

“Remember” and “Observe” were uttered together¹

a. The reasons for the commandment of Shabbat in the Ten Commandments as it appears in Sefer Shemot and Sefer Devarim respectively

A comparison of the Ten Commandments as they appear in Sefer Shemot and in Sefer Devarim reveals minor discrepancies, except for the commandment of Shabbat, where we find a marked difference between the two texts.² The exchange of “Remember” and “Observe” is not the most important difference (even though we derive the positive commandments pertaining to Shabbat from the command to “remember”, while the exhortation to “observe” is the basis for the negative commandments relating to Shabbat³), since in both places the verse goes on to say “to sanctify it”, and the prohibition of “any *melakha*” is similarly mentioned in both. Rather, the real difference lies in the explanation that is given for the commandment of Shabbat. In each place the reason is absolute, as though it and it alone were the reason for the sanctity of Shabbat and its attendant laws. In Sefer Shemot, the reason given for Shabbat is that it commemorates the creation of the world, recalling the Shabbat following the six days of creation, while in Sefer Devarim the concept of Shabbat is predicated on the Exodus from Egypt.⁴ These two absolute justifications do indeed seem to contradict human logic; they certainly could not be uttered together, as Hazal taught, except by God – as a Divine utterance.⁵

Let us begin by comparing the language of the commandment of Shabbat as set forth in Sefer Shemot and Sefer Devarim:

Shemot

“Remember the Shabbat day to sanctify it.

Devarim

“Observe the Shabbat day to sanctify it, as the Lord your God has commanded you.

Shemot and Devarim:

Six days shall you work, and perform all of your labor

Shemot and Devarim:

And the seventh day is a Shabbat unto the Lord your God

Shemot:

You shall perform no labor – (neither) you nor your son nor your daughter, nor your man-servant nor your maid-servant nor your beast, nor the stranger who is within your gates.

Devarim:

You shall perform no labor – (neither) you nor your son nor your daughter, your man-servant nor your maid-servant, nor your ox nor your donkey nor any beast of yours, nor the stranger who is within your gates,

In order that your man-servant and maid-servant may rest like you.

Shemot:

For (in) six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the seas and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Shabbat day and sanctified it.

Devarim:

And you shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to keep the Shabbat day.

Sefer Shemot focuses on God as Creator of the world, and on those who remember and sanctify Shabbat as standing before Him – as created mortals before their Creator and the Creator of the entire world.⁶ Shabbat is testimony to the Creation, and it expresses the nullification of man's will, needs, and aspirations before the absolute will of the Creator, which is manifest through Creation itself and through the weekly cycle of time. Creation *ex-nihilo* is not a necessity; it is not the result of some phenomenon or event, force or law. Rather, it itself is the event and the law. Shabbat, likewise, is an arbitrary time-frame; it is not the result or the reflection of any sort of natural phenomenon, nor of any natural time, force, or event. The absolute will of the Creator is to cease labor on the seventh day, just as He desired to create and to act for six days. A person who observes Shabbat thereby acknowledges his limitations as a created being, and his recognition of God and His will as Creator of the world.⁷ This is a religious perception, manifest especially amongst the Jewish nation, but not limited to Jews. Essentially, it could be manifest as a natural, universalist religion that believes in God as Creator of the world and of man, as Rabbi Yehuda ha-Levi explains⁸, and as indeed exhibited in religions that have developed from Judaism (with well-known distortions).

Sefer Devarim focuses on God as the Redeemer and Savior of Israel, as bringing Israel out of Egypt to eternal freedom. Here, those who observe and sanctify Shabbat stand before God as free Jews before the Master and Guide of the world, Who breaks the yoke of slavery imposed by human dictators – those mortal kings who, with arrogant (pagan) pretense consider themselves masters of the universe.⁹ Shabbat is testimony to the Exodus from Egypt and to freedom in general. It is the torch of freedom raised by the redeemed nation of Israel (and by each individual who is redeemed) which is thereafter able to stand before the Lord God of Israel as a free nation and to accept the Torah and its commandments.

The prohibitions on labor on Shabbat are testimony to human freedom and equality, which came into existence at the time of the redemption from Egyptian slavery. A Jew is forbidden to subjugate himself¹⁰, the members of his household, his workers, or a stranger at the gate; even his ox and his donkey¹¹ - and all his other animals – are deserving of rest. A Jew who observes Shabbat thereby testifies to a recognition of his limitations as a free person: he is forbidden to subjugate himself or others. This is a unique socio-moral view. Am Yisrael has a special obligation to observe Shabbat, having experienced the highs and lows of subjugation and redemption to a greater degree than any other nation in history. The mitzvah of Shabbat is a central pillar of the Torah that was given to Am Yisrael, and its values and ideas emerge and spread to the entire world by virtue of Am Yisrael.

Can these two completely different ideas be sounded “in a single utterance”? Can they be brought together even where each of them possesses its own absolute reason and justification: “Therefore God blessed...”/ “Therefore God commanded...”?

The Rambam raises this question and gives a rational answer (Moreh Nevukhim, part II, chapter 31):

Two alternative reasons have already been given for this commandment, since they are [directed] towards two different objects. The reason given for aggrandizing Shabbat in the first Decalogue (Sefer Shemot) is: "For in six days God made the heavens and the earth...", while in the Mishneh Torah (Devarim), it says, "And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt... Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to make the Shabbat day." Yet this (difference) is true! For the object in the former instance is the honour and distinction of the day, as it is written, "Therefore the Lord blessed the Shabbat day and sanctified it": this is related to the reason, "For in six days...".

However, the fact that God has given us the law of Shabbat and commanded us to observe it, is the consequence that relates to the reason of our having been slaves in Egypt; where we did not work in accordance with our own will and at the time that we so chose, and (so) we could not have rested.

Thus God commanded us to abstain from work and to rest – so as to bring these two themes together: (namely,) (1) To inculcate true knowledge of the origin of the world, which indicates the presence of God at the origin of thought and at the most superficial examination; and (2) remembering God's kindness towards us in freeing us "from under the burdens of Egypt". Hence (Shabbat) is like a double blessing, including both correct theoretical notions while also perfecting the material world (by mandating rest for our bodies).

To Rambam's view, the first reason given relates to the remembrance of Shabbat and its honor, in the theoretical sense ("*Zakhor*"), while the second reason relates to the guarding or observing of Shabbat in the practical sense ("*Shamor*"). This explanation is difficult to accept, in view of the fact that the elaboration – "You shall perform no labor..." – i.e., the command concerning the "observance", is exactly the same in both places.

In the language of the Torah, the meaning of the term "*zakhor*