

If Jews are to benefit from the great gift of Shabbat, then Shabbat must be continually renewed.

TWIN CENTERS: SACRED TIME AND SACRED SPACE

BY ARTHUR GREEN

Shabbat, the day of holiness and rest, is the central religious institution of the Jewish people. It is the keeping of Shabbat, above all else, that identifies us as part of the religious community of Israel. Often referred to as God's great gift to Israel, Shabbat is also surely one of the greatest gifts that the Jewish people ever had—and still has—to offer the world.

Shabbat is needed now more than ever. The pace of modern life makes the need for true rest ever greater. Like laboratory animals on a treadmill, we fail to see how rapidly the pace of our lives is speeding up. Every increase in the means of rapid transportation and communication makes new demands on the speed at which we live. Now the computer revolution increases these demands many times over. How many megabytes can your mind hold? How quickly can you turn out whatever the product or service is that you produce? Just spend a few minutes watching children glued to a video game, and try to imagine *anything* that moved so rapidly a century ago. Compare these video games of today with the pace of the games you played as a child, and you will begin to understand the increase in demands made upon the human mind in the past few decades. We humans were simply not made to function at such a pace. There will be a price to pay in balance and sanity for all this rapid "progress." Now more than ever, we urgently need the ability to take a day each week to slow down and stop the clock, to reflect, and to renew our humanity.

The Renewal of Shabbat

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in history. But before we can offer Shabbat to the world, we have to reclaim it for ourselves. To most Jews, real celebration of Shabbat is at best a distant memory. Others limit their Shabbat to the lighting of candles or attendance at synagogue, but do not allow themselves the full gift of a relaxing Shabbat day. The pressures working against Shabbat have been overwhelming, and the complex network of laws makes the traditional Shabbat seem to many like a day of restriction and constraint rather than one of joy. *Shabbat itself is in need of renewal.* It needs to be presented again to the Jewish people as a new gift, something being offered to us just this day.

The power of religion lies in its ability to invoke a quality of *specialness*: special times, special places, special people, special acts and words. These are lifted up out of the ordinary and, by the power of the religious community's devotion to them, transformed. They are then associated with the universal human intimation of transcendence, the sense that there is (or must be) meaning to life beyond the frailty and smallness of our own existence. *It is of this union of the special—however designated by the particular tradition—and the transcendent that our sense of holiness, the core experience of religion, is born.* The transcendent is proclaimed present or accessible at that moment, in that place, or through that special person, word, or deed. It is these special times, places, or persons, these acts or words, that become bearers of the holy.

The Biblical Shabbat

Judaism's tale of origins, the creation story of Genesis, is a tale of sacred time. Its purpose is to proclaim the origin of the Sabbath, or to establish the roots of

the Sabbath's holiness in the very foundation of the world order. The God who separated light from darkness, who defeated the forces of primal chaos, and who created human beings in the divine image, set forth this pattern of sacred time at the moment of creation itself.

Heaven, earth, and all their beings were finished. God completed on the seventh day the work that had been done, and ceased upon the seventh day from all the work that had been done. God blessed the seventh day and set it apart. For on it God had ceased from all the work that had been done in carrying out Creation. (Gen. 2:1-3)

This sanctification of the seventh day will be repeated later in the proclaimed holiness of the seventh year, and then again in cycles of seven times seven. Finally, the Kabbalists will declare cosmic history to be patterned in seven great sevenfold epochs, to be concluded in a great jubilee of return to the ultimate divine source. But all of that comes later: here the Bible seeks only to tell us that the cycles of sacred time have been with us *forever*. The Sabbath is holy because God declared it so from the beginning. Its celebration is in the first place a divine act, and our joining into that celebration is nothing less than the imitation of God, an acting out of our own creation in God's image.

The early chapters of Genesis contain no parallel designation in the realm of sacred space. The Garden of Eden is set at the convergence of four rivers in distant Mesopotamia. But it is not a *place* to which anyone longs to return. There is no pilgrimage to the site of Eden, no temple is built there, it does not become the center of the universe. The exile of humans from Eden is in this sense complete and permanent, without hope of return, at least on the geographical plane.

The earliest forbears of Israel are depicted as wanderers, migrants drawn after the word of God, promised a new land that is not yet ancestrally their own. It is this land, a place of promise and destiny, that will become their center, the place toward which we still turn when we recite our prayers. But in the Bible, this land is a sacred center *in the making*, clearly not rivaling the Sabbath for antiquity or ultimately divine character. The God who made all the world and gave each people its land chose to give this one to Israel, that special priestly nation. The Bible never sets the Sabbath in the context of "peoples and their days" the way it speaks of the Land of Israel among "nations and their lands."

