

*Rav Kook's Introduction to
Shabbat Ha'aretz,
trans. Julian Sinclair (Hazon, 2014)*

שַׁבָּת הַאֲרֵץ

Shabbat Ha'aretz, Introduction

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook

כָּרְדוּבָּר אֶבְרָהָם אַיִלְקֹן קֹוק זֶ"ע

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דָּמָה

לְאַשִׁי-קְרָקִים עַל שְׂנִיר תְּשִׁמְפָּנָה וְיִגְּלָל
בְּתִתְחַת הַאֲדָמָה, תְּאַרְזֵת הַעוֹלָה, תְּהַלְלָמִים

A summary of the value of shmita and yovel in the life of the Jewish people generally and in the revival of the nation, the life, and the Torah, in the light of God, Life of the World

מֵאַי קָרְבָּן כִּי שָׂרֵךְ בְּאָרֶץ שְׁמֹאָלָב, וְאֵיךְ נָאָרָן אֲנָיו בְּאַרְיָה.

וְאֵיךְ בְּאָרֶץ הַמִּזְרָחָן אֲנָיו בְּאַרְבָּעָה.

(זהר יירא צ"ג¹)

*Who is like Your people Israel, a unique nation on earth?*²
(2 Sam. 7:23)

"Who is like your people Israel, a unique nation on earth?"³
When they are united with the land, they are called a unique nation, but not when they are separate from it.

(Zohar, Leviticus 93b)⁴

הַשְׁמָדָה וְהַיּוֹבֵל בְּמִינְאִים, מִתְהִקְמִים וְהַלְבָנָה
כְּעַלְמָם יְשָׁרָל הַאֲדָם בְּפִשְׁטוֹת, - יְהִים תְּפִרְטָן שְׁדָם,
כְּמַמְּבָדָם הַעֲצָמִי תְּיוֹתָר תְּרוֹתָן, אֲרָכִים וְהַלְבָנָה:
בְּאָרָעָן לְקָלָל הַאֲרָעָן לְקָרְבָּן.

The sabbatical and Jubilee years are interconnected in time,² like the sun and the moon in the universe, like Israel and humanity in the world of souls.³ The particular and the universal are profoundly interdependent in the most vital and spiritual sense; the particular needs the universal, and the universal needs the particular.⁴

1. In choosing this quotation from the Zohar, the classic work of Jewish mysticism, as the epigram for his book about shmita, Rav Kook suggests that the uniqueness of the Jewish people is fully manifested only when they are living on their land and practicing the laws that regulate life in harmony with the earth—shmita foremost among them.
2. In Leviticus 25, the primary biblical source for shmita, the sabbatical and Jubilee years are interconnected parts of a fifty-year cycle; see Lev. 25:2–10.
3. Rav Kook alludes here to the foundational kabbalistic notion of *ashan*, an acronym of *olam, shana, nefesh*, or world, time, and soul, the three dimensions that shape the finite world. The concept of *ashan* first appears in *Sefer Yetzirah*, the oldest extant work of Jewish mysticism, references to which occur in texts from the first century (see *Sefer Yetzirah* 4:7–14, trans. Aryeh Kaplan [York Beach, Me.: Samuel Weiser, 1990]). Rav Kook's otherwise rather enigmatic reference to the sun and moon as instances of the particular and the universal appears to refer back to *Sefer Yetzirah* 4:7. See *Orot haTodah* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1938 1985), 2:313, for an expanded explanation of Rav Kook's understanding of the holiness inherent in these three basic dimensions of existence.
4. The interdependence of the particular and the universal is a major theme in Rav Kook's writings. For an especially penetrating discussion of the relationship between these poles of Rav Kook's thought, see Yehudah Mirsky, *Rav Kook: Mystic in a Time of Revolution* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2014), 107–11. See also the introduction to this volume, p. 51.

