attached the expression “ **שבת** ” to the seventh day of the week.

This is not the place to examine this difference of opinion; however, it should be strongly emphasized that our Chachamim consider the term “ **שבת** ” used here as a label for the first day of Passover and accordingly we begin to count the Omer on the eve of the second day of Passover.

The second instance of a deviation from the standard use of the term “ **שבת** ” is found in the same chapter by the provisions on the day of Atonement, which is also called “ **שבת** ”. (Also see Ibn Ezra on **שמות לא יג** which comments on the unusual appearance, that the Torah designates three different days with the name “ **שבת** ”, namely, the seventh day of Creation, the first day of Passover and Day of Atonement, without offering any explanation for this peculiarity.

For the time being, we do not wish to raise further problems, but we make the transition to answering the above questions.

II

Giving of the Torah - The Most Significant Event in World History

The Exodus of Israel from Egyptian bondage is for us the most magnificent deed of G-d among all nation building events in world history. The academic world historian may downplay the Exodus from Egypt but for us it is a central event that should always be fresh in our memories and it is the basis for a significant number of mitzvot. Perhaps the clearest formulation of the paramount importance of **יצאת מצרים** for the fundamental principle of the Jewish religion, namely the belief in the existence of G-d, emerges in the first of the Ten Commandments: **אנכי ה' אלהיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים – שמות כ ג**

“I am the Eternal, your G-d, who has taken you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery.” But **יצאת מצרים** only provided the outer frame for becoming a nation. The great revelation of G-d to Israel at Mount Sinai, i.e. **מתן תורה**, provided the actual content and nature of the nation. And the conclusion of the birth of the nation came about with the occupation by Joshua of the holy land promised to our ancestors.

The 613 Mitzvot are intended exclusively for Israel: **תורה צוה לנו משה** **מורשה קהלת יעקב** “The Torah that Moshe commanded us is the heritage of the Congregation of Jacob.” Nevertheless, the Torah is the source, the fountain-head of all morality, the first and most secure basis, the solid foundation on which the great structure of the entire Western ethics in religious piety was built.

Therein lie the relationships, historical, spiritual, moral and religious, which shaped, sustained and perfected the world. No other event surpasses in importance G-d's revelation on mount Sinai. So, **מתן תורה** is the epitome of blessing and light for all mankind.

The scope of this little **ספר** is too limited to enumerate all those passages from the Bible, Talmud and Midrash which clearly and definitively demon-

strate the assertion made above and it would be superfluous to prove in detail with quotes such a widely acknowledged, by Christians and Muslims alike, truth. However, we would like to cite some lesser-known, short and interesting sources that are important for the flow of our ideas and the structure of our discussion.

The Gemorah **עבודה זרה 9א** is our first source: In the **תנא דבי אליהו** the following was taught: the world will exist for six thousand years: during the first two thousand years there was intellectual uncertainty, mental confusion, because during that time the G-dly laws had not yet been given. They were followed by the two thousand year period of the Torah. The last two thousand years - in which we currently find ourselves - was designated as the Messianic age; due to our many sins a large portion of the latter period has passed without the appearance of the Messiah. Concerning this partition of the World's Era the Talmud asks which event began the period of the Torah. The obvious answer that it began with the Revelation at Sinai turns out to be incorrect because **מתן תורה** occurred in the year 2448 after the Creation.. So the period of the Torah must have started already four and a half centuries earlier. By means of chronological backtracing the Talmud determined that our forefather Abraham began his campaign for belief in one G-d, for a polytheistic environment, at two thousand years after the creation of the world, as it is reported in Bereishit (12,5). The two thousand years of Torah date back to this point in time.

It may seem strange that the Talmud designates the first two millennia of history simply as **תוהו ובוהו**, chaotic. Is it not reported in the fourth chapter of Bereshit that in that time period man had already established cities and acquired the elementary knowledge of artistic and industrial activity? And is not common history filled with monuments which bear witness to the high cultural level of great antiquity? Thus arises the question what did the Talmud mean when it designated the two thousand year period prior to Abraham's declaration of belief in one G-d as **תוהו ובוהו**.

It is undoubtedly clear that chaos, **תוהו ובוהו**, is not to be understood here in physical or cultural sense, rather that the lack of a spiritual, religious or moral foundation left the world in a state of chaos. The revelation at Sinai, **מתן תורה**, was the high point of the two thousand year Torah period marked by Abraham's work. Without the accomplished religious and ethical foundations the physical material world in higher sense would not have been liveable; it would have remained in chaos, **תוהו ובוהו**. The world lacks a social order

without Torah; it knows nothing of borders between ours and yours; it exists without law and justice which allows all of humanity to sink into the deepest abyss of utter destruction, taking with it the entire world. The deluge **מבול** over the entire world and the destruction of Sodom and Gemora are biblical warnings of the consequences of humanity deviating from the eternal laws of morality, of right and justice.

We have just witnessed how the world, standing at the zenith of civilization, by unleashing people's delusions, by overriding all moral and religious norms, was transformed into an horrifying State of physical, spiritual and moral chaos, **תוהו ובוהו**. The healing of this ravaged dysfunctional world will take, as far as humans can calculate, decades or even centuries. This verifies the determination of our holy Sages: without Matan Torah, without a moral foundation, the material world was in a state of **תוהו ובוהו** in spite of its cultural development.

The world time table taken from the Talmud Avoda Zara also teaches us that the era of Torah began at the point in time when Abram prepared to announce the concept of G-d conceived by his own reflection **ויקרא בשם ה'**. Also Maimonides **הלכות מלכים א** – **משנה תורה** begins his brief outline of the development corridor of the Torah already with Abraham. The Revelation at Sinai constituted the high point of this period. Chronologically the "oral Torah" preceded the "written", but the latter was first to be fixed; as Moses our teacher departed the world, the "written Torah" found its forever immutable form in the "Five Books", valid for all time. On the other hand, the "oral Torah" was handed down through the centuries and expanded; its final completion occurred two thousand years after Abram in the Mishna. In Talmudic times the entire "oral Torah" was thoughtfully, keenly scanned and checked back to its sources; apparent contradictions were reconciled and with the help of hermeneutic rules new conclusions based on existing principles were explored. The postTalmudic spiritual leaders produced systematic mappings of the vast fabric of oral teaching. The best known among these codifications are the Rambam's (12th century) **משנה תורה** and R. Josef Karo's (16th century) **שלחן ערוך** customized to fit the needs of life in the diaspora.

This large, legal system encompassing all ethical, legal and religious norms is the most sacred immutable heritage to which the people of Israel, all over the world and during all periods of suffering, have clung. Many millions of our Bretheren were destroyed and eradicated by the rage of murder addicted peo-

ple while Sifre Torah and Jewish Sanctuaries in the thousands were consumed by flames; nevertheless the spirit of Torah, Mishnah and Talmud remained intact, as it is so beautifully and simply expressed by our Scholars in the Talmud: גוילין נשרפין ואותיות פורחות באויר – עבודה זרה אסור the parchment burns but the letters blossom in the air. That is to say, the parchment could be inserted by unholy and unclean hands into the fire and burned, but no “world culture” could bring even to fading, let alone to the eradication, of the sacred letters of the Torah and of the Talmud scrolls radiating Holy Spirit!

III

G-d the Groom, Israel the Bride

Numerous Talmud, Mishnah, Zohar references - some of which we will cite later - portray the historical event of the Revelation at Sinai מתן תורה as a marriage alliance between G-d the groom and Israel the bride.