As the biblical tale progresses, the association of the sacred with the spatial begins to grow. Interestingly, the term "holy land" (actually "holy ground") appears but once in the Bible, and there it refers to the spot in the Sinai wilderness where Moses sees the burning bush. But

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that spot, already identified with Mount Sinai in the Torah text, is holy only at the moment when God descends upon it. Sinai has no permanent holiness; it never becomes the site of a Jewish shrine. The land promised to the slaves redeemed from Egypt is the Land of Canaan, still so called for its earlier and unworthy inhabitants. Only late and rarely does the Bible refer to it as Eretz Yisrael, the Land of Israel, but never as the "holy land." Holiness accrued to the land as such only after it had become the object of our exilic longings.

When Israel was yet wandering in the wilderness, sacred space retained a portable character, the holy of holies being at the center of the tent which was folded up so that the Levites could carry it on their journey. When Israel was encamped, the Bible tells us, three of the twelve tribes on each side of the tent, there was indeed a geographical "sacred center" to its universe, but one that would soon move forward with them. While contemporary scholars see the tabernacle descriptions as a retrojection from a later stage of Israel's history, this image of a portable cosmic center is at least that which Jewish memory carried forth as its own understanding of its spiritual origins. Post-exilic Israel, bearer of a temporal sacred center in Shabbat, but not of a living spatial one, chose this portion of the biblical legacy, rather than the descriptions of Solomon's fixed and elaborate Temple, for regular reading and elaboration through commentary.

As Israel became rooted in the land (or came to be defined as a single people), local tribal and family shrines on various "high places" eventually gave way to the single shrine in Jerusalem. This place is indeed spoken of by the prophets as "my holy mountain," and the city of Jerusalem is already referred to in late biblical texts as "the holy city." It was probably during the reign of Solomon's descendants that the book of Deuteronomy was "discovered," with its insistence that sacrifice to the God of Israel could take place only in the chosen place that God had designated, and none other. Deuteronomy is also our earliest record of Jerusalem as a center for regular festival pilgrimages, a long-lasting and essential feature of its life as a holy place.

Shabbat Evolves

Biblical religion is a record of great tensions in the realm of the holy person: the ongoing struggle between priest and prophet for that mantle is woven throughout the tapestry of Israel's early history. Perhaps surprisingly, no similar struggle is recorded between sacred space and sacred time as the central focus of reli-

gious living. Awareness of times of day, the Sabbath and new moon cycles, and the festivals of the sacred year, were all fully integrated into the life of the Jerusalem Temple. Regular sacrifices were offered at dawn and dusk, setting the pattern for the daily prayer-life of later Judaism. Additional offerings marked Sabbaths and festivals, probably accompanied by the chanting of special hymns, now included within our psalter.

We know unfortunately little of the religious lives of ordinary people in ancient Israel. Reverence for the Temple was certainly strong, at least in Judea, but local shrines seem to have continued to function (despite the Deuteronomic proscriptions) throughout the First Temple period. At some of these shrines forms of worship were practiced that did not meet the approval of the greater "purists" in Jerusalem; a degree of syncretism between Israelite and Canaanite religion was commonplace, if the prophetic fulminations against it are any indication. But as to the practice of religion *outside* the shrines, in the lives and homes of ordinary Israelites, we have precious little record.

The regular integration and interplay of sacred place, sacred time, and sacred person, however, seems entirely characteristic of the Israelites' lives in earliest recorded times.

The Distinctiveness of Shabbat

It is in the period of transition from biblical religion to the earliest post-biblical forms we call Judaism that observance of the Sabbath becomes the best-known distinguishing mark of Jewish piety. Already in Ezra's great address at the dedication of the Second Temple, *Shabbat* alone is singled out for special mention among God's commandments:

You came down on Mount Sinai and spoke to them from heaven; You gave them right rules and true teachings, good laws and commandments. You have made known to them Your holy Sabbath, and You ordained for them laws, commandments, and teachings through Your servant Moses. (Neh. 9:13-14)

In the oath administered by Ezra on that occasion, the first demand was the forbidding of intermarriage, and the second was the prohibition against purchase of food from non-Israelites who were selling it on the Sabbath day (Neh. 10:32). This is an especially important passage, as it clearly assumes that Israelite merchants would not be selling on the Sabbath, and that it was only because of the presence of others among them that this proscription needed mention. It is also clear here that observance of the Sabbath set Israel apart from the neighboring peoples in whose midst they dwelt.