"מי ניגר רול אַשְׁר לוֹ אַלְמָנִים קָוִינוּם אַלְיוּן!" – סְבָקָה שֶׁל כַּעֲסֵר
וְשֶׁלְאָלָתָא, שֶׁהָיא מִסְתְּפָלָת עַל תְּהִיהָ כְּלָה בְּאַסְטְּפָלָה
כְּאֶרֶחֶת שֶׁל קָדְשָׁו: בְּכָל־עַל מִגְּדָרָת שְׁמָרָתָם שְׁוֹיִם דָּם
אַתְּ שְׁרָכָם רָק בְּאוֹתָה מִדְּחָרָה שְׁהָשְׁבָּתָם אַלְגָּהָן
אַיִם שְׁוֹיִם לְהָנִיחָה רָאָה יְדָעָתָם אַזְמָנִים חַיִם אַלְאָתָר
אַלְהָיִם, וְאַיִם שְׁמַאיִים אַיִם תְּהִילָּה גָּלֶל, וְהִידָּעָה דָּאָתָר
כְּמַעֲתָת בְּעַמְקָם תְּכִבָּתָן וְלְעַמְּרָתָה, מַטְבָּעָת צָלִיךְ אֶת הַזְּמָנָה-עַרְכָּה
לְמִידָּה לְהָלָל בְּעַמְּטָבָתָה מִיהִידִּךְ. כי אַרוֹן־עַל,
עַל הַיחִידָּה תְּלִיאִים דָּם בְּמִדְתָּתָה אֶת הַעֲשָׂרָה וְקָדְשָׁה
בְּתָרוֹן עַד עַדְךָ וְשְׁמָנוֹתָה. אַזְמָנִים בְּפָר אַלְמָנִים חַיִם כְּלָלָם
רַיּוֹם " –

6. Holiness is a central concept in Rav Kook's thought. For an insightful discussion, see Norman Lamm, "Harmonism, Novelty and the Sacred," in *Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook and Jewish Spirituality*, ed. Lawrence J. Kalman and David Schatz (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 159–77; see also the introduction to this volume, p. 48.

5. Deut. 4:7. Note that elsewhere, Rav Kook cites this biblical passage explicitly in the context of elaborating the goal of creating an exemplary and enlightened socioeconomic order in Israel. E.g., "In order to fulfill this aspiration, it is particularly necessary that this community possess a political and social state and national sovereignty at the peak of human culture—'surely a wise and understanding people is this great nation'" (Deut. 4:6), *Orot* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1993), 104.
6. Deut. 4:4.

Life in its fullest, divine intensity is increasingly revealed to a person to the extent that he struggles to aspire with all his being to connect to the inner life of the people as a whole and to be illuminated by the light of its exalted spirit; the spirit lives through a pervasive inner awareness of the precious godliness in life.

The essential quality of the Jewish people's collective soul is its divine nature.⁸ The people did not gain this characteristic⁹ through its choices, actions, righteousness, or good character. It is a core quality, both physical and spiritual, that gives the people divine force and strength. It was not acquired through choice, and no choices can negate it. Choices, however, can powerfully affect the state of this innate quality.¹⁰ The people can decide to nurture, develop, and perfect it; alternatively, bad choices will darken its light, muddy its glow, and stupefy hearts so that they will no longer sense the spiritual riches hidden in the life of the soul. But darkness and stupefaction

8. Rav Kook uses the word *neshamah* here for "soul." This is the highest of the three levels of soul that are commonly discussed by the kabbalists: *nephesh*, *ruach*, and *neshamah*. See the introduction to this volume, p. 53.

9. The nature of the Jewish people's difference from other nations is a classic issue in Jewish thought; the key medieval protagonists were Yehuda Halevi and Maimonides. See introduction to this volume for further discussion of Rav Kook's relation to their views, p.52.

10. Rav Kook expresses here in brief his view that the holiness of Israel depends on two main elements: an innate *segula*, or soul force; and the choices to do good or bad that each of us makes. He believed that the *segula* force was the greater and that it would grow stronger still in the period of the "footsteps of the Messiah." See *Igerot ha're'a* 2:186–88 (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 2002), for an expanded discussion of this. For a good English summary, see Michael Z. Nehorai, "Halakhah, Metz-Halakhah, and the Redemption of Israel: Reflections on the Rabbinic Rulings of Rav Kook," in *Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook and Jewish Spirituality*, ed. Kaplan and Schatz, 122–24.

