

# Sabbath as Temple: Some Thoughts on Space and Time in Judaism

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In 1945, just as the European Holocaust (and with it the second great age in Jewish history) was drawing to a close, Abraham Joshua Heschel gave voice to a hope that later Jewish history would one day be recognized and sanctified by the world, as has the history of Biblical Israel:

When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and set fire to the Temple, our forefathers did not forget the Revelation at Mount Sinai and the words of the Prophets. Today the world knows that what transpired on the soil of Palestine was sacred history, from which mankind draws its inspiration. A day may come when the hidden light of the East European period will be revealed.<sup>1</sup>

We look at Jewish history throughout the Diaspora period—going here beyond Heschel and extending back from Eastern Europe to the Roman destruction—and ask ourselves what sort of inspiration we hope humanity might derive from the collective experience of the Jew. Surely the basic insights of our religion, moral as well as spiritual, are by now accessible outside of Judaism, whether through her younger sister faiths or altogether independently. The particularizing nuances of Jewish faith and expression, vital as they may seem from within, will not constitute a major new source of understanding. It is rather from the experience of Jewish history, and within this overwhelmingly from the experience of

*galut*, that the world has to learn. Homelessness, alienation, permanent insecurity, the feeling of living as unwelcome guests in a society not of our making: these long-known characteristics of life as a Jew are now increasingly the lot of millions of others in a world where the uprooting of populations, the migration of labor forces, and, above all, the ongoing urbanization and de-traditionalization of people are taking place far faster than anyone can record.

Surely the great miracle of Jewish existence is our survival of *galut*. But if we ask ourselves what exactly *galut* is, and what means the Jewish people used to combat its corrosive power, our answer will necessarily be manifold. Our interest here is in the specifically religious quality of *galut*, in distinction (a historical artificiality, to be sure) from its political, economic, linguistic, and other aspects. It was in religious terms, after all, that pre-modern Jews generally and most successfully expressed themselves, and it is around religious symbols, not surprisingly, that a great deal of the discussion of *galut* is focused.

*Umi-penei haṭa'enu galinu me-'arṣenu*—"because of our sins we were exiled from our land." Such phrases abound in Jewish liturgy, alternating always with the prayers for restoration. If we take such liturgical expression as a standard for the Jews' images of their history, it becomes clear that *ḥurban* and *galut*, the destruction of the Temple and the exile from the land, are invariably treated as one. This is the case despite the fact that they did not come at the same time in the all-important second destruction. Erez Yisrael remained a major center of Jewish life and creativity for four or five hundred years after the Temple was destroyed. The paradigmatic event for classical-Jewish self-understanding was the *first* destruction, even though it was in the crucible of the second that rabbinic Judaism had its birth. Sin and prophetic warning, followed by destruction and exile as one event—this is the way the Jewish people chose to remember it.

In order to see the meaning of this exile in religious terms, some patterns perceived elsewhere in the study of the history of religions should be recalled. Israel is a people living in what its God has designated as a holy land, proclaimed as such through the various deeds of revered ancestors in times long gone. In that holy land God has chosen one place "to cause His name to dwell there" (Deut. 12:11) and at that spot has commanded His faithful servant to build a Temple. True, many among Israel had learned, especially by the second Temple period, that their God was not purely a local tribal deity, that the Creator could be wor-

shipped from anywhere and by others as well as Israel. And yet the religion of Israel had never fully abandoned its tribal roots. The Land of Israel, Jerusalem, and the Temple were still the *right* places—if not the only places—for Israel to stand before its God. The clearest expression of this viewpoint in the Bible is probably the prayer of Solomon, with which he reportedly dedicated the House of God. It is worth calling to mind some excerpts:

But will God really dwell on earth? Even the heavens and their uttermost reaches cannot contain You, how much less this house that I have built! Yet turn, O Lord my God, to the prayer and supplication of Your servant, and hear the cry and prayer which Your servant offers before You this day. May Your eyes be open day and night toward this House, toward the place of which You have said: "My name shall abide there"; may You heed the prayers which Your servants will offer toward this place. And when You hear the supplications which Your servant and Your people offer toward this place, give heed in Your heavenly abode—give heed and pardon . . .

In any plague or in any disease, in any prayer or supplication offered by any person among all Your people Israel—each of whom knows his own affliction—when he spreads his palms toward this House, O hear in Your heavenly abode, and pardon and take action! . . .

When Your people take the field against their enemy by whatever way You send them, and they pray to the Lord in the direction of the city which You have chosen, and of the House which I have built to Your name, O hear in heaven their prayer and supplication and uphold their cause. (I Kings 8:27-30; 38-39; 44-45)

Although this prayer was probably composed long after Solomon, and possibly after the first exile, it shows how central the chosen city and Temple remained in Israelite eyes. Historians of religion have shown that early societies are generally constructed around a geographical "sacred center." Such a center serves to embody the values and aspirations of each society. It is also in one way or another the very real dwelling place of the deity, the locus out of which divine power radiates, or at least the place on earth where humans are most apt to be touched by the Presence. The Bible is somewhat reserved about the expression of this concept, at least in some of its more mythological aspects. The notion that the Temple is the opening to heaven and hell, or stands on the spot with which Creation began, or is located just below a great heavenly Temple, does

not find direct narrative expression in Scripture. They are of course indicated by biblical language and terminology: *Beth El* and *Sha'ar ha-Shamayim* are two of the more obvious examples. The fact that these terms grow forth into full and explicit narratives in the post-Biblical sources, where less care was taken with regard to such anti-mythic "orthodoxy," and sometimes in forms quite strikingly parallel to expressions in Mesopotamian literature of more than a millenium earlier, makes it rather likely that these concepts were indeed a part of the unrecorded folk legacy of ancient Israel.<sup>2</sup> This notion of center ties together visions of ideal past or origins and restoration in the harmonious future, which is to say that it stands at the very core of what the Bible understands as both cosmology and history. It has also been suggestively argued that the Biblical narrative itself, taken as a literary whole, may be said to have underlying it an ongoing sense of sacred center, extending from the tree of Eden down through Abraham's discovery of the Holy Land, Jacob's Bethel vision, and the tabernacle in the wilderness, until it receives its final articulation in the city of David and the Temple of his son.<sup>3</sup>