Early post-biblical sources continue to portray obser-

vance of the Sabbath as a defining characteristic of Jewish faith. The Maccabean army was reluctant to fight on the Sabbath. Evidence from the Dead Sea documents indicates that the Sabbath of these sectarians was not unlike that of the later rabbis in having an already quite developed halakhic character. Roman writers, who saw the religion of the Jews as one of the great curiosities of the Orient, make frequent references to the Sabbath as a central feature of this people's odd way of living. Strictness in observance of the Sabbath seems to have been a point of contention between the Pharisees and that initial group of spiritual radicals around Jesus of Nazareth, whose followers split off from the house of Israel and created a new religion, one that eventually marked its separation from the "old" house of Israel by changing the day of its Sabbath.

It was probably in this Second Temple period, and especially in the years of sectarian strife that ultimately led to its destruction, that the Sabbath gradually supplanted the Temple as the central, unifying religious symbol of the Jewish people. Both sacred space and sacred person were much under attack in the stormy centuries that preceded and followed the calamitous events of 68-70 C.E. The descendants of the Hasmonean priests had themselves turned out to be Hellenizers and, at least from the perspective of their critics, had befriended the enemies of Israel. Neither the office of priesthood nor the shrine the priests served could any longer claim the unquestioned devotion of the entire Jewish people.

The fact is that out of the crucible of those difficult years new constellations of both *place* and *person* were to emerge as holy in Israel. The synagogue or house of study and the rabbi or *talmid hakham* (wise disciple) would be sanctified by the Jewish people over the course of the coming centuries. We are told that the heavenly angels would sing "Holy, Holy!" only after Israel gathered in its houses of assembly and study and called out "*Sh'ma Yisrael!*" Thus did the synagogue replace the Temple: it was now the words spoken by the assembled Jews, rather than the smoke rising from the Jerusalem altar, that sustained the universe. Similarly, it was to the sages debating one another over points of law that God chose to listen, "peering through the lattice-work" into the affairs of His beloved people. To be sure, neither priest nor Temple was ever replaced fully and unambiguously in rabbinic Judaism, as they were in Christianity. Jews have continued throughout our history to recall, however imperfectly, which families are those of priestly descent, and to accord them certain rather innocuous honors. The prayers of the synagogue proclaim only rather softly that they have come to supplant the sacrificial cult, and indeed every service of the traditional liturgy concludes with a petition for the rebuilding of the Temple and the reinstitution of Israel's ancient form of worship.

Sacred Time Comes into Focus

In an age when both of the other main categories of holiness were in flux, continuity with Israel's past was maintained by deep loyalty, and even a newly underscored devotion, to the realm of sacred time—and especially to the Sabbath. Sacred space was, after all, of historic origins: it had been designated by God within history. It was therefore conceivable to the Jewish religious imagination to live outside it. Similarly, the priesthood had begun with Aaron: Jews knew quite well that the world had survived—and the patriarchs had lived lives of exemplary piety—without it. But the Sabbath transcended history: time itself was measured in categories that had no meaning outside the cycle of Sabbaths. Life without Shabbat was not something the rabbis could imagine. “More than Israel has kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath has kept Israel.” Surely it was in this age when everything else was in flux in Jewish history that Shabbat began its long career of “keeping Israel.”

The best symbol of 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) 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* [“moreover”], with which this Sabbath verse opens, is a term of exception in the technical vocabulary of rabbinic exegesis (that is, 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 as planting, shearing, dyeing, sewing, and striking a hammer. The point seems to be obscure and arbitrary. So much of Sabbath law is unmentioned in Scripture, derived by the sages merely from a seemingly innocuous two-letter Hebrew word. The rabbis themselves called such laws “mountains hanging by a hair.”

But perhaps the derivation of the Sabbath laws was 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 already 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 by the destruction of the Temple, to that of time. The phenomenon is one of reversal: by *doing* all of the labor 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.

Viewing the tabernacle/Temple from this perspective, we understand why 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 carry out 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 Exodus 35:1-3, just as the actual work is to be under way, makes it clear that in this case what the rabbis saw was quite plausibly the plain meaning of the biblical text, or at least the intent of a scriptural editor.