רְאוּנָן הַמִּסְפָּר בְּחֵן תְּהִלָּה. אֶבֶל לֹא יָכֹל טְמֵיטָם-הַלְּבָב
וְהַשְׁבָּת הַמְּאָרָר לְהַעֲדר לְזָלַם. נָקָגָה וְהַתְּהִיר לְהַתִּיהָ.

סָלַחַת אַמְּבָד - דְּפָעָב הַאֲלֵהִי - סָדָר-תְּעִזָּזָב, סָדָר-תְּעִזָּזָב,
תְּשִׁירִים וְהַטְּבָבִים דְּמִתְּבָבִים אֶל הַאֲזָקָן וְהַשְׁלָלָה,
הַלְּבָב וְהַאֲמֵץ הַאֲמֵץ אֶל אֶלְמָאָה בְּהַסְּמָךְ מִלְּגָדָת, כַּאֲשֶׁר
נוֹמָאָת בְּנֵשֶׁשֶׁת הַאֲמָרָה - אֵין חַיָּה הַחֹל בְּכָלִים לְהַזְּעִין אֶת
אֶל הַפְּעָל. חַיִּים אֶלְהָה בְּמַהְמַתְמָתְמָת הַפְּעָשָׂוֹת הַתְּמִמָּנָה מִסְתָּרִים
לִם אֵת הַהְרֹד תְּהַלֵּעַ תְּשִׁירָה הַאֲלֵהִית, וְעַצְבָּבִים אֶת תְּהִרְחָה
אָוֹרָה תְּבִירָה תְּהֹורָה לְהַזְּלָטָת. דְּחִיפָּה
גַּדְגָּול וְהַתְּלִמְלָמָה שֶׁל הַתְּהִיא אֶל הַפְּעָל עַל-דִּין
וְתִינְחָתָן לְפִסְכָּה הַתְּהִירָה, מִתְּהִירָה
תְּהִירָה מִתְּהִירָה מִתְּהִירָה, מִתְּהִירָה - גַּאֲלָל שְׁבָת.

The individual shakes off mundane routine frequently—
every week. “Shabbat comes and so does rest!”¹² The soul
begins to shed her harsh chains. “The Lord has given
you rest from your sorrow and trouble and from the
hard service that you were made to serve.”¹³ The soul
then seeks higher pathways of spiritual desire that are

cannot continue indefinitely. Sooner or later, this inner
soul treasure can be relied upon to arouse the nation to
renewal.¹¹

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11. The inevitability of spiritual renewal is a theme of Rav Kook’s book on re-pentance, *Orut ha’teshuvah* (Jerusalem: Rabbi Kook Institute, 1994). See e.g., chap. 1, where repentance is described as a natural health-restoring impulse; 4:2, where the repentance of the individual is an expression of a movement toward *tshuvah* active in the whole universe; and 16:10, where the individual’s *tshuvah* is presented as a return to authentic selfhood.

12. Rashi on Gen. 2:2. Rashi’s full comment reads: “What was lacking [in Creation]? Rest. Enter Sabbath, enter rest; and then the work of Creation was finished.” Creation was not complete until rest was made to complement and balance creative activity.

13. Isa. 14:3.

עֲבָדָה קְרֹבָה, טֹב לְהִדּוֹת לְדַל' וְלֹמֶר לְשָׁמָן לְמַגֵּד בְּבָבָקָר
תְּמִיקָה וְאַמְנוּנָה כְּבָלָה עַל עַלְיָה יְמִין וְבָבָבָה. עַל עַשְׂרָה וְעַל עַשְׂרָה אָתָה הָאָלָעָה אֶל תְּמִיקָה
בְּחִירָה – תְּמִיקָה שֶׁל תְּחִזְקָה – בְּחִירָה – בְּחִירָה –
אָתָה תְּאַמְּרָה לְאַמְּרָה שֶׁל תְּחִזְקָה – תְּמִיקָה שֶׁל תְּחִזְקָה –
וְעַם אַלְגָה, תְּמִיקָה לְגַדְעָה רְדָחָה שֶׁל נְשָׁמָה בְּלָבָבָךְ.