In the bible, in the report about the revelation at Sinai, it is already written: "and Moshe brought the people forth towards G-d. Here the Mechilta remarked (cf. also Rashi at that point) מגיד שהשחינה יצאה לקראתם כחתן היוצא לקראת כלה "It says that the Divine Presence came out towards Israel like the groom towards the bride." Whether or not one knows שיר השירים - at least one knows that its author, King Solomon, with G-d gifted poet power, in the guise of love poetry unfolds before our eyes, a gorgeous, spiritual, soul thrilling and delightful image gloriously colorfully symbolizing the courtship of G-d with Israel through all stages of love.

"Come with me from Lebanon, אתי מלבנון כלה - שיר השירים ד ח my bride" says the Divine bridegroom to the bride of Israel. According to one Midrash the word לבנון is derived from לבנים bricks. Accordingly the meaning of G-d's request is: מטיט ולבנים לקחתיך "I took you out of bricks and mortar". So King Solomon refers to the engagement of G-d with Israel in Egypt, since G-d brought the Bride out of slavery on the night of Passover.

"Israel became a Nation there in Egypt, the nation of G-d". The dialogue of G-d with Israel is in the שבת הגדול of יוצר displayed beautifully and movingly.

However, the engagement, the freeing of Israel from Egypt did not yet complete Israel's becoming a nation. It was just the ceremonial kick-off with the final alliance of marriage occurring at Horeb. The Torah speaks clearly: בהוציאך את העם ממצרים תעבדון את האלקים על ההר הזה - שמות ג יב "the Exodus from Egypt should lead to assuming the heavenly yoke at Mount Sinai." The liberation of the people from Egyptian slavery sim-

ply established a national framework still lacking specific content. The framework of the Jewish nation created in Egypt finally received its sacred content at the wedding event under the חופה of מתן תורה at Sinai; at the Exodus from Egypt it was referred to as a nation without any ornamental adjective and קדוש was added only after this event. Consequently it says היום הזה נהיית חופה ונשואין “Only today, this day of לעם ליהוה אלוהיך – דברים כז, ט ולהיותך עם קדוש” And it is further stated there “that you will be a holy nation as he promised to you at Sinai”

Also the author of שיר השירים sings of the יום חתנתו וביום שמחת לבו “the day of the wedding, the day of the gladness of his heart” - which according to the interpretation of the Midrash, is to be understood as מתן תורה .

IV

The Two Tier Creation of the World

From the presentation up to this point we have come to the realization that the work of creation of G-d was two tier, that is, it was performed in two acts.

Two tier in the sense that the physical cosmos in the six days of creation was successfully completed, but looked like a body without a soul. The earthly world was still matter without spirit; it still lacked a religious moral foundation and thus - as we could see from the Gemara mentioned before - it remained **תוהו ווהו**, a state of desolation and emptiness, for another two thousand years until the Revelation at Sinai gave it spirit, soul and breath of life. The situation of the earthly world and of humanity was secured and solidified by means of the moral soul breathed into it by **מתן תורה**. Thus, the work of creation had, strictly speaking, reached its conclusion only after two thousand years on the 6th of **סיון** with **מתן תורה**. On that day, the spiritual and moral state of **תוהו ווהו** was ended.

The correctness of these conclusions is corroborated by numerous citations in the Talmud and Midrash. We wish to confirm this here with only a few brief quotes.

Concerning the passage **ויתצבו בתחתית ההר – שמות יט יז** “And they stood under the mountain”, the following is said in the Gemorah Shabbat 88a :

אמר רב אבדימי בר חמא בר חסא: מלמד שכפה הקדוש ברוך הוא עליהם את ההר כגיגית, ואמר להם: אם אתם מקבלים התורה מוטב – ואם לאו שם תהא קבורתכם. אמר רב אחא בר יעקב: מכאן מודעא רבה לאורייתא. אמר רבא: אף על פי כן, הדור קבלוה בימי אחשורוש דכתיב – אסתר ט – קימו וקבלו היהודים, קיימו מה שקיבלו כבר.

Rabbi Avdimi bar Hama bar Hasa derived from the words “under the mountain” that the Holy One Blessed Be He, overturned the mountain upon them

like an inverted cask, and said to them, "If you accept the Torah all is well, but if not, there will be your grave." Rabbi Aha bar Yaakov noted that "This furnishes a strong excuse for Israel that it only accepted the laws at Sinai under duress it happens that they do not fulfill the commandments and G-d calls his nation to account." Raba said, "Be that as it may, they did reaccepted it in the days of Ahashverosh, for it is written, 'the Jews observed and accepted' – אִסְתָּר ט כז – namely they observed and freely accepted what they had accepted at Sinai under the threat of death."

Also the Psalm sings the tremendous revelation of God: מִשְׁמִיִּם הַשְׁמַעַת דִּין אֶרֶץ יִרְאָה וְשָׁקֵטָה – תְּהִלִּים עו ט "From heaven You made judgement heard; the Earth feared and was tranquil." Hezekiah finds the ending of this biblical verse a bit strange because if it feared, why was it tranquil, and if it was tranquil, why did it fear? Therefore he interprets this verse in the sense that the earth's fear and the earth's tranquility did not occur simultaneously, rather one happened after the other: at first it was frightened and then it became tranquil. The earth feared that Israel might refuse to accept the Torah, the condition which had initially enabled its existence. As Resh Lakish explains what is the purpose of the definite article הַ in the words יוֹם הַשִּׁישִׁי? He translates homiletically the continuance of morning and evening was depended on the sixth day of שִׁיּוֹן, when Israel was offered the Torah. So G-d had indeed imposed following condition by creating the world: If Israel accepts my teachings, it can continue to exist; but if it rejects the Torah, then it will sink back into the תוהו ווהו from which it was extracted at creation. So as the historically critical moment approached, because the decision about of the continued existence of the universe was placed in Israel's hands, the Earth feared its future. And it could again become tranquil only after Israel had said נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע.

The idea that the work of creation is two tier, that is, that in the six days of creation the earthly physical world was created but made viable only two thousand years later by the lofty event of the revelation at Sinai, is also clearly indicated in Psalm 19, a part of the שִׁבְתָּ prayer, in which King David praises the creation of G-d. It starts with the powerful words: הַשְׁמִיִּם מְסַפְּרִים – תְּהִלִּים יט ב "כבוד ה' ומעשה ידיו מגיד הרקיע – תְּהִלִּים יט ב "The heavens declare the glory of G-d and the firmament tells of his handiwork"

To the marvelous description of the solar system and the meshing of all natural phenomena the psalmist suddenly adds the following hymn on the ex-

cellence of the Torah: תורת ד' תמימה משיבת נפש – תהילים יט ח "G-d's Torah is perfect, restoring the soul." The term used here תמימה "perfect" perhaps indicates the completion of total creation achieved by מתן תורה

Carefull consideration of the entire תהילים יט leads to the conclusion that earthly creation and מתן תורה intrinsically complement each other and form a unified whole as do body and soul, matter and spirit.

The second mishna of the first chapter of פרקי אבות reads: שמעון הצדיק היה משיירי אנשי כנסת הגדולה. הוא היה אומר על שלושה דברים העולם עומד על התורה ועל העבודה ועל גמילות החסדים. "Shimon the righteous was one of the last of the Great Assembly. He used to say: the world depends on three things on the Torah, on the service of G-d and on kind deeds." And the eighteenth Mishnah reads: רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר על שלושה דברים העולם קיים על הדין ועל האמת ועל השלום, "Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, says: the cultural heritage of the world is sustained by three things: justice, truth and peace, as it is said: You are to adjudicate truth and the verdict of the peace within your gates."