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The Sabbath, according to Genesis, is the apex of Creation. There is no holiness in God's world until God finds rest. Only after Creation has been completed and God ceases from work can “blessing” and “hallowing” take place. *And it is not the fruit of God's labors that is sanctified, but the day of God's rest.* The building of a Temple is, for religious societies, the most meaningful of human labors; in it humans make an earthly dwelling-place for the presence of their God or, in Israel's case, a symbol of the divine 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.

It is no wonder, then, that the closing chapter of the Book 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* (“Moses completed the work”), echoing in its language “On the seventh day God completed the work. . . .” A biblical redactor, having before him an account that reached from Creation to the tabernacle, sought to “seal” that account with a conclusion that is appropriately parallel to its beginning. Creation is completed by its repetition as a

human act; God's work finds fulfillment only as something of the divine power to create is 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.

Sacred Space is Reasserted

Judaism's struggle with the issues of sacred space and sacred time is far from over. Rabbinic and later Judaism was largely time-centered, to be sure. Observance of the Sabbath was the most obvious sign of belonging to the sacred community of Israel, and was used as such. The easiest way to say "Orthodox Jew" in the Yiddish of our immediate forebears is *Shoimer Shabbes*, "Sabbath observer." Our reverence for the spatial was maintained through the long centuries of Diaspora, but in a highly idealized sense. We turned toward Jerusalem for prayer, to be sure, but most pre-modern Jews hardly distinguished, in that point of devotional focus, between the earthly and the heavenly Jerusalem. We prayed for and sang of the rebuilt Temple, but the distinction between the "third Temple" of Jewish history and the "heavenly Temple" that would one day descend to earth simply did not exist. Pilgrimage was always considered meritorious, but it was associated especially with the virtues of being buried in the holy earth, offering a chance for the soul to reach God's throne unsullied by the defiled soil of the heathens' lands.

When the call for return to Zion began to be heard in the late nineteenth century, it encountered serious resistance among the pious in both the Orthodox and the Reform camps. Much of the Orthodox reluctance stemmed from the fact that Zionism was led and preached by free-thinkers, most of the movement's ideology resulting from the discovery of nationalism among "enlightened" Jews, who then seemed only to be using Judaism's traditional longing for Zion as a way of spreading their ideas among the still-faithful masses. Reform Jews opposed Zionism because it stood in the way of their expressions of complete loyalty as citizens of the nations in which they lived and from which they so desperately longed for full acceptance. But some in both camps surely also sensed the true spiritual revolution that would inevitably come in Zionism's wake: the assertion of space as an active claimant for the devotional loyalties of the Jewish people. Two of the most important Jewish religious thinkers of the early twentieth century certainly understood Zionism in this way. Franz Rosenzweig, the very core of whose Judaism lay in the commitment to the sacred calendar, remained

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forever cool to Zionism for precisely that more properly religious reason. Abraham Isaac Kook, the great theoretician of religious Zionism, understood the stakes as clearly as did Rosenzweig: he welcomed the Zionist revolution, despite its secular character, as one that would restore health and balance to the Jewish soul by rerooting its faith in the land and in a new earthiness, redeeming it from the unstable overspiritualization caused by long centuries of the Jew's career as *luftmensch*.

Though it is unfashionable to say so these days, it was the rise of Nazism and ultimately the slaughter of European Jewry that made Zionism the shared ideology of the Jewish people. In the face of the death camps, who could argue that life for the Jew as an undefended minority—except perhaps in America—was any longer tenable? And after the war, how could any Jew—indeed any feeling human being—not respond to the plea of the survivors in the displaced persons camps of Europe to be restored to our ancient but renewed homeland, one we could both cultivate and defend like any other nation? Our return to the world stage as players in the game of politics, land, and history was made inevitable by the unimaginable and incomparable horrors of diaspora Jewish history in the mid-twentieth century. This is the great historic bridge that the Jewish people has crossed in our lifetime, and all future Jewish history will proceed from it.

It was perhaps only after 1967 that the *spiritual* implications of the return to Zion began to become fully apparent. The conquest of the old city of Jerusalem and especially the liberation of the western wall (so long called the "Wailing Wall" by non-Jews who described our relationship to it) had a tremendous impact on the collective soul of the Jewish people. Whatever our politics, no matter how deep our cynicism about the manipulation of symbols, "wherever a Jewish soul still beat within the heart," we were moved by the sight of soldiers along with bearded elders, of "secular" kibbutzniks along with Jewish pilgrims (no longer just "tourists") from abroad, praying, dancing, and weeping—this time for joy—at that holy place. For the whole Jewish people, it became as clear as anything can be in these morally murky and complicated times that Jewish sovereignty over the Wall and the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem could never be relinquished, no matter at what cost. This realization gave to the Jewish people, both Israeli and diaspora, a sense that there was, after all, a geographic sacred center to Jewish life, in a more profound and primitive sense than Ahad Ha-am's "cultural center" in the land of Israel could ever have been.