Bearing in mind this view of Temple as the center of cosmic orientation, we can now pose more clearly our question about the religious meaning of *galut* to the Jewish people and how post-Biblical Judaism has been a reaction to it. First, we should reiterate that the destruction of the Temple made *galut* a fact; a visit or even settlement in the Holy Land could not change that. The Land of Israel *sans* Temple and altar was still sacred, to be sure, but it had lost much of its luster in Jewish eyes. Medieval Jewish visitors to the Land, rather than glorying in their return home, joined the land in its mourning. It was as though the burning of Jerusalem had caused the land itself to go into exile. Our primary focus, however, should not be upon Judaism's mourning but upon its growth and renewal. Given the role that the Jerusalem center played in the cosmology of ancient Israel, and given the later Biblical insistence that only there could the cult of Israel be practiced, how was the transition made in the religious life of the Jewish people from Temple to synagogue, from a sacrificial cult at the Center to a liturgical faith that could thrive anywhere?<sup>4</sup> To answer this we should look at the attitudes of the early synagogue and its religion, especially as reflected in the liturgy, toward the old cult and Temple. Fortunately, this very question has been addressed in an illuminating study by Robert Goldenberg entitled "The Broken Axis."<sup>5</sup> In examining early rabbinic liturgy the author notes that the

rabbis never resolved the dilemma of whether or not their religion of prayer, *halakhah*, and study successfully superseded the Jerusalem cult. They proclaimed with Hosea (14:3) that "We shall render for bullocks the offering of our lips" and they structured their daily *'amidah* prayers as though they were filling the role of sacrifices. But they also made sure, in the midst of those prayers, to express a longing that "the Temple be rebuilt soon, in our own days," that "You restore the priests to their service and the Levites to their song and music," and, quite explicitly, that "there we shall eat of the sacrifices and the Paschal offerings as their blood reaches the side of Your altar, in fulfillment of Your will."<sup>6</sup> Goldenberg reaches the following conclusion:

The self-conception of rabbinic Judaism is built on the contradictory assumptions that the earlier worship in the Temple has been successfully left behind, but that things will never be quite right until it has been restored. If considered theologically, that amounts to a stark contradiction or at best an ambivalent paradox; seen as an effort to preserve the old religious orientation after its basis has been swept away, it makes sense. We can then see here the outlines of a system which took advantage of the disorientation caused by the fall of Jerusalem, but did not fall victim to it. The continuity of religious life was thus protected, even as all the forms of religious life had to be changed.

This ambivalence toward the sacred center is placed into clearest relief when the position of rabbinic Judaism is contrasted with that of its rival and fellow heir to ancient Hebrew cosmology, the early Church. Classical Christianity took the clear and unambiguous step that the rabbis declined to take: the old Temple has been replaced. Christ has become the center; sacred space has been recast into Christ the Temple. Sacred person completely dominates the cosmological stage; as Jesus the Christ is Torah enfleshed, so is he God's house re-established. His cross and his body are the meeting-place of heaven and hell. His body, through its presence in the eucharist, is able thus to consecrate real sacred space over and over again. It is the clear negation of the old *axis mundi* that allows Christianity the power to symbolically create new sacred space in a way that Judaism was never able (nor did it seek) to do. The cathedral and its architecture seek to recreate and embody the primal world; through the death of sacred space and its rebirth, creation can happen anew. The synagogue, though sometimes called *miqdash me'at*, is viewed so much as a temporary replacement for the only *real*

sanctuary that its structure, however loved and sometimes embellished, could not be granted such significance.

Lacking an unambiguous resolution of this question, the Judaism of the rabbis moved on several fronts at once. The Day of Atonement, liturgy, and good deeds all serve in one or another rabbinic pronouncement to replace the altar. Sacred person has a very limited role in early post-exilic Judaism, and assumes major proportions only—to the distress of many—in the Hasidism of the eighteenth century.<sup>7</sup> An area that is less obvious, largely because it is not articulated directly by the rabbis, is our concern here: the transfer of attention from sacred space to sacred *time*. Diaspora Israel are deprived of space; the land they are in is profane in their sight, not capable or worthy of sanctuary. The only truly holy place, far off from most, in any case lies in presently irreparable ruin. What has remained untouched by the conqueror, however, and, moreover, what remains consistently portable for a wandering community, is the realm of time. It is to time, and of course particularly to the Sabbath, that the rabbis sought to turn Israel's attention. The development of the already ancient Sabbath as the central ritual/halakhic institution of rabbinic Judaism was a specific reaction to the era of destruction, and represented an unconscious shifting of primary Jewish allegiance from the spatial to the temporal realm.