From all the citations above, we see the clear-cut finding of our Scholars: THE EARTHLY PHYSICAL WORLD, COMPLETED IN SIX DAYS OF CREATION, RECEIVED ITS SOUL AFTER TWO THOUSAND YEARS THROUGH THE REVELATION OF G-D TO ISRAEL AT SINAI; FROM THEN ON, THE WORLD WAS COMPLETE, VIABLE AND COULD CONTRIBUTE TO ITS ACTUAL DEVELOPMENT.

V

Nature and Content of the Idea of שבת

We now come to the most important point, the point that is the foundation of our train of thought. This point of our considerations which should empower us to solve the various issues and problems and to explain numerous difficult points in Talmud and Midrash. Understanding of the idea of שבת is completely dependent on understanding that the Revelation at Sinai occurred on a שבת.

In the Gemara שבת 86 it says: Our Rabbis taught: On the sixth day of the month of סיון Israel was given the Ten Commandments. R. Jose maintained: On the seventh thereof. Raba said: All agree that they arrived in the Wilderness of Sinai on the first of סיון. Furthermore, all agree that בשבת נתנה תורה, the Torah was given to Israel on the שבת. For at the beginning of the fourth commandment it is written זכור את יום השבת לקדשו "Remember the שבת day, to keep it holy" while at an earlier point it is written זכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים מבית עבדים – שמות יג ג "Moshe said unto the people, remember this day on which you came out from Egypt". Just as in the latter reference Moses spoke about that very day, so also the Fourth Commandment speaks about that very day. This demonstrates that the Torah was given on שבת.

This citation from the Gemara shows that our Scholars are in unanimous agreement that the Revelation at Sinai took place on a שבת day, that the fountain, from which all justice and all inexhaustible human civilization gushes, began to flow on a שבת. In this way G-d's earthly physical work of the six days of creation was infused with its religious soul, that is, its perfection.

Due to the Torah covenant, which was initiated between G-d and Abraham and was sealed through the Sinai Revelation, Israel became גוי קדוש, holy nation for all times and through all development phases of the world's course.

The above remarks cast light on the nature and content of the שבת day. The creation of the world was not concluded immediately after the six days of

creation, but only after a two thousand year interruption started on a שבת day, through the magnificent Revelation at Sinai. Therefore, the words וישבת ביום השביעי "He rested on the seventh day." cannot be taken to mean that His work was complete on the seventh day. Rather the precise translation should read: "He interrupted his work on the seventh day." because the creation was not entirely complete after the six days. It still required a completion that would be achieved by מתן תורה at Mount Sinai after a hiatus of two thousand years.

From the above, new insight emerges into R. Akibas' response to Turnus Rufus' question that was mentioned in the first chapter of this book. When R. Akiba replied הקב"ה רצה לכבדו "G-d wanted to honor the seventh day", he meant that G-d wanted to honor the שבת with the grandiose event of Matan Torah, thereby elevating it to be the holiest and most memorable of all days.

So when the Torah says ויכל אלקים ביום השביעי מלאבתו אשר עשה "G-d completed his work of creation on the seventh day", it does not mean the seventh day following the six days of creation, but rather another specific seventh day: the שבת of מתן תורה, on which the earthly creation received its נשמה, its soul, by means of the Revelation at Sinai!

The phrase, שמו מעיד עליו, can be applied to the use of the word שבת which only indicates a pause. That is, it represents simultaneously an interruption and a continuation. In our context it builds a bridge between creation and revelation.

VI

Summary of the Idea of שבת

אות היא ביני וביניכם ... : שבת it says about כי תשא In parshah
... ביני ובין בני ישראל את הוא לעולם – שמות לא יגִיחַ “It is a sign of the
eternal Covenant between Israel and me.” In what sense is the seventh day of
creation an “eternal Covenant” between G-d and Israel? In the sense that the
work of creation was actually completed after a two thousand year hiatus in a
state of תוהו ווהו through the Revelation at Sinai which took place on the
שבת day. In the sense that, on the שבת day, the giving of the Torah closed
an eternal Covenant between G-d and Israel.

This thought constitutes the entire meaning, the entire consecration, of the
שבת. It adorns the שבת with a Crown, because on the שבת day, at Mount
Sinai, mankind received, by means of the Torah promulgated by Israel as the
highest and safest guarantee of bliss, the forever lasting principles of all morals
and manners, principles of all law and justice, principles of all philanthropy and
respect for humanity,

Our holy שבת day is called שבת שלום ומבורך “A peaceful and conse-
crated שבת”. The word שבת itself exudes happiness, joy, elation, holiness,
zest, and a peaceful outlook. The שבת day gives people, after the six ex-
hausting working days, refreshing escape from the whirl of the material hustle
and bustle, uplifting mind and mood. And it gives Jews new will to life, new joy
of live, new energy to work. It instills a loftier goal in life, raises ethical stan-
dards, and prods all the other memorable ideals for which Israel has been the
standard-bearer for more than three thousand years.

Whoever observes the שבת puts into practice the first tenet of Judaism:
אני מאמין שהבורא ית"ש בורא ומנהיג לכל הברואים “I believe with
complete faith that the Creator, blessed be His name, is the Creator and Guide
of all the created beings, and that He alone has made, does make, and will
make all things.”

VII

New Insights into Biblical and Talmudic Reflections

In the light of the above findings of the Talmud, we would like to try new interpretations of all the **שבת** relevant verses at the beginning of the Genesis and other places in Bible dealing with the **ה'ב'ר**.

Friday evening's Kiddush begins with **ויכולו**, but is preceded by the last verse of the description of the sixth day of creation: **ויהי ערב ויהי בוקר**. What is the connection between these two passages. Rashi explains: **שביום ו' בסיון שקבלו ישראל התורה נתחזקו כל יצירות בראשית ונחשב כאילו נברא העולם עתה וזהו יום הששי בה"א אותו יום ו' בסיון המוכן למתן תורה** "The sixth day of **סיון**, the day on which Israel received the Torah, all the creations were affirmed and considered as if the world had been created at that point in time. And the letter **ה**, in front of the word **ששי**, indicates that the sixth of **סיון** was prepared for **מתן תורה**." That is, the definite article **ה**, attached to the word **ששי**, indicates that from the beginning the sixth of **סיון** was designated to be the day of the Revelation.

These words of Rashi succinctly summarize the previously cited views of our Talmud and Midrash scholars. However, Rashi failed to attach the, also highly significant, finding of the Talmud that G-d designated just one **שבת** for Matan Torah, the final consolidation of the work of creation.

This fantastic event is what gave the **שבת** its real consecration, and only with this sublime and great event does the Torah elevate the **שבת** to the holiest of all days, towering over all other festivals, including Yom Kippur.

Rabbi Juhuda's view that the words **יום הששי**, added to the Kiddush, refer to the **הוספה** of the short period of time taken away from the working day and attached to the beginning of the **שבת**, is interesting and thoughtfull. According to Maimonides and his great contemporaries generally the short span of one minute is sufficient to be a **הוספה**. This allows us to conclude

that the הוספה should be a symbol that expresses the sublime idea of an unbreakable connection between the two ideas: the world left unfinished in the six days of creation and the Revelation at Sinai carried out on a שבת . So we do consider this הוספה of a minute to be a symbolic link between the earthly-physical creation of the world and its spiritual-religious creation.