The exhilaration of that moment had more than just the character of a national victory for the Jewish people. Jews sensed that the God of Israel was present in that return to the Wall, in a way not dissimilar to the presence as we had known it in our ancient tales of the Exodus from Egypt or the splitting of the sea. Jews of a higher level of theological sophistication, the present writer included, were (and remain) embarrassed to admit that feeling. American Jews, busily opposing the Vietnam war and horrified by "God is on our side" speeches by military chaplains, were especially unable to come to terms with their overwhelming feeling that the Jewish people's return to this ancient place was also a return of God. Jewish history would never be quite the same.

And it was the folk, with its most educated leaders trailing behind, who realized this. Neither the monopolization and desecration of the Wall that has taken place in the hands of the ultra-Orthodox in the past twenty years nor the loud and increasingly horrifying trumpeting of militant Jewish nationalism since 1967 has done anything to change this reality.

Changing Economics

This reassertion of sacred space as a claimant for Jewish loyalty has come after more than a century-long weakening of Jewish devotion to sacred time, one that has just recently begun to reverse itself. It was the rise of capitalism and the Industrial Revolution that brought about this weakening. As Jews entered the ever-expanding mainstream economy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Jewish merchants, tradesmen, and workers were no longer able to maintain the distinctively Jewish and slower patterns of living that had characterized their lives for many centuries. The breakdown of the ghetto in the West and the Jewish-dominated *shtetl* existence of eastern Europe meant that Jews were going to live like their gentile neighbors with regard to their patterns of work and rest. No one *forced* them to do so, to be sure, and a traditionalist minority was willing to bear great loss and hardship in order to avoid work on the Sabbath. But for most Jews, entry into the mainstream and the degree of assimilation that allowed for it went hand in hand. The possibility of acceptance into Western society was considered so desirable that the various prices to be paid were accepted by the majority of Jews with relatively little resistance. In places where Jews lived amid generally traditionalist societies (North Africa, rural eastern Europe, Iran, Yemen) or where Jews continued to live

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near their ancestral homes, a higher degree of Sabbath observance was maintained. But in new areas of Jewish settlement, especially urban Western Europe and America, the rhythms of sacred time and the pattern of the Jewish week and year were nearly lost.

If it was economic necessity and the pattern of life in the general society that led to the decline of Shabbat and festival observance, it is in part the reversal of these patterns that has made room for the resurgence of interest and observance among Jews today. In North America, the current generation of middle-aged and younger Jews is no longer primarily involved in the retail business. Professionals, academics, and other white-collar workers are fully used to the idea of a five-day work week. The

opening of stores in evenings and on Sundays means that Jews no longer "need" to do their shopping on the Sabbath. In Israel, for all its shortcomings, Jews have been able to create a society in which Shabbat is a reality. Diaspora Jews who visit Israel have brought home with them something of the experience of Shabbat and even its integration into a contemporary society. Franz Rosenzweig might be surprised to learn that the existence of a Jewish state has served to increase rather than diminish the observance of Shabbat and the rest of the sacred calendar among Jews.

Integrating Holiness of Time and Space

As we stand at the edge of a new age in Jewish history, we are perhaps ready for a healthy balancing of Jewish devotion to the realms of space and time. While the recovery of our spatial roots has indeed been a healthy one for us, we Jews will continue to exist as a people only insofar as we have a positive and regularly developed relationship to the land of Israel. The love for the land reflected in every aspect of Israeli culture is something that should serve as an inspiration to diaspora Jews as well. As we go and send our children on educational pilgrimages to Israel, we should seek to create a new generation of diaspora Jews that shares, even if from a distance, in that love. Kibbutz and other attempts of the Jewish people to accept the legitimacy of agriculture and manual labor should also be viewed as part of the blessing of this return to sacred space. We diaspora Jews continue to be *luftmenschen* in this regard, and we are less healthy for it. We continue to reward those of our children who excel in academic and professional achievement, and have insufficient room in our communities and in our hearts for those who are not destined to overachieve in

these realms. Here we would do well to learn from Israel, including encouraging our own children to see *aliyah* as a possibility, especially once peace is achieved.