It was Heschel, whose words introduced this study, who first called the attention of modern Jews to the Temple-like quality of the Jewish Sabbath. His book *The Sabbath* made frequent reference to *shabbat* as a "palace in time" and went on to describe Judaism as a time-oriented rather than space-oriented way of viewing the world. Heschel did not, however, set the centrality of *shabbat* in historical context, a move that might have been inappropriate to an essentially poetic work.<sup>8</sup> In asserting the superiority of time over space as an eternal Jewish value, however, and in consigning the love of space to the realms of the ancient pagan and the modern materialist, the work inevitably wound up in deprecation of space, despite Heschel's claims to the contrary.

The remainder of this study may be viewed as an extended postscript to *The Sabbath*, a claim that *shabbat*-centered piety belongs specifically to the second era of Jewish history, the result of particular spiritual/historical circumstances.

Anyone familiar with the life of a traditional Jewish community needs no proof of the centrality of *shabbat* in Jewish religious life. The ongoing love affair between Jew and *shabbat* is so well attested in Jewish

folk literature, and has been so beautifully described by Heschel and others, that it would be worse than superfluous to try to capsule it here. It might be worth noting that there are ways in which the Jewish community actually *defined* itself religiously as a community of Sabbath-observers: one who keeps the Sabbath is part of the group, but one who profanes it (for the Sabbath was proclaimed holy at Creation) is not. A Sabbath-observer may be trusted as a witness before a rabbinic court; a Sabbath-profaner may not. Food served in the home of a known Sabbath-observer may be assumed ritually fit; among others one could take no chances. Probably the closest one could come to speaking of an "Orthodox" Jew in pre-modern Jewish parlance, as used within the community, was *shomer shabbos*. Such evidences are, of course, popular and informal; they reflect general opinion rather than *halakhah*,<sup>9</sup> and are not necessarily early. One might wonder, however, whether the Talmudic tale of the final encounter between Elisha ben Abuya and Rabbi Meir does not represent something similar. It is as Elisha rides off on his horse beyond the Sabbath-barrier, leaving Meir behind, that the final break is made by the heretic who has left the rabbinic fold.<sup>10</sup>

The observance of the Sabbath has always been one of the major concerns of Jewish law: definitions and categorizations of forbidden labors, punishments for Sabbath-violation, and the application of old categories of forbidden labor to ever-new situations of advancing human technology have occupied Jewish legalists since very early times. While we do not know as much as we would like about the observance of the Sabbath in pre-rabbinic times, there is much evidence from the later period of the Second Temple, both internal and external, to indicate that Sabbath rest was a central part, if not actually the defining characteristic, of the religion of the Jews.<sup>11</sup> Evidence from the Dead Sea sectarians shows that their Sabbath was rather like that of the later rabbis in terms of its halakhic nature;<sup>12</sup> some indications are now found that lead scholars to trace later forms of Sabbath observance back to Biblical times, despite the lack of written evidence for them.<sup>13</sup>

Our claim is *not*, then, that Sabbath became *important* only after the destruction of the Temple. This would be foolish; the ten commandments are ample testimony to the contrary. It is rather this: *the Sabbath gradually supplanted the Temple as the central unifying religious symbol of the Jewish people*. This shift took place originally in the context of the sectarian strife of the Second Temple period, and was ultimately confirmed by the destruction of the Temple.

The best symbol for this movement from space-oriented to time-oriented piety is in the formula that the rabbis use to encapsulate the Sabbath regulations; the thirty-nine categories of forbidden labor. According to Talmudic report (originally disputed but later widely accepted by the tradition)<sup>14</sup> the biblical basis for almost the entirety of the Sabbath prohibitions lies in Exodus 31:13: "Moreover you shall keep My Sabbaths . . ." This Sabbath command is inserted, seemingly without reason, in the midst of the ongoing discussion of the building of the tabernacle, the Torah's prototype of an ideal Temple. Since the word *'akh*, with which this Sabbath verse opens, is a term of exception in the technical vocabulary of rabbinic exegesis (i.e. it comes to teach that what follows is an exception to the previously stated rule), the rabbis conclude that all forms of labor involved in any way in the construction of the tabernacle were meant to be forbidden on the Sabbath. These include such general categories, e.g., as planting, shearing, dyeing, sewing, and striking a hammer. The point seems to be obscure and arbitrary, that so much of Sabbath law should be unmentioned in Scripture and derived from a seemingly innocuous two-letter Hebrew word. The rabbis themselves called it "mountains hanging by a hair."<sup>15</sup> But perhaps it is neither arbitrary nor obscure. The commandments for the tabernacle tell how to construct sacred space, elaborating in full and rich detail the place that was to be Israel's center and opening to heaven. Now, because of changed circumstances, a new such center was needed, temporal rather than spatial in character. The ancient and revered institution of *shabbat* is the vehicle, of course, but the detail of *shabbat* observance is lacking in Biblical basis and especially lacking in a coherent structure to lend it meaning. By the deft interpretation of an *'akh*, the rabbis have succeeded in transferring all that Biblical detail from the realm of space, where it had been rendered useless, to that of time. The phenomenon is one of reversal: by *doing* all these labors in the particular prescribed configuration, one creates sacred space. By *refraining* from these same acts, in the context of the Sabbath, one creates sacred time. Here the legalistic device, far from being arbitrary, is used in a highly sophisticated way to effect a basic change in religious modality.

The Talmudic rabbis had not read Mircea Eliade. For them such notions as "sacred time" and "sacred space" hardly existed as categories of thought. There was, of course, no conscious decision taken one fine day at Yavneh to fashion the Sabbath after the fallen Temple.<sup>16</sup> How then, according to our reading, could such a transference have come



about? How could Temple and *Shabbat*, two seemingly unrelated institutions of ancient Judaism, be so linked? The question requires a brief examination of the theological rationale provided for these institutions in the Biblical and rabbinic sources, one that will uncover a deep though mostly unspoken link between the two, a link that makes this shift of focus after the destruction considerably more understandable.