The Torah begins with the word בראשית whose first letter is ב . The Midrash relates that the letter א , which precedes the ב lexicographically, made the claim that it should have been at the beginning of the Torah. Several explanations are given but we would like to try to interpret this quarrel between letters in yet another way.

According to the Midrash (also see Rashi at that point), the word ראשית refers, in a figurative sense, to both the Torah and Israel, as can be seen by examining several biblical passages. In addition, observe that the Hebrew root word ברא not only means “to create”, but it also means “to heal” (cf. בריא healthy). - By combining these two notions the first sentence of the Torah, בראשית ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ , can be interpreted as follows: By combining the “First” two considerations, Torah and Israel, G-d made heaven and earth healthy, strong and viable. That is to say, the combination of Torah and Israel gave the earthly world its breath of life, its soul. And this leads to the following interpretation of the second sentence of the Torah:

והארץ היתה תהו ובהו וחשך על פני תהום; ורוח אלהים מרחפת על פני המים – בראשית א ב The earth was unformed and void, and darkness (which can be interpreted as spiritual darkness) prevailed over the entire world until the hour of the Revelation at Sinai when the spirit of G-d radiated light over the face of humanity, as it is written, וירא אלהים את האור כי טוב ויבדל “And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.” That is, the Divine transmission of Ten Commandments was a source of light for the world, the fountainhead of all religious and ethical principles, the embodiment of highest ideals! Thus state of תהו ובהו on Earth ended and a healthy spiritual life and religious standards replaced the spiritual religious emptiness!

את שבתתי תשמרו כי אות היא ביני כי תשא In parshat “Keep My שבת because it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations.” Further it says: ביני ובין בני ישראל אות הוא לעולם כי ששת ימים עשה ה' את השמים ואת הארץ וביום השביעי שבת וינפש – יז “It is a sign between Me and the

children of Israel forever that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and on the seventh day He ceased and rested."

The following question arises: What is the connection between the שבת as a day of rest after the six days of Creation and the Alliance concluded between G-d and Israel? It seems clear that here in **כי תשא** the Torah just refers to the big event which took place on the שבת of **מתן תורה** Torah, to the alliance between G-d and Israel, that is, just the spiritual completion.

In view of the preceding, the following verse also can be explained in a straight forward manner: **ויכל אלקים ביום השביעי מלאכתו אשר עשה** "And G-d completed his work on the seventh day". The obvious question that the creation was completed on the sixth and not on the seventh day is easily dismissed. In fact, the work remaining after the sixth day of creation was only completed after a 2000 year interruption by **מתן תורה** which occurred on a שבת.

Additionally, it says there **ויברך אלקים את יום השביעי ויקדש אותו** "And G-d blessed the seventh day and pronounced it holy". G-d sanctified it, not by ceasing work and resting which would have given no content, no positive meaning to the seventh day, but by designating the שבת for future events, as Rashi explains there **והמקרא כתוב על העתיד**.

The Midrash adds: **ברכו באורה** "He blessed the שבת with light." There was no darkness during the night between the sixth and the seventh day of creation; continuous daylight shone until the exit of the שבת. But we do not go astray with the belief that this unique illumination of the שבת night should be the icon for the light source, **אורה זו תורה**, the Torah.

This interpretation not only explains why God sanctified the שבת day in advance of its future destiny; it also explains why Moshe, during the bondage in Mizraim, long before **מתן תורה**, emphasizes the holiness of the שבת day to Israel.

The Midrash commenting on the passage **ויצא אל אחיו וירא בסבלותם** (שמות ב יא) says Moshe saw that Israel worked tirelessly, so he went to Pharaoh and said to him: "one who has a slave and makes him work constantly, without at least a day a week to rest, must not be irritated if the servant dies prematurely from exhaustion. If you do not grant your servants, the Israelites a day of rest each week, they will die." Pharaoh responded to Moshe saying: "Go and give them a day off as you said." Moses went and set the שבת as the weekly day of rest for them. The Israelites occupied themselves

every שבת by reading scriptures about the future redemption through G-d's hand. According to the Midrash, the passage תכבד העבודה על האנשים ויעשו בה; ואל ישעו בדברי שקר – שמות ה ט indicates that when Pharaoh learned about this, he regretted having granted to the Israelites a weekly day of rest and commanded: "The work for Israel should be made more difficult; they should not spend their time reading! They should not rest and they should not recuperate by reading hope raising texts on the שבת."

Of course the שבת commandment is an exception in the context of the other laws of the Torah, which were first given over to the people of Israel at Sinai. Because, the שבת commandment was already given over on the occasion of the giving of instructions for gathering of the Manna ראו כי יהוה נתן לכם השבת ... וישבתו העם ביום השבעי – שמות טז כטל "Observe G-d has given you the שבת ; therefore He gives you on the sixth day the bread of two days ... So the people rested on the seventh day." But this event preceded מתן תורה as is indicated by the words כאשר צוך ד' "as the Lord your God commanded you." The citations and discussions above show that G-d, in anticipation of the consecration of the שבת at Sinai, wanted the people of Israel to become accustomed to the sacredness of the שבת before the actual occurrence of this sublime event.

The light of this train of thought reveals to us the deeper meaning of the last words of the section of ויכולו :

אשר ברא אלקים לעשות – בראשית ב ג "He rested from all His work which G-d in creating had made". The last word לעשות , which is a synonym of תקן , to fix, far from being a mere triviality, indicates that the creation, the בריאה , required a rich עשיר consummating תיקון which was achieved by means of מתן תורה .

VIII

The “Golden Calf” - Desecration of the שבת

Whereas the Revelation at Sinai (occurring on שבת) meant a spiritualization and finalization of the earthly physical creation, Israel's turning away from G-d by committing the Sin of the Calf shocked the creation back into the תוהו ווהו state. That is, set it back into its pre-Sinai state of imperfection. Just forty days after the grand event of the Revelation at Sinai, just after Israel had heard from G-d's mouth ... אֲנִי יְהוָה ... “I am the Lord ... You shall have no other gods”, it fell from its religious peak into a state of godlessness, into a moral abyss rejecting G-d's providence. Israel rejoiced over the golden calf with the refrain: אֵלֵהּ אֱלֹהֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֵעֲלוּךָ – שְׂמֹת לֵב ד “These are your gods Israel which brought you out of Egypt.” We will discuss the religious psychological explanation for this sudden religious and moral revolt of Israel in the second part of our book. Here we would like to simply cite several places in the Bible and Talmud referring to Israel's teacherous turning away from G-d and comparing Israel allegorically to the faithless wife in an act of adultery. In the Bible G-d's relationship to Israel, is often metaphorically referred to as a marriage (for example, see the beginning of the books of Hosea and Jeremiah), and the Israel's idolatry branded as unchaste. In the same Gemara: אָמַר עוֹלָא עֲלוּבָה כְּלָה מְזֻנָּה בְּתוּךְ חוּפְתָּהּ – שַׁבַּת בָּעָם “Ulla said: Shameless is the bride who is unchaste within her bridal canopy” And Rashi explains: כִּי־יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּשֶׁעָמְדוּ בְּסִינִי וַעֲשׂוּ הָעֵגֶל “As the children of Israel did with the golden calf where they were still standing at Sinai.” The Gemarah then sees Israel's disloyalty in the verse עַד שֶׁהַמֶּלֶךְ בִּמְסָבוֹ נִרְדִּי נָתַן רִיחוֹ – שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים א יב by interpreting it as “While the King was still at the feast (at Sinai), my Spikenard (Israel) lost its fragrance (due to the breach of faith of the idolatry of the calf).