At the same time, we need have deep reservations about the glorification of sacred space and its potential dangers. The mix of religion and nationalism, as we Jews know so well from bitter experience in this century, is a deadly one. Does our acceptance of the holiness of the land of Israel preclude the return of territory to the Palestinians? For those of us who believe that the settlement of this problem must be both a just and realistic one, the intervention of the realm of the sacred is frightening. As strongly as we may feel about the Wall and the return of the Jews to old Jerusalem, we hesitate at the sacralization of *Yom Yerushalayim* ("Jerusalem day," a recently proclaimed new Israeli and Jewish holiday). If that is to mean that none of the territory in "greater Jerusalem" is to be considered negotiable, we had best be cautious.

Within the realm of sacred time, we might also hope to achieve some balance. In prior ages, the need to enhance Shabbat as it became so central to the lives of Jewry was expressed largely in a wild and somewhat uncontrolled growth of Sabbath laws, particularly prohibitions. The rabbinic way of underscoring the importance of one of its sacred institutions was to ring it about with ever more legal "adornments." The thirty-nine categories of labor derived from the Tabernacle were elaborated by authorities both early and late into ever more detailed sub-categories and extensions of forbidden activities. For one who has always lived within the world of such a halakhic Shabbat, the restrictions mostly seem to function well. It is the rules of Shabbat, especially the rules of forbidden labor, that give the day the character it needs to have. Because you refrain from doing so many other things, a vacuum is created in life that leaves room for the spiritual "work" of Shabbat as well as for relaxation itself. But most Jews today come from outside the world of *halakhah*.

For many who are interested in experimenting with Shabbat observance, the welter of rules and even the legalistic approach itself are daunting and even frightening. The accompanying "ten commandments of Shabbat" will hopefully serve as a good starting place for some. They are meant as an alternative for those who find the "Orthodox" version of Shabbat too difficult or even spiritually oppressive and who have not found in liberal Judaism the willingness to take a stand for the sorts of rules and disciplines required for any serious spiritual undertaking.

This balancing of commitments to sacred space and sacred time might allow us to create a Judaism that is liberal in a rather different sense: one that is *liberated* from the potential dangers and extremities of both of these realms. We seek a Judaism in which a new commitment to sacred time will be one that allows us to find a Jewish context for personal spiritual growth and renewal. The commitment to sacred space should be one that serves to renew our involvement with the natural realm and with our own history as a people and a civilization. The purpose of religion, after all, is the enhancement of all of human life. The sacred, whether it is concentrated in place, in time, or in person, is valuable only insofar as it teaches us to treat the rest of life, not just the sacred realm itself, with that special combination of love and reverence shown us by religion.

Shabbat is without value unless it also teaches us how to revere time on the weekday. The love of Jerusalem and the land of Israel is unfulfilled unless it edifies us in general with regard to land, places, and the relationship to the holy. Attention to the special realm of holiness ultimately brings us back to the ordinary and shows us that it too is holy. It is in this sense we can affirm that Shabbat is indeed *Me'eyn olam ha-ba* (a foretaste of the world to come). It is the tangible experience of holiness on Shabbat that inspires us forward in our ongoing task of redeeming the everyday, of uplifting the world. ■

DO

1. **Stay at home.** Spend quality time with family and real friends.
2. **Celebrate with others,** at the table, in the synagogue, with community/havurah, or with those with whom you best can share appreciation of God's world.
3. **Study** or read something that will edify, challenge, or make you grow.
4. **Be alone.** Take some time for yourself. Check in with yourself, review your week, ask yourself where you are in your life.
5. **Mark the beginning and the end of this sacred time:** candle-lighting and *Kiddush* on Friday evening and *Havdalah* on Saturday night.

DON'T

1. **Do anything you have to do for your work life.** This includes obligatory reading, fulfilling unwanted social obligations, homework for children, and preparing for work as well as doing your job itself.
2. **Spend money.** The atmosphere of Shabbat is best protected by complete separation from the commercial culture.
3. **Do business.** No calls to the broker, no following up on ads, no paying of bills. Relax: it can all wait.
4. **Travel.** This refers especially to long distances, involving airports, hotel check-ins, and similar depersonalizing commercial situations. Stay free of encounters in which people are likely to tell you to "Have a nice day!"
5. **Use commercial or canned video entertainment.** Stay in situations where you are face-to-face with those around you, rather than together facing the all-powerful screen. ■