Rav Judah in the name of Rav (Babylonia, 3rd cent.) teaches that Bezalel, architect of the tabernacle, "knew how to perform those permutations of letters through which heaven and earth were created."<sup>17</sup> Why should Bezalel, of all people (and not Moses or Aaron), be privy to this secret? The tradition makes sense only if his single task is somehow especially related to the original Creation. We do not have to go far to see that this is the case:

"These are the accounts of the tabernacle" (Ex. 38:21) . . . Said Rabbi Jacob ben Assi: Why does Scripture say "Lord, I love the habitation of Your House and the place where Your Glory dwells" (Ps. 26:8)? Because it [God's house] is parallel to the Creation of the world. How is this?

Of the first day it is written: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." It is also written "He stretched forth the heavens like a curtain." (Ps. 104:2). And what is written regarding the tabernacle? "You shall make curtains of goatskins" (Ex. 26:7).

On the second day: "Let there be a firmament," and separation is mentioned, as it says: "Let it separate waters from waters." And of the tabernacle: "And the veil shall separate for you between the holy and the holy of holies" (Ex. 26:33).

On the third day water is mentioned: "Let the waters be gathered." And in the tabernacle: "You shall make a brass basin with a brass base . . . and place water there" (Ex. 30:18).

On the fourth day He created the lights, as it says: "Let there be luminaries in the heavenly firmament." And in the tabernacle: "You shall make a gold candelabrum" (Ex. 25:31).

On the fifth day He created the birds: "Let the waters swarm with every living thing and let birds fly." Parallel to them in the tabernacles are sacrifices of lambs and birds. [Alternative reading: "And in the tabernacle: 'The cherubim spread their wings upward' (Ex. 25:20)."]

On the sixth day man was created, as it says: "He created man in His image.

He created him through the glory.<sup>18</sup> Man (Adam) in the tabernacle is the high priest, anointed to serve and minister before the Lord . . .<sup>19</sup>

The continuation of this midrash will be quoted below, but there is enough here for our present purposes. The parallel raises to an ultimate height the cosmic significance of the drama that takes place within the tabernacle or Temple. The priest is now Adam or the embodiment of all mankind, the candelabrum gives off the radiance of the sun, and so forth. While the language is that of metaphor, the intent seems clearly symbolic: thus is the cult to be understood. The rabbis speak of sacred space as microcosm, the tabernacle reproducing in a sacralized context the entirety of Creation. In other passages the relationship between Creation and the tabernacle is adumbrated somewhat differently: Creation is not quite complete or secure until it has been "sealed" by the erection of the sacred shrine:

"Who has established all the ends of the earth" (Prov. 30:4). The tent of meeting, as it says: "It was on the day that Moses completed setting up the tabernacle" (Num. 7:1). The world was set up with it. Rabbi Joshua ben Levi in the name of R. Simeon ben Yohai: It does not say *LeHa-QYM Ha-MiSHKaN*, but rather *LeHa-QYM 'et [with] Ha-MiSHKaN*. What was set up "with" it? The world, for until the tabernacle was erected the world trembled; when the tabernacle was set up the world was firmly established . . .<sup>20</sup>

Here too we see a theme that is familiar from other cultural contexts. The shrine finally validates (and hence guarantees) the existence of the world itself; only at this point is Creation complete.

Viewing the tabernacle/Temple from this perspective, we understand that the rabbis took it as no coincidence that the Sabbath command of Exodus 31:12 followed immediately upon the details of its construction. Only then is Moses told (31:1ff.) that God has called upon Bezalel and his associates to execute the work. The Sabbath warning comes before work can actually begin. Theologically as well as halakhically, there is no arbitrariness; as God rests on the seventh day after *His* work of Creation, so do you rest on the seventh of yours. The repetition of the Sabbath command in Ex. 35:1-3, just as the actual work is to get underway, makes it clear that in this case what the rabbis saw was probably *peshat*, at least the intent of a Scriptural editor.

The Sabbath, according to Genesis, is the apex of Creation. There is no holiness in God's world until He finds rest. Only after Creation has

been completed and He ceases from work does He bless and hallow. And it is not the fruit of His labors that is sanctified, but the day of His rest.

The building of a Temple is, for religious societies, the most meaningful of human labors; in it man makes an earthly dwelling-place for the presence of his God or, in Israel's case, a symbol of His presence in their midst. But this labor too remains unhallowed until completion. The laborers who constructed the Temple, we are told, were able to come and go throughout, even walking through what was to become the holy of holies, until their work was done.

No wonder then that the closing chapter of Exodus repeats the step-by-step structure of the opening chapter of Genesis, concluding with the unmistakable refrain *Va-yekhal Mosheh et ha-mel'akhah*.<sup>21</sup> A Biblical redactor, having before him an account that reached from Creation to the tabernacle, sought to "seal" that account with a conclusion that has an appropriate parallel to its beginning. Creation is completed by its repetition as a human act; God's work finds fulfillment only as something of His power to create to imitated by humans. In this linking of sacred-space construction to the original Creation, the Torah also implies a link, spoken only with the subtlety of juxtaposition and linguistic parallel, between Temple and Sabbath.

