

Time and Space - the Holiness of Shabbat

Excerpts from R. Abraham Joshua Heschel's The Sabbath

“The Sabbath is not determined by any event in nature, such as the new moon, but by the act of creation. Thus the essence of Shabbat is completely detached from the world of space.”

Text #1 Reflection questions:

- 1- What does it mean that Shabbat was created by the “act of creation”?
- 2- Why is Shabbat detached from the world of space?

“The meaning of Shabbat 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 *holiness in time*. It is a day in which we are called upon to share in 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.”

Text #3 Reflection questions:

- 1- What do you think the quote “There are no two hours alike” really means? What is the author’s intention?
- 2- Why does Judaism want us to be attached to sacred events and “consecrate sanctuaries that emerge from the magnificent stream of a year”?

Text #2: Reflection questions:

1- What does it mean to “turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation” and “from the world of creation to the creation of the world”?

2- What does it mean to “celebrate time rather than space”

“Judaism is a religion of time aiming at the *sanctification of time*. Unlike the space-minded man to whom time is unvaried, iterative, homogeneous, to whom all hours are alike, qualities, empty shells, the Bible senses the diversified character of time. There are no two hours alike. Every hour is unique and the only one given at the moment, exclusive and endlessly precious. 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...”

Text #3 Reflection questions:

- 1- What do you think the quote “There are no two hours alike” really means? What is the author’s intention?
- 2- Why does Judaism want us to be attached to sacred events and “consecrate sanctuaries that emerge from the magnificent stream of a year”?

“The art of keeping the seventh day is the art of painting on the canvas of time the mysterious grandeur of the climax of creation : as He sanctified the seventh say, so shall we. The love of the Sabbath is the love of man for what he and God have in common. Our keeping the Sabbath day is a paraphrase of His sanctification of the seventh day.

What would be a world without the Sabbath? It would be a world that knew only itself or God distorted as a thing of the abyss separating Him from the world; a world without the vision of a window in eternity that opens into time.”

Text #4 Reflection questions:

- 1- Please reflect on this excerpt. What do you think it is telling us?
- 2- Why the image of art? What can that teach us?