אָתָה אָתָה לְפָעַלְתָה עַל כָּל תְּמִיקָה, פְּזָעַלְתָה
הַשְׁמִינִית וְטָעַר הַמִּידָה אֶל אַמְּרָה בְּכָלְלָה. צְדָקָה שֶׁל
בְּתֻמָּה דְּאָזָר בְּאָזָר בְּמִלְאָה בְּמִלְאָה, אָשָׁר לֹא יָשַׁבְתָה
כְּעַד-הַבָּרָה-עַד-הַזָּהָר, תְּמִעָד וְתְּמִרְתָּה אַשְׁר

אַל

consonant with the nature of her source. "It is good to praise the Lord, to sing hymns to Your name, O Most High, to proclaim Your steadfast love at daybreak, Your faithfulness each night with a ten-stringed harp with voice and lyre together."¹⁴ "It shall be a sign for all time between me and the people of Israel."¹⁵ This is a holy day when the innate inclination of the people for a godly life emerges from its hiddenness and is a sign for the people that its soul treasure contains within it the need and the ability to rejoice in God, in the delight of the divine. This is concentrated in the point of the extra soul¹⁶ that dwells within each one of the people's children.

What Sabbath does for the individual, shmita does for the nation as a whole. The Jewish people, in whom the godly, creative force is planted eternally and distinctively has a special need to periodically reveal the divine light within itself with full intensity. Our mundane lives, with their toil, anxiety, anger, and competition do not entirely suffocate this creative force. On the shmita, our pure,

14. Ps. 92:1-4. This is the "Psalm for the Sabbath Day."
15. Exod. 31:17.
16. Rav Kook refers to the "extra soul" that, according to tradition, Jews possess on the Sabbath. The talmudic source is Beitzah 16a, which interprets the words *shavat ve-yigash* (Exod. 31:17) as *Vay-nefesh!* ("Alas for the soul that is lost!" — at the end of Sabbath). Interpretations of this idea have ranged from the more rational, e.g., Ibn Ezra and Radak, who argue that the soul that "is given rest on this day from the affairs of the world can occupy itself with wisdom and the words of God" (commentary to Gen. 2:3), to the more mystical, e.g., Nahmanides, who takes issue with Ibn Ezra and writes that "although his view of this is

right to those who believe in it, for this is not something that can be tested by experience, ... nonetheless you must understand that on the Sabbath, there is in truth an additional soul." (See also Zohar II 204a-b.) Rav Kook draws on elements of both schools here in understanding the "extra soul" as something that is always within us that we are able to access on Sabbath when the rush of weekday activity is stilled.