Now we may proceed with the passage from *Midrash Tanhuma* that we cited above. The six days of Creation, we recall, have already found their match in the tabernacle. And now:

On the seventh day: "Heaven and earth were completed." And in the tabernacle: "All the work was completed" (Ex. 39:32). Of Creation: "And God blessed [the seventh day]," and of the tabernacle: "And Moses blessed them" (Ex. 39:43). Of Creation: "God completed," and of the tabernacle: "On the day when Moses completed" (Num. 7:1). Of Creation: "And He made it holy," and of the tabernacle: "He anointed it and made it holy" (ibid.).

It was the rabbis' sensitivity to this nuance of Biblical meaning, barely hinted at in text but deeply implanted in the structure of the two institutions, that allowed them, in the face of the need of their age, to perform the delicate manipulation of an *'akh*<sup>22</sup> that had so great a meaning for all of the Judaism that was to come.

Jewish thinkers writing under the influence of Kabbalah, beginning in the thirteenth century, were able to articulate most fully this link

between Temple and Sabbath. In the works of the Spanish Kabbalists, well known for their deft use of symbols and their ability to rapidly translate from one symbol-system into another, it is frequently made clear either that Temple (or tabernacle) and Sabbath are one or else that they are the classic pair which need to be drawn together. Here we are dealing with a literature of mysticism, one in which both time and space will perforce be relativized. The chief focus of the Kabbalists' interest is the realm of the *sefirot*, seen at once as the stages of divine unfolding or emanation and as the rungs in the ladder of the mystic's ascent to the One. As the adept moves by successive degrees ever "upward" or "inward" toward realization, points along the journey must perforce somehow be designated. These designations, drawn especially by the *Zohar* in a full array of colorful symbols, may be characterized by terms that have their origins either in the temporal or the spatial realm. Either is acceptable for this purpose because neither is quite adequate. The divine effulgence does not first flow through either spatially locatable points or temporarily determined moments; neither does the mystic in his ascent to God. In order to speak of his universe in human language, however, he must designate the stages in symbols taken from one realm or the other. It is not surprising, then, to find in his writings moments in "time" and objects in "space" that turn out to be identical with one another. As symbols of light may turn into water as one proceeds from line to line on the same page of *Zohar*, so may figures in space "reveal themselves" to be figures in time. What we have here is no merely external literary device, but a representation in symbolic language of an essential characteristic of mystical experience.

The central figures in most discussions of the sefirotic universe are the sixth and the last of these ten manifestations. The sixth *sefirah* represents the deity as generally depicted in the earlier Biblical and rabbinic sources. This is the God-figure, Father and King, who is the source of the written Torah, the object of non-mystical prayer, and whose being represents a constant balance of the potentially warring forces of justice and love, the "Holy One, blessed be He," as He is most frequently called by the rabbis. The tenth *sefirah* is the *shekhinah*, the presence of God indwelling, the hypostatized Community of Israel, and most importantly, the object of divine affection, the bride of the mystical Song of Solomon. The most essential and daring theological innovation of the Kabbalah was the claim that the Canticle, long read by the rabbis as a love-song between God and His people Israel, was now to be seen as

documenting a love that takes place *within* God, between two poles of the divine self symbolically designated as male and female, a relationship in which Israel were no longer seen as the direct object of divine *eros*, but rather as its offspring and devotees.

The association of the Sabbath with the feminine aspect of the divine world is widespread in the Kabbalah and is quite well known, if only through its presentation in the Sabbath hymn *Lekha Dodi*. Many Kabbalistic writings speak of two Sabbaths, or of male and female aspects within the *shabbat* itself (these resting on earlier speculations around *zakhor*—"remember" the Sabbath [Ex. 20:8] and *shamor*—"keep" the Sabbath [Deut. 5:12]). But it is with the *shekhinah* as bride and queen that the mystics' Sabbath is finally identified:

The secret of Sabbath: *she* is Sabbath as she cleaves to the mysterious One, causing that One to shine upon her . . . When Sabbath comes, she is unified and separated from the "other side." All evil forces of judgement are removed from her, and she dwells in union with the holy light. She is crowned with many crowns as she faces the holy king . . . her face shines with a sublime radiance as she is crowned from below by the holy people . . .<sup>23</sup>

The tabernacle/Temple too is identified with the *shekhinah* throughout the literature of the Kabbalah. House, Tent, Temple are all classic symbols of the feminine archetype: that which is entered, gathering place, womb, etc. It is in this symbolic garb that the last *sefirah* serves as the meeting-place for God and Israel: the flow of divine energy from the *sefirot* "above" and the devotion of Israel's prayers "below" are joined together in this *bet mo'ed le-khol hai*. It was in some of their most daring moments that the Kabbalistic authors allowed Moses (or the adept in the guise of Moses?) to share with God the role of bridegroom of the *shekhinah*. Hence this rather startling passage is made possible:

"They brought the tabernacle unto Moses" (Ex. 39:33). Why did they *bring* the tabernacle? Because that was the hour of Moses' marriage—for this reason "they brought the tabernacle unto Moses"—just as the bride is brought to the bridegroom. First the bride must be brought to her groom, as Scripture says: "I have given my daughter to this man as a wife" (Deut. 22:16). Only afterwards may he [the bridegroom] come to her, and it says "and he came unto her," as is written "Moses came unto the tent of testimony" (Num. 17:23). Here, however, what is written? "Moses could not come in to

the tent of meeting for the cloud abode upon it" (Ex. 40:35). For what reason? She was preparing herself for him, as a woman prepares and adorns herself for her husband. At the time when she is adorning herself it is not proper for her husband to come in to her. That was why "Moses could not come in to the tent of meeting" and it was for that reason that "They brought the tabernacle unto Moses."<sup>24</sup>