On the 17th of תמוז Moshe broke the divine Tablets, the visible sign of the covenant between G-d and Israel. As a result the 17th of תמוז was predestined for subsequent national misfortunes, מוכן לפורעניות, prepared

for calamities so to speak, and therefore the day of the “breaking of the Tablets” was designated as a fast day.

The Gemara תענית brings down that אמר רבן שמעון בן גמליאל: לא “ R. Shimon ben Gamaliel said there never were in Israel greater days of joy than ... the Day of Atonement.” Rashi explains that it is a day of forgiveness and pardon because on that day, the 10th of תשרי , Israel received the “second Tablets” handed down by Moshe. The significance of this event can be described as follows: G-d reconnected with His displaced people. Therefore יום הכפורים constitutes the greatest and most important holy day for Israel. The Covenant between G-d and Israel was renewed and eternalized on יום הכפורים .

IX

Yom Kippur - a Day of Renewal of the Alliance Between G-d and Israel

The sin of the Golden calf, the infidelity of Israel against G-d just after it had received its religious and moral foundation through the Revelation at Sinai, shook the entire world, It set Israel, together with all of humanity, back to a **תוהו ווהו** state, similar to the one that prevailed at the time of the Flood and of the Babylonian tower. G-d considered an annihilation decree against Israel while speaking to Moshe: **ויחר אפי בהם ואכלם ואעשה אותך לגוי גדול – שמות לב י** “And My anger will be kindled against them so that I will annihilate them, and I will make you into a great nation.” Moses, the great and faithful shepherd of Israel, rose to defend his people and spoke with the passion of his soul: **ועתה אם תשא חטאתם ואם אין מחני נא מספרך – שמות לב לב** “And now, if You will, forgive their sin but if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written”. And the merciful G-d, forgives the people of His Covenant their great and egregious sin. On the 10th of Tishrei He declares **סלחתי כדברך – במדבר יז כ** “I have pardoned according to your word.” On that very day Moses chiseled the second Tablets; Israel received them, and thereby the Alliance between Israel and the **הבק"ה** was eternally sealed for the second time.

The Torah includes the tenth of **תשרי** among the Jewish Holy Days, designating it the annual Day of Atonement and labeling it **שבת שבתון**, in recognition of the significant event that occurred on this day.

The similarity between the weekly **שבת** and the **שבת שבתון**, **יום**, catches one's attention. The earthly Creations received their **נשמה**, their soul, their secure foundation on both of these days, that is, on the day of the Revelation at Sinai and on the day of transmission of the “second Tablets”.

Our discussions thus far logically lead to the intrinsic connection between

the most important three days in the history of the emergence of the Jewish people. These three days are: the Passover night representing the Engagement of G-d with Israel, the *hbr* of the Revelation at Sinai metaphorically the wedding day, and the 10th of Tishrei, the day the Second Tablets were given over to Israel, marking the renewal of the Holy Covenant which was dissolved by the sin of the Calf. The assertion that these “three days” bear the same name “*hbr*” because of their roles in the completion of the work of Creation by means of the Torah Covenant now seems well founded.

How beautiful is this grand Alliance idea of the “*שבת* consecration” in the *עבודה* of the day of Atonement symbolizes: The grand Alliance represented by the consecration of the “*hbr*” is beautifully symbolized in the *עבודה*, the priestly ritual of the Day of Atonement: The Kohen Godol sprinkled the blood of the bull upward seven times in front of the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the Second Tablets as well as the fragments of the First. The sprinkling seven times on the day of Atonement, the anniversary of receiving the Second Tablets, is a shining symbol that the Torah Alliance with Israel constitutes the last of the seven days of Creation.

Israel donates his blood — sacrifices his life for the sanctification of the Torah Covenant with G-d. Israel sanctifies the *שבת*, and the “*שבת-שבתון*”, the Day of Atonement. G-d, with love and mercy, forgives their sins and transgressions. This is the meaning and the essence of *יום הכפורים*.

The Number Two and the שבת

מזמור שיר ליום השבת טוב להודות. ר' יצחק פתח ראו כי ה' נתן לכם השבת, מהו ראו, אמר ר' אמי מרגליתא ויהיבית לכוון, א"ר יצחק כל עסקה של שבת כפול, עומרה כפול שנאמר שני העומר לאחד, קרבנה כפול שנא' וביום השבת שני כבשים בני שנה תמימים גו', ענשה כפול שנאמר מחלליה מות יומת, מתן שכרה כפול שנאמר, וקראת לשבת עונג לקדוש ה' מכובד, אזהרותיה כפולות שנאמר זכור את יום השבת שמור את יום השבת, מזמורה כפול מזמור שיר ליום השבת, אמר ר' קטינא שיתא אלפי שני הוי עלמא וחד חרוב – בישיעיה ברמי שצ"ד.

34

of the Holiness of שבת .

The juxtaposition of the Show Bread law to the foregoing requirements for the seven branched menorah which, as we already suggested, is a symbol of the six days physical creation and the שבת of the Revelation at Sinai, demonstrates the unequivocal commonality between the Show Bread and the Menorah. As is well known the word לחם (bread) symbolizes divine teaching in various parts of the Bible משלי ט ה . Thus the work of Creation was "spiritualized" twice, the first time on 6th of סיון by handing over the יום on י תשרי , and then again after the sin of the Calf in עשרת הדיברות through the giving of the Second Tablets to Israel. The most significant event of that original Day of Atonement was, without a doubt, the transmission of the Second Tablets. It was a repetition of מתן תורה . Since the day of giving the First Tablets was intrinsically intertwined with idea of שבת , it seems only natural, that the same be true of the day of its recurrence, י תשרי , and for this reason is labeled שבת שבתון .

Therefore, the two stacks of six loaves of bread, perhaps can be considered to be symbols of the six days of earthly creation leading to the שבת and to the שבת שבתון . The repetition ביום השבת ביום השבת suggests that each of the two acceptances of the Torah represents the infusion of the soul into the material world thereby completing its creation.

It is now clear that the Show Breads are an icon for the culmination of the everlasting Divine Alliance with Israel through the Torah. According to the Talmud Chagiga כסידורו כך סילוקו – בבל the Show Breads kept their freshness and warmth in a wonderful way from one שבת to the next. This miracle demonstrated the fundamental and inviolable principle that the Torah with all its commandments never becomes obsolete and retains its freshness and warmth with all the advances of human culture.

XI

The שבת Candles, Kiddush and Havdalah

For millennia, Jewish women many of whom lead otherwise nonreligious lives, fulfill this woman specific obligation, the lighting of the שבת candles, executed in solemn reverence. Why does this מצוה have greater success than so many others; why does it enjoy such popularity? The reason is probably attributable to the famous משנה of בבבא מציעא – שבת ב ו' על שלש עבירות נשים מתות בשעת לידתן על שאינן זהירות בנדה בחלה Women die in childbirth for three transgressions: for lack of care with נדה חלה and הדלקת נרות .

The reason, according to the Gemara שבת אלף , that lack of care with lighting candles receives such severe punishment is that G-d says:

נשמה שנתתי בכם קרויה נר על עסקי נר הזהרתי אתכם אם אתם מקיימים אותם מוטב ואם לאו הריני נוטל נשמתכם “The soul that I breathed into you is called light; I have warned you to keep this light holy and if you do not then I will take your ‘Light’, your souls, your lives».