לָהּם, לְמַעַן גַּנְעַל לְהַדְגִּילוֹת בְּגִזְבָּה פְּנִים, טְהֻרָה תְּהֻנָּה שֶׁשְׁמַתָּה
בְּכָלְלָה כְּמוֹ-עַלְיהָא-אֵלָה. אֲםָן אָנוּתָה הַאֲנָגָעָה, דְּבָרָה הַדְּבָרָה לְהַלְלוֹת
עַם כָּל סָדָר שֶׁל תְּנִיעָה קְבוּעָם, נְדָרָה קְבוּעָם, לְבִין אֲנָגָעָה
חַיִים הַמְּסִירָה, וְהַמְּגָנָךְ, הַמְּתִמְיד שְׁבִין כְּשֶׁמְיָה הַאֲדִיאָה
לְהַקְרָה שֶׁל דָסָר וְאַמְתָה, תְּמִיקָה וְתְּמִיקָה, לְבִין הַגְּשָׁה וְהַקְּפָחָה
וְלֹא-זָהָר קְפָדָה שֶׁל קְבָרוֹן רְמָנָשׁ, הַמְּבָרָקָה וְהַמְּבָרָקָה
גּוֹרָם הַדְּחָקָה לְאָוֹר דְּאָלָה וְמְקֻמָּתָה הַכְּבָרוֹת שֶׁל הַאֲקָה,
שְׁהַדְּחָקָה זוֹ מְפַעַּתְהָאָרָם וּמְמַסְּרָם שֶׁל הַיְהִידִים, בְּזָדְדִים ?
לְמִסְתָּרָה תְּמִידָר הַתְּבָרָתִי בְּזָדְדִים ?
מְבָאָה לְאָהָרָה זֶה, שְׁלִיךְתְּהָרָה זֶה, עַלְמָנוֹתָה זֶה
לְמִרְאָה הַתְּבָנָה הַתְּפָנִים זֶה, מְרָאָה הַתְּבָנָה הַתְּפָנִים זֶה,
הַתְּבָנָה הַאַלְמָנָה, הַעֲמָדָה לְמַעַל הַמְּלָאָכִים וְסָגָן,
תְּבָרָתִי וְהָאָמָעָד וְמַעֲלָה אָתָה כְּפָרָתִים כְּתָבָתִים
אַתְּ שְׁלָמָתָם. –

inner spirit may be revealed as it truly is. The forcefulness that is inevitably part of our regular, public lives lessens our moral refinement. There is always a tension between the ideal of listening to the voice inside us that calls us to be kind, truthful, and merciful, and the conflict, compulsion, and pressure to be unyielding that surround buying, selling, and acquiring things.¹⁷ These aspects of the world of action distance us from the divine light and prevent its being discerned in the public life of the nation. This distancing also permeates the morality of individuals like poison. Stilling the tumult of social life from time to time in certain predictable ways is meant to move this nation, when it is well-ordered, to rise toward an encounter with the heights of its other, inner moral and spiritual life.¹⁸ They touch the divine qualities inside them that transcend all the stratagems of the social order and that cultivate and elevate our social arrangements, bringing them toward perfection.

17. There is a note of suspicion about commerce in this passage. For a discussion of Rav Kook's relationship to socialist thought, see Shalom Rosenberg, "Introduction to the Thought of Rav Kook," in *The World of Rav Kook's Thought*, ed. Benjamin Ish-Shalom and Shalom Rosenberg (Jerusalem: Ahi Chai, 1991), 59–61. See also the introduction to this volume, p. 49.

18. Cf. Rav Kook's idea of "the continuous prayer of the soul": the soul is always praying (i.e., yearning to unite with God). When we consciously pray, we rise to an encounter with the soul that is praying constantly (*Olat b'rei'ya*, 1:1).

לֹאָתֶת מִצְאַתִּי לֵי חֹבֶה קָרְבָּה לְהַזְׁיא אֶת הַדָּבָר הַאֲמָת, אֲשֶׁר סְדָרְתִּיךְ
לְהַלְלוֹת שְׁבִיעִית בְּעֵגֶל. אַקְהָה לְשָׁמוֹ יְהִי יְמִינְךָ וְאַדְרָה
וְזָהָר אָתָה נְאָתָן כָּל לְמִזְרָחִיךְ, וְבִזְמָר אַת אָתָי אֲשֶׁר אֲמָרָתָךְ

עַם אָלָו תְּלִמְדִיךְ מִשְׁבְּאַרְזִיךְ? יְשָׂאָל לְהַרְהָרָה אֲלֵיכֶם עַל
הַפְּאָזָת-הַגְּדוֹת-בְּאָזָן בְּכָל עַל מִצְוֹת שְׁבִיעִית בְּקָרְבָּת. וְיַהְרָךְ
עַם הַעֲדָק בְּהַלְלוֹת הַמְּעֻשָׂות תְּהִפְנִימָה תְּלִבְבָּתְעַם-בְּעַדְעַת
לְהַשְׁכִּיל בְּעַם ד' בָּאוֹ דַעַת אֲלֹהִים, בְּרוּם מְלָא עַזָּה וְאַבְרָהָם
וְהַהְנוּ לְאָדָם דַעַת הַעוֹלָם אָזְרָה עַל אֲדָמָת קָדְשָׁנוּ, אֲשֶׁר אֲסִנָּה
לְהַסְׁתֹּוֹף בְּחַבְלָן וְהַלְּוָה, יְמָלָא נָרָה דַעַת וְחַגָּגָן בְּשַׁבְּתָלָטָבָר,
אֲיַלְעָל מְלָל שְׁלִיאָה, לְאַזְעָן עַמְּנוּ גַּתְהָלָה.