This rather courtly vignette of Moses and the *shekhinah* as bridegroom and bride is paralleled by a number of passages, particularly in the Zohar, where the lovely damsel or chaste and faithful wife appears as symbolic representation of the *shekhinah*. It is generally understood that these refer in the first place to *shekhinah* as the bride of God, but not exclusively so. With regard to the Sabbath too, it should be recalled, there is reason in old Midrashic sources to think of her as *Israel's* bride: "Israel will be your mate," God says to the lonely seventh day.<sup>25</sup> The poetic genius of Alkabez' *Lekha Dodi* lies in his steadfast refusal to name the *dod* to whom the hymn is addressed, thus maintaining a certain enriching ambiguity in the identity of the Sabbath's bridegroom.<sup>26</sup> This *shabbat*, for whom one must prepare "as one prepares a canopy for a bride," is also the one who is "shut and sealed on the six weekdays," in a passage that quotes from Ezekiel's vision of the restored Temple (46:1): "... but on the seventh day she is open to receive her husband."<sup>27</sup> The identification of Temple and Sabbath is sometimes associated with the exegesis of Lev. 19:30: "You shall keep My Sabbaths and fear My Temple." So, for example, Rabbi Bahya ben Asher of Barcelona, a contemporary of the Zohar:

"'You shall keep My Sabbaths' . . . One is the Great Sabbath, that of 'remember,' and the other is the Temple, the Community of Israel, mate of [the upper] Sabbath. This one is 'keep,' and for that reason it was not proper that the work of [building] the Temple supersede this Sabbath/Temple."<sup>28</sup>

Here the lower Sabbath, that of 'keep' and thus particularly identified with the prohibitions among the Sabbath commands, is identified at once with *shekhinah* and Temple. For the Kabbalist it is perfectly a matter of course that the command of Sabbath was so placed in the Bible as to infer that the work of construction had to cease on the seventh day: anything else would have been self-contradictory, for the Sabbath, and particularly the cessation from labor, is the Temple.<sup>29</sup>

If the medieval Kabbalists were able by means of their mystical symbolization of space and time to bring Temple and Sabbath to a state of identification, the free-wheeling associative patterns of the later Hasidic homilies were able to do the same. Popular impressions to the contrary, their method was not at all that of the Kabbalists, but rather an extension, sometimes seemingly *ad absurdum*, of the classical methods of Midrashic exegesis. Although the rubric of the *sefirot* is formally preserved in Hasidic discourse, its content has been largely vitiated. The Kabbalistic system is generally used (*HaBaD* is the great exception here) as only one more device in the hands of the homilist. Thus "Sabbath" and "Temple" in the following passages are no longer ciphers for the *shekhinah*, but once again the real Sabbath and Temple of time and space, with perhaps just a slight added nuance of Kabbalistic meaning.

The first Hasidic passage comes from the *Degel Maḥaneh Ephraim*, the collected homilies of Rabbi Moses Hayyim Ephraim of Sudilkov, first published in 1810/11. Ephraim was the grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov,<sup>30</sup> and his teachings often reflect the thoughts of the movement's first central figure:

"The children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant; it is a sign forever between Me and the children of Israel" (Ex. 31:13). The *Ba'al ha-Turim* notes that the words '*et ha-shabbat le-dorotam*' may be abbreviated as '*HL*' (consonantly) '*ohel*', "tent."

In commenting on this we must first recall the verse "They shall make Me a tabernacle and I will dwell in their midst" (Ex. 25:8). We might then think that without such a tabernacle it would not be possible for the *shekhinah* to dwell amidst us! But the matter must be understood thus: "A foretaste of the world to come is the Sabbath day of rest." The best counsel [since there is no tabernacle] is to keep the Sabbath properly. In this way may we merit, as it were, the indwelling of the Presence, for the Sabbath is a sort of sanctuary. In that way too is it a foretaste of the future world [i.e. of the rebuilt Temple].

It was for this reason that the Torah hinted at the word "tent" in the phrasing of this verse, showing that the Sabbath too is a form of tent or tabernacle. The word *le-dorotam* also hints at the notion of "dwelling" (*DoRoTaM*=*DiRaTaM*), as in the dwelling of a Temple. In this way God dwells in our midst, and that is why Scripture continues: "as an everlasting covenant": by means of the Sabbath, the Lord, blessed be He, dwells in our midst . . . and the words '*ot hi' le-'olam*' again form the word '*ohel*', showing

that this sign goes on without interruption. Even in times when there is no Temple, the Sabbath has not been negated, *and it is the Temple*.<sup>31</sup>

Operating here outside that symbol-structure that had so utterly relativized space and time, the Hasidic master produces his own spiritualized re-reading of the Scriptural command. His spirituality remains halakhic, to be sure, for it is only by "keeping the Sabbath properly (*kehilkhato*)" that this new Temple is maintained. His essential point, however, is far-reaching, one that goes to the very core of the religious radicalism of the Hasidic movement: The destruction of the Temple does not represent an *essential* change in the relationship of God to His world and to Israel. The Presence remains in our midst as previously; only the medium of primary access to it has been shifted. The immanentism that the Ba'al Shem Tov's religion represented had to find a way to overcome the sense of divine distance that permeates so much of rabbinic and later Judaism.