Commenting on the above cited Gemara, Rashi explains why the commandment to light candles is specifically directed to women. ונשים נצטוו על כך כדאמרין בבראשית רבה היא איבדה חלתו של עולם שעל ידה “The woman, נטרד אדם הראשון שנתרם כחלה וכבתה נרו של עולם referring to Eve, brought the first sin into the world while in the Garden of Eden and thereby extinguished the Light of the World. Therefore, her daughters are commanded to light שבת candles to atone for this original sin.

Sin, religious and moral decay caused mental chaos and spread darkness throughout the world. The Revelation at Sinai on the day of שבת allowed spiritual light to radiate and dispel the moral darkness. Two candles are reminders of the two שבת days on which the two Divine Tablets were given. This is the symbolic content of the obligation to light the candles. They spread a devotional mood upon every Jewish home, like a Holy cloud descending at the onset of שבת . The sight of the שבת candles raises the soul high above all

the common daily activities. With the singing of the ancient שלום עליכם the father of every family welcomes the angels accompanying the שבת המלכה . This is followed by the קידוש , the sanctification of the שבת , whose words instill meaning and significance of the שבת deep into the hearts of wife and children.

The קידוש begins with the word ויכולו and ends with כי בנו בחרת . ואותנו קידשת מכל העמים ושבת קדשך באהבה וברצון הנחלתנו For You have chosen us and sanctified us from among all the nations. With love and favor You have granted us Your holy שבת as an inheritance.

In this connection the question why the ישמח משה passage was included in the שבת שחרית עמידה should be discussed. In view of our previous observations this question is easily answered. Matan Torah occurred on שבת , and, as the Bible says, in the early hours of the morning:

“It happened on the third day in the morning.” ויהי ביום השלישי בהיות הבקר – שעות יט טז It was the same with delivery of the Second Tablets on וישכם משה בבקר ויעל אל-הר סיני כאשר צוה יהוה : שבת יום כיפור Thus שבת morning is an appropriate time to recite the ישמח משה passage.

The קידוש prayer is said over a cup of wine. So also at the departure of שבת the bidding farewell is accompanied with the הבדלה prayer by the light of the הבדלה candle.

There are various views in הלכה about the origin and the reason for the requirement that the קידוש and הבדלה be recited over a cup of wine (see e.g. פסחים אטו)

Our discussions up to this point lead us to a very simple and clear rationale for these requirements. Wine is designated as a symbol of the Torah in innumerable places in the Gemorah and Midrash. Needless to say this should be substantiated with more precise detail and citations. According to our thinking the שבת day acquires its actual holiness, and its historical significance, from the Revelation at Sinai i.e. the completion of the Creation through the giving of the Torah.

To substantiate this intuitive reasoning, we offer the following quote: נמוגים ארץ וכל ישיביה, אנכי תכנתי עמודיה סלה – תהלים עה ד) “Even if the earth and all its inhabitants are melted, I have firmly established its pillars, Selah.” On the basis of various relevant מדרשים Rashi explains this Psalm as follows:

ביום מתן תורה כשהיו נמוגים הארץ וכל יושביה מתנאי שהתנית עם מעשה בראשית אם לא יקבלו וכו' תחזרו לתוהו ובהו

If the people of Israel had not stood at Mount Sinai to receive the Torah, the Creation would have remained unfinished, its spiritual religious condition remaining in a state of תוהו ובהו The Creation attained its completion with the symbolic opening word of the Ten commandments אנכי This idea is expressed by the words:

“I have firmly established its pillars” אנכי תכנתי עמודיה

Therefore in the קידוש welcoming the שבת Queen, the wine symbolizes the Torah.

Likewise the wine serves as Symbol of the Torah in the הבדלה prayer at the departure of the שבת As we prepare to bid farewell to the holy שבת day of rest and as the work week begins, the wine in hand should bring to our awareness that our entire range of activities during the six working days must be executed in full compliance with the Torah commandments. The holy Torah spirit emanating and radiating from the שבת day (and symbolized by the wine) should cascade over the entire spectrum of activities during the subsequent week so that a person remains a Jew by fulfilling obligations in accord with the holy Torah.

Darkness prevails in every Jewish home; The שבת is about to end; until then, the fire is lighted and הבדלה candle emits light for the recitation of the הבדלה Light, also Symbol of the Torah כי נר מצוה ותורה אור, should be shed on our weeks journey, to show the way we are to go during the work week and to protect us from errors, from the dark influences in the world around us.

The שבת light, the שבת idea, the synthesis between the physical and the spiritual world creation, the dualistic notion, the interconnectedness of matter and mind, body and soul, the connection between the this-worldly and otherworldly life, this circle of thought should be our guiding light, our guide to human perfection:

ליום שכולו שבת ומנוחה לחיי העולמים (משנה תמיד ז ד):
FOR A DAY THAT IS ALL שבת AND REST FOR EVERLASTING LIFE!

XII.

The Conquest of the First City in the Promised Land on a Sabbath

The Bible describes, in detail, the remarkable conquest of Jericho, the first city in the Holy Land occupied by Moses' successor Joshua: On G-d's command the people of Israel on the tenth of Nisan crossed the Jordan. Then G-d said to Joshua: ראה נתתי בידך את יריחו ואת מלכה, גיבורי החיל. וסבותם את העיר, כול אנשי המלחמה הקף את העיר פעם אחת; כה תעשה, ששת ימים. ושבעה כוהנים ישאו שבעה שופרות היובלים לפני הארון, וביום השביעי תסובו את העיר שבע פעמים; והכוהנים, יתקעו בשופרות – יהושוע ו גִּדְ

“Behold, I have given into your hand Jericho, its king, the mighty warriors. And you shall circle the city; all the men of war go round about the city once. Thus shall you do six days. And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the Ark; and on the seventh day you shall encircle the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.”

In this connection the Talmud Yerushalmi Shabbat I אלו teaches אין מקיפין על עיר של עכו"ם פחות מג' ימים קודם לשבת. הדא דתימר במלחמת הרשות. אבל במלחמת חובה אפילו בשבת שכן מצינו שלא נכבשה יריחו אלא בשבת דכתיב כה תעשה ששת ימים – יהושוע ו שבת This applies to a discretionary war. However, a necessary war may be waged even on שבת — as we know Jericho was conquered on שבת from the passage cited above יהושוע ו גִּדְ And if one would ask why Joshua was allowed to conquer Jericho while desecrating the שבת, then G-d would respond “I ordered it!”

Thus Jericho was conquered on שבת. And Joshua said unto the people gathering in the city: Just as the Sabbath is Holy so should the town captured on the Sabbath be consecrated to G-d (See Rashi on יהושוע ו יז). Further

according to the Midrash Rabba, just as חלה , the first secretion of dough is set aside, so the entire content of יריחו the first city of Land of Israel to be conquered, should be declared Holy for G-d. וכול כסף וזהב וכלי נחושת But all the silver and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated to the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of G-d.

An interpretation or elaboration of all the above is hardly needed. The specific details of the procedure for conquering the first city in the promised holy land clearly reflect the Divine planning, namely, the date of the conquest of the city coming immediately after Pesach, circling the walls of the city for seven days, fixing שבת as the actual day of the conquest, circling the walls seven times on this day, the sounding of the horns by the seven כהנים .

The seventh Day of creation, the consecrated Sabbath, which is also the day of the revelation at Sinai and the memorial day for the Torah alliance of G-d with Israel, also serves as the certain and unshakable foundation for the possessio of ארץ ישראל the Holy Land!

XIII.

The Triad: Israel, Torah, and Eretz Israel

Israel was freed from Egypt; the great historical event had taken place; the Jewish people appeared on the international stage; the Nation was born miraculously. However, not all prerequisites for Jewish identity were achieved by means of the Exodus from Egypt. The liberation from bondage merely created the Jewish Nation, but not Judaism. Pesach night was the occasion of the birth of the Jewish people but the birth of Judaism actually took place on the sixth of Sivan by the great Revelation at Sinai. Content, determination, mission, purpose, all these were only received by the Jewish people through the **שבת** Revelation at Sinai. This was the second main phase of becoming the Jewish people. Israel became the carrier of the unfurled Holy Flag of G-d with the mission of proclaiming and spreading morality and civilization amongst all of humanity. And Israel assumed the weighty yoke of the 613 commandments and prohibitions upon themselves and only for themselves.

However, at the point of the Sinai revelation, only two components had been created: the Jewish people and Judaism. The third component, indispensable for the existence of a free and prosperous people, was still missing. A nation must possess its own territory in order to be able to freely develop its intellectual and ethical powers. This axiom is particularly true for Israel, with its 613 Torah and numerous rabbinic commandments! The meaning of many commandments is absent in the Diaspora and hence can be only observed in the holy land of Israel. Furthermore our Commandments have an insulating effect that makes social interweaving between Israel and other cultures largely impossible. In the second part of our book, we go into a more detailed discussion of this delicate question.

It was only after wandering in the desert for forty years that the third and final prerequisite for the Jewish National existence was met. This happened when Joshua took possession of the land of our forefathers as Divinely promised. It is interesting to note that G-d commanded the crossing of Jordan on the tenth

of Nisan והעם עלו מן הירדן בעשור לחדש הראשון – יהושע ז יט And the people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month), the same day on which forty years earlier the people of Israel were commanded to deploy the Pesach lamb – בעשר לחודש הזה ויקחו להם איש שה – שמוות יב ג On the tenth of this month each man shall take a lamb. Thus, the cornerstone for building the Jewish nation was laid on the tenth of Nisan by taking the Paschal lamb and the third step in this construction, the appropriation of the land by crossing of the Jordan, was taken also on the tenth of Nisan

By crossing of the border of the Promise Land, the historic triad, Israel - Torah - Eretz Israel, was completed. The Covenant between G-d and Abraham, the forefather of the nation Israel, had been fully met from G-d's side. The Text of this Covenant is as follows:

אני הנה בריתי איתך והיית לאב המון גויים ... והקימותי את בריתי ביני ובינך ובין זרעך אחריו לדורותם לברית עולם להיות לך לאלוקים ולזרעך אחריו ונתתי לך ולזרעך אחריו את ארץ מגוריו את כל ארץ כנען לאחוזת עולם והייתי להם לאלקים – בראשית יז ז,ח

As for Me, behold My covenant is with you, and you shall become the father of a multitude of nations ... And I will establish My covenant between Me and between you and between your seed after you throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant, to be to you G-d and to your seed after you. And I will give you and your seed after you the land of your sojournings, the entire land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and I will be to them G-d. In this text, the Covenant between G-d and Abraham our forefather, the eternal possession of the Land of Canaan is assured with unambiguous clarity. The words שמוות ו ז are reiterated in ולקחתם אתכם לי לעם and prefaced by Rav Hirsch (Pentateuch-Commentary) explains that indicates that Judaism is not a church or religion in the usual sense. It is a Nation in accord with the spirit of G-d.

The above discussion clarifies the important role the possession of the Land of Canaan plays in the framework of the Divine promise to Abraham. But it also leaves us a bit puzzled. Is it not very surprising that the basic tenet of Judaism, Eretz Yisrael, is not even mentioned in the "Ten Commandments"? At the announcement of the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, Moses had so often conveyed the Divine message "I will lead you to the land of your forefathers" and now, at the "marriage" of G-d with his people at Sinai not a word

or thought about this land. The reason for this might be found in the fact that the possession of the Holy Land was not continuous and that for two millennia, while no longer slaves of Pharaoh, we were merely tolerated citizens of other countries **אכתי עבדי אחשורוש אנן – מגלה א4, ערכין ב10**

However, on the basis of a Midrash, even the position that the third component of our nation, the Holy Land, was given a worthy place in the framework of the Revelation at Sinai can be supported. The Midrash **שומר טוב סח** asks about the verse **ההר חמד אלקים לשבתו – תהילים סח יז** the mountain which G-d desired for His abode the question **וסיני מהיכן בא** and where did Sinai come from? To answer this question R' Yosi said:

מהר המוריה נתלש כחלה מן העיסה Sinai was ripped from Mt Moriah like a portion of chala from dough. Thus, according to this Midrash, Mt. Sinai is an exclave of Eretz Yisrael, connecting the mountain of the Revelation with the mountain of the **עקידה**

We will not explore fully the deeper content of this Midrash but this much is quite obvious: It demonstrates the close ties and inseparable unity of the Torah and Eretz Yisrael, making it a true hallmark of the grandiose Triple Alliance of Israel, Torah and Eretz Yisrael.

G-d's words on the occasion of his first appearance to **משה** at Mt Choreb-Sinai harmonize beautifully and poignantly with the above Midrash: **של נעליך** **מלך רגליך כי המקום אשר אתה עומד עליו אדמת קודש הוא** remove your shoes from off your feet for the place upon which you stand is holy ground. From the phrase **אדמת קודש** it can be understood that the sacred soil of Eretz Yisrael, the Holy ground upon which the **בית המקדש** was destined to be built, had replaced the desert sand of Sinai.

The correctness of this interpretation is supported by the noteworthy appearance of the same expression in the salutation of the angel to Joshua in front of the walls of Jericho, the first city to be conquered in the promised land **ויאמר שר צבא ה' אל יהושוע של נעליך – יהושוע ה טו**

In the final analysis it seems clear that the concept of **שבת** unifies all the holy Jewish values. After all, the **שבת** connects the epitome of all holy Jewish ideals, the whole foundation of Jewish ideology in itself; specifically the fact that the great event of the Revelation at Sinai occurred on **שבת** emphasizes the link between Creation, the giving of the Torah at Sinai, and the Holy Land.

The above train of thought about the triad, Israel - Torah - Eretz Yisrael, is based on a beautiful metaphorical interpretation of the following pas-

sage from the Yerushalmi Talmud: רבי יונה כדעתיה דרבי יונה שתי ארבעתי כסוי דלילי פסחא וחזיק רישיה עד עצרתה רבי יודה בי רבי אלעי שתי ארבעתי כסוי דלילי פיסחא וחזיק רישיה עד חגא – ירושלמי פסחים דף סט,א פרק י הלכה א

Rabbi Jonah drank the four cups at the Pesach night and had a headache until Shavuot; Rabbi Yehuda drank four cups on Pesach night and a headache even until Sukkot. המדרש הזה אומר דרשני — it is clear that these statements are not to be understood literally.

The four cups that we drink at the Seder are not only symbols of the four expressions of the redemption – והוצאתי וגאלתי ולקחתי – שמוֹת וּרְחֹ but also allude to the other Feasts of Israel. The following is the metaphor contained in the above Yerushalmi Talmud:

Rabbi Jonah was so mentally intoxicated by the idea of the “four cups” as a Jewish insignia that he was only able to regain his inner balance by the day of Matan Torah, that is, Shavuot.

Rabbi Yehuda went even further. He was so consumed by a blazing love for Eretz Israel that he could not be stabilized like his colleague Rabbi Jonah with the Matan Torah Festival. The “Third Triad”, Eretz Israel, was still missing! Only after the Sukkot festival was Rabbi Yehuda able to feel that he completed the circle of Jewish ideology. Sukkot was originally designated as a celebration of the soil, a harvest festival on sacred Jewish ground. The two commandments of the Bible, that apply on Sukkot, the occasion of gathering from the soil, express thanks to G-d for blessing the soil. באספכם את When you have gathered the fruits of the land, you shall keep the feast of G-d seven days ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון פרי עץ הדר כפת תמרים וענף עץ-עבת וערבי-נחל. ושמתם לפני יהוה אלהיכם שבעת ימים – ויקרא כג מ אתרוג , branches of palm trees , לולב , and boughs of thick trees , הדסים , and willows of the brook , ערבות , and you shall rejoice before the Lord your G-d seven days. חג הסוכות תעשה לך שבעת ימים באספך מגרנך ומיקבך – דברים טז יג You shall celebrate the feast of booths when you collect from your threshing floor and your winepress. The Talmud concludes on the basis of this passage that by-products (straw, leaves and the like) should be used for the covering of the booths.

Although the Suka - and Arba minim are mandatory in the Diaspora and

are not classified as מצוה התלויה בארץ, a commandment bound Eretz Israel, the fact that they are commandments thanking G-d for blessing the soil at the conclusion of all harvesting operations is not to be overlooked. For this reason, the view that the Sukkot festival is a celebration of the land is well founded.

And so the three pilgrimage festivals Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot correspond to Jewish people, Torah and Jewish Land, respectively.

The thought of the intrinsic inseparability of the Jewish triad, people, faith, and country, is what captured Rabbi Yehuda, upon drinking the "Four Cups" and did not leave him until the calming and strengthening arrival of Sukkot, the festival of the land of the Jewish people.

XIV.

The Sabbatical Year and the Shabbat

The wording of the *מצוה* of *שנת שמיטה* in the Torah is quite strange and unprecedented among the vast circle of our *מצוות*.

The statement is

ושבתה הארץ שבת לה' ... ובשנה השביעית שבת שבתון יהיה לארץ שבת ליהוה. (ויקרא כה ב-ד)

"The land keeps a *שבת* for G-d ... and in the seventh year shall be a *שבת* of solemn rest for the land, a *שבת* for G-d." Noteworthy! While the other commandments of the Torah are addressed to the Jewish people, this is directed to the land! A peculiar wording that is without parallel in Jewish law.

The expression *שבת לה'* used here is also not entirely clear. It can mean either "*שבת* of the Eternal" or "*שבת* for the Eternal". Rashi chooses the latter interpretation: "לשם ה' כשם שנאמר בשבת בראשית" "For the sake of G-d, as is stated about the *שבת* of Creation." The identical phrase in both instances connects *שנת שמיטה* with the Creation. See *רמב"ן על ב' ויקרא כה ב'*

A further peculiarity of *מצוה* of *שנת שמיטה* is reflected in the introduction: *וידבר ה' אל משה בהר סיני* And G-d spoke to Moses at Mt Sinai. Is it not strange that just *מצוה* of *שנת שמיטה* is commanded at Sinai, whereas all other 613 commandments and prohibitions were taught at Sinai? This question was already posed by Rashi:

מה ענין שמיטה אצל הר סיני; והלא כל המצוות נאמרו מסיני
What relevance does the subject of Shemittah have to Mt Sinai? Weren't all the commandments stated from Sinai? Perhaps this can be answered as follows:

The scale and the weight which the Torah attaches to the *מצוה* of *שנת שמיטה* is seen from the severity of the penalty prescribed for its violation. Hence that it is extremely weighty can be seen from each one of the following four quotations which indicates that dispersion among the nations is the terrible consequence of failure to observe this *מצוה* :

ואתכם אזרה בגויים והריקותי אחריכם חרב והייתה ארצכם שממה ועריכם יהיו חורבה. אז תרצה הארץ את שבתותיה כול ימי הושמה ואתם בארץ אויביכם אז תשבת הארץ והרצת את שבתותיה כל ימי הושמה תשבות את אשר לא שבתה בשבתותיכם בשבתכם עליה – ויקרא כו לג-לה

And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword after you. Your land will be desolate, and your cities will be laid waste. Then, the land will be paid its sabbaticals. During all the days that it remains desolate while you are in the land of your enemies, the Land will rest and thus be paid its sabbaticals. It will rest all the days that it remains desolate comensurate with all your sabbaticals it had not rested while you lived upon it.

Concerning the following passage:

עד רצתה הארץ את שבתותיה: כל ימי הושמה שבתה למלאות שבעים שנה. (דברי הימים ב פרק לו כא)

“Until the land had been paid for its שבתות it rested until the completion of seventy years for all the days of its desolation.” Rashi explains that:

שבעים שנה של גלות בבל הן היו כנגד שבעים שנות השמטה ויובל שהיו בשנים שהכעיסו ישראל בארצם לפני המקום ארבע מאות ושלושים שנה. “The seventy years of the Babylonian exile corresponded to the seventy years of Shemittah and Jubilee years that took place during the years that Israel angered G-d while in their Land for 430 years.”

Similar declarations can be found in פרקי אבות :

גלות באה לעולם על עבודה זרה, ועל גילוי עריות, ועל שפיכות דמים, ועל שמיטת הארץ

“Exile comes to the world for idol-worship, sexual immorality, murder and the failure to leave the land fallow in the sabbatical year.”

The juxtaposition and parity of transgressing the מצוה of שנת שמיטה with the three killed-rather-than-transgress crimes in the Torah is so astonishing that we must ask what is the actual meaning of שנת שמיטה and why is the punishment for transgressing it so harsh.

Maybe, the Midrash saying Mt Sinai was part of Mt Moria can show us the way to a satisfactory answer. Eretz Israel joins with people of Israel and the Torah into an inseparable unity. The creation of the world was completed by מתן תורה at Sinai, part of the land of Israel, on שבת. This expresses the intrinsic connection between the שבת day of rest and with the Schemita year of rest, as well as, the unity of Israel, Torah and Eretz Israel.

Therefore the *מצוה* of *שנת שמיטה* has the same meaning and content as the weekly *שבת*. The ground of the Holy Land, which played a key role at the Sinai revelation, is intended to document by means of a *שבת* of its own kind, the *שבת* of the great Revelation at Sinai. When the soil observes the commandment addressed to it by as a reminder of the Sinai *שבת*, then also we, the children of Israel, must not desecrate the worship of *שבת* by working our fields.

It is also entirely appropriate and understandable that Mount Sinai is mentioned in the *מצוה* of *שנת שמיטה*. It is rooted in the *שבת* at Sinai revelation; its entire meaning is in the Sinai event. It follows that an offense against the institution of *שנת שמיטה* is equivalent to the desecrating the triad people, Torah and land. A violation of *שנת שמיטה* constitutes a violation of *בראשית* - thoughts; a desecration of the *עמודי העולם* disrupts the three foundations of the world and therefore receives the harshest of all possible punishments, Galut, exile and confusion.

In conclusion we summarize our interpretation of the *שבת* idea: the Foundation of the *שבת* and its sanctification is not only for the memory of the day of rest following the six days of Creation but also a reminder of the largest of all the events, namely, the completion of the creation of the soul and the orientation of the universe by means of the Sinai revelation - the Crown of the Queen, the *שבת*.