כ

וְקַרְבָּה רְאִמְנָה דְּבָרִי לְבָבָאָנוּ:

"וְלֹאָתֶת אַתְּכֶם מִן-הַגָּוִים וְמִקְבָּצָתִי אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל-הַאֲגָּרָתִי
אַתְּכֶם אָל-אֲדָמָתְכֶם. וּבְרוּשִׁי עַל-עַמִּים מִים טְהָרָתְךָ וְתְהָרָתְם
עַמִּים אֲוֹתִיכֶם וְאַל-עַמִּים אֲטָהָר אֶתְכֶם. וּבְרוּשִׁי
וְרוּתְךָ שְׁדָשָׁה, אֲתָה בְּקָרְבָּנָם וְמִסְרָרָתִי אֶת-לְבָבְךָ בְּאָגָן מִכְבָּשָׁרָתְךָ
קֶם לְבָבְשָׁר. אֲתָה-רוֹחִי אֲתָה בְּקָרְבָּנָם וְלִשְׁפָחָתִי אֲתָה אֲשֶׁר-בְּנָדָק,

May God's word to the prophets be soon fulfilled:

"I will take you from among the nations and gather you
from all countries, and I will bring you back to your land.
I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be
clean: I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness and all
your fetishes. And I will give you a new heart and put a
new spirit into you: I will remove the heart of stone from

That is why I felt obliged to write this book laying out the halakhot of shmita, with God's help.

I hope to God that through it, the Torah will be made great and glorious; that I and all those who yearn to learn of God's ways, especially my brothers, whom I call upon in pleasantness, the great Torah scholars of the Land of Israel, will merit to expand our teaching about the mitzvot that concern the land, and especially shmita. And alongside our involvement in the practical halakhot, may our hearts be strengthened with wisdom and discernment to know, with a spirit that is filled with counsel and strength, the light of divine knowledge that is being granted to our holy land, which we have been fortunate to inherit; and may this spirit of this knowledge fill and strengthen us with sound understanding and save us from errors for the sake of His name and inheritance.

የኢትዮጵያ ቤትና የዕለታዊ ሪፖርት አንቀጽ ፫፻፭

କାହାର ପାଦରେ ଏହିମାତ୍ର ନାହିଁ ।

your body and give you a heart of flesh; and I will put My spirit into you. Thus I will cause you to follow My laws and faithfully to observe My rules. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your father, and you shall be My people and I will be your God. And when I have delivereded you from all your uncleanness, I will summon the grain and make it abundant, and I will not bring famine upon you. I will make the fruit of your trees and the crops of your fields abundant, so that you shall never again be humiliated before the nations because of the famine.⁶⁷

הנְּגָמָר

"Thus said the Lord, God: when I have cleansed you of all your iniquities, I will people your settlements, and the ruined places shall be rebuilt; and the desolate land, after laying waste in the sight of every passerby, shall again be tilled. And men shall say, 'That land, once desolate, has now become like the garden of Eden; and the cities, once ruined, desolate, and ravaged, are now populated and fortified.' And the nations that are left around you shall know that I the Lord have rebuilt the ravaged places and replanted the desolate land. I the Lord have spoken and will act." ⁶⁸

The holy city of Jaffa, may it be built and established, 1909.

67. Ezek. 36:24-30

67. Ezek. 36:24-30
68. Ezek. 36:33-36