A second Hasidic example, as likely to have been well-known to Heschel as was the first, is found in the *Mey ha-Shiloah*, by Rabbi Mordecai Joseph Leiner of Izbica (1800/01-1854). Izbica was an important school of Hasidic thought in central Poland; its founder, Mordecai Joseph, had at one point been quite close to Rabbi Mendel of Kotzk, whose latter-day disciples Heschel knew so well in Warsaw. R. Mordecai Joseph writes:

"You shall keep My Sabbaths and fear My Temple" (Lev. 19:30). 'My Sabbaths' [in the plural], for every dwelling of the *shekhinah* at any time, no matter how temporary, is called a Sabbath. The blessed Lord commanded us to honor all the places where His *shekhinah* has dwelt, however temporarily. "And fear My Temple"—the Targum renders this as "be in fear *for* My Temple": you still should long for the deepest [eschatological] good to be found in each of the commandments. The Sabbath as we have it now is much diminished; only in the future will God grant us "the day that is wholly Sabbath," when we shall have no need for any labors. We must long for this, while still giving honor, meanwhile, to that which God has commanded us.

This may be compared to a king who moves from place to place: you show honor to each of his lodgings, while still looking forward to his own resting-place . . .

This was the mistake of Hophni and Phinehas: they saw that God's dwell-



ing in Shiloh was only a temporary one, and therefore they treated it lightly. Of such conduct Scripture says: "You have despised My Temple" . . .<sup>32</sup>

Here we have the lesson drawn out for us in a strikingly modern-sounding formulation: the juxtaposition of Sabbath and Temple teaches us that any place where the glory of God appears, in however transient a manner (and indeed what place is not capable of such description?) is to be treated as God's holy Temple. Yes, Judaism has become a religion of sacred time, learning through the bitter experience of exile that geographical locus alone could not suffice to describe the manner in which God dwells on earth. This time-centeredness, however, also served to expand and "liberate" the notion of sacred space, a process we see reaching its culmination here in the *Mey ha-Shiloah*. The history of exile teaches Israel that a sacred day, unlike a sacred mountain or a sacred shrine, may be carried anywhere and remain safe from outward attack. The hidden lesson here learned also inevitably points to the idea that any place where that Sabbath is proclaimed holy comes to have just a touch of Jerusalem residing within it. The legacy of wandering Israel to the world may lie precisely in this: home does not have to be abandoned as you are forced to leave it. The transformation of space into time may allow us to be bearers of our homes and origins, however far away from them modernity may lead us, so that the values they represented in our lives need not fade into mere pleasant memories of things past.

## NOTES

1. *Der Mizrekh-Eropeisher Yid*, New York, Schocken Books, 1946, p. 44f. Expanded translation as *The Earth Is the Lord's*, New York, Schuman, 1950, p. 99.

2. These sources have been collected and discussed by Raphael Patai in *Man and Temple*, London, 1947. See also the dated but still important treatment by Victor Aptowitzer in *Bet ha-Miqdash shel Ma'alalah* Tarbiz 2 (1931). For the older Mesopotamian parallels see particularly the works of Geo Widengren, including *Sakrales Königtum im Alten Testament und im Judentum*, Stuttgart, 1955, and the various ancillary studies.

3. Michael Fishbane, "The Sacred Center in the Bible," in *Texts and Responses: Studies Presented to Nahum N. Glatzer*, Leiden, 1975, p. 6ff. See also his *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts*, New York, Schocken, 1979. I am grateful to Pro-

fessor Fishbane for several suggestions he has made in connection with this article.

4. I do not mean to oversimplify a long and complex process. Of course I am aware that the synagogue began to come into being before the Temple was destroyed, etc. The question is asked from a long-range historical vantage-point.

5. Robert Goldenberg, "The Broken Axis," in *JAAR* 45 (1977) 353ff.

6. The phrases are all from the liturgy: daily *'amidah*, festival *mussaf 'amidah* and Passover *haggadah*.

7. See the author's "The *Zaddiq* as *Axis Mundi* in Later Judaism," in *JAAR* 45 (1977) 327ff.

8. It is perhaps noteworthy, however, that the tale of Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai and his son plays so prominent a role in that volume, certainly serving to focus the reader's attention on the generation immediately after the destruction.

9. As to witnessing, for example, Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Testimony 10:2 makes it clear that a violator of *any* Torah law of a certain magnitude may not testify; no special point is made of the Sabbath.

10. Yer. *Hagigah* 2:1 (77b).

11. The Sabbath attracted a good deal of attention among Latin writers, and not only those who had a particular interest in the Jews. For the sources see Radin, *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans*, p. 245ff. and J. Hugh Michael, "The Jewish Sabbath in the Latin Classical Writers" *AJSL* 40 (1923/24) 117ff.

12. See the thorough treatment by Lawrence Schiffman, *The Halakhah at Qumran*, Leiden, 1975, p. 77ff.

13. See the treatment by Y.D. Gilat, "*Le-Qadmutam shel 'Issurey Shabbat 'Aḥadim*" in *Bar-'Ilan* 1 (1963) 106ff. A summary of Sabbath ritual in the Second Temple is found in *EJ* 15, col. 977. See further M. Fishbane's "Revelation and Tradition as Religious Categories in the Bible" in a forthcoming *JBL*.

14. The "derivation" of the 39 labors from the construction of the tabernacle is given in *Shabbat* 49b; see also 96b. It is clear that this is a rubric added later to an accumulation of forbidden labors of diverse origins. *Tosafot* ad loc. seems nearly to admit as much. On the 39 labors see further Y.D. Gilat, "39 'Avot Mel'akhot *Shabbat*" in *Tarbiz* 28 (1959/60) 226ff.

15. *Hagigah* 1:8, *Tosefta Hagigah* 9:9 and *'Eruvin* 11:23. The actual derivation from *'akh* is not found in the extant rabbinic sources, but only in the Middle Ages: RaSHI to Ex. 31:13. We do have a source in the *Mekilta* (ed. Horwitz/Rabin p. 345) that derives the relationship from the similar juxtaposition in Ex. 35:1ff. On the question of *'akh*, see the extended discussion by M.M. Kasher in *Torah Sheleimah*, v. 21, p. 58, n. 34.

16. But consider the parallel between our matter and the decision recorded in *Rosh Hashanah* 4:1: "When the holiday of Rosh Hashanah occurs on the Sabbath, the *shofar* is blown in the Temple but not in the town. When the Temple was destroyed, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai decreed that it should be blown wherever there is a *bet din*." Here is a rather clear symbolic statement that the seat of rabbinic authority takes on something of a Temple-like quality. On this see Neusner, *A Life of Yohanan ben Zakkai*. Second edition, Leiden, 1970, p. 205f and *Development of a Legend*, Leiden, 1970, Index s.v. Sabbath.

17. *Berakhot* 55a. The Biblical text itself already seeks to link Hiram, architect of Solomon's Temple, with Bezalel. Note the linguistic parallel of I Kings 7:14 with Ex. 31:3. Further material on Bezalel of a similar sort is found scattered in rabbinic sources. See Ginzberg, *Legends*, s.v. Bezalel.

18. I am emending *bi-khevod yošero* to *ba-kavod yešaro*, which seems to make more sense, particularly if the phrase is a medieval gloss. I find no way of understanding the text as it stands.

19. Tanhuma, *Pequdey* 2. A parallel version is found in *Leqaḥ Tov*, ad loc., and a somewhat better text of the Tanhuma is preserved in R. Bahya to Ex. 38:21. A rather different version is found in *Midrash Tadshe' 2* (*Bet ha-Midrash* 3, p. 164f.) See also the sources discussed in Ginzberg's *Legends*, v. 6, p. 67, n. 346, and by Chavel *ad loc.* in his edition of the Bahya commentary. See Bahya also on Ex. 40:16.

20. *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana*, ed. Buber 5b-6a, as emended by the editor. Perhaps an even stronger statement is found regarding Solomon's Temple in *Pesikta Rabbati* 6, ed. Friedmann 25a. There it is suggested that Solomon's very name (SHeLoMoH) indicates that it was he who completed (hiSHeLyM) the making of heaven and earth.

21. This has been noticed by Cassutto, *Commentary on the Book of Exodus*: Jerusalem, 1967, pp. 476 and 483. Cassutto does not mention that he had been preceded by the Midrash and especially by R. Bahya in this insight. M. Fishbane informs me that "there is an ancient Near Eastern pattern, embedded in Enumaelish, that the end of Creation is construction of a temple for the victor god." Fragments of this, he notes, appear in the Bible (Ex. 15, Ps. 29) and this concluding pattern of Exodus is to be seen as a transformation of that pattern.

22. Taken symbolically; see note 15 above.

23. Zohar 2:135a-b. On the two Sabbaths in early Kabbalah see Nahmanides on Ex. 20:8 and 31:13. His comments are based on those in Bahir 181-2 (ed. Scholem 124). See further Tishby's *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, v. 2, 487ff. Sabbath as bride in the Kabbalah is of course also based on earlier motifs; the figure of Sabbath as queen is mentioned occasionally in rabbinic literature. Much is made of this theme in the Falasha treatise *Ta'azaza Sanbat*, but that development seems entirely unrelated to the Kabbalistic expansion of this idea.

24. Zohar 2:235a. "And he came unto her" is not part of the verse in Deut. 22:16, but has slipped into the author's mind from elsewhere.

25. Bereshit Rabbah 11:8. Elsewhere, however (Shemot Rabbah 25:11, for example), shabbat is taken as a token of the intimacy that exists between God as King and His lady Israel.

26. See the extended discussion of the bride and queen motifs in Heschel's *Sabbath*, p. 126ff., n. 4. The rabbinic sources to which I refer in n. 23 above are there listed in full.

27. Zohar 3:272b; Tiquney Zohar 36, ed. Margalioṭ 78a.

28. Bahya to Lev. 19:30; ed. Chavel v.2, p. 532.

29. One cannot help but wonder also whether the Safed Kabbalists did not have this association somehow in mind when they chose Psalm 95 as the opening to Kabbalat Shabbat. The closing line of that Psalm stands before the Sabbath as a liturgy of entry: "So I vowed in My anger that they would not come in to my *menuhah*." Of course in the context of the Psalm *menuhah* clearly refers to the Land of Israel. Here, however, it cannot but refer to the Sabbath, and the Psalm then challenges the worshipper, much as does Psalm 24, to examine whether he is ready to "enter" the Sabbath as *Sanctum*. This same verse, by the way, was used earlier, exactly as one might expect, with regard to the Temple. See *Yalqut Shime'oni*, 2:189. I am indebted to Rabbi Jack Riemer for this insight.

30. On R. Ephraim, see the references in my *Tormented Master*, a study of his nephew, R. Nahman of Bratslav. The sources on him have been collected by M. Y. Guttman, *Geza' Qodesh*, Tel Aviv, 1950/51, and in Horodezky, *Ha-Hasidut weha-Hasidim*, v. 3, p. 7ff.

31. *Degel Mahaneh Ephraim, Ki tissa'*, ed. Jerusalem, 1962/63, p. 131f.

32. *Mey ha-Shiloah*, part one, *Qedoshim* 38b. The verse with which he concludes is not to be found in Scripture. He seems to be misquoting from I Samuel 2:29ff.

# Go and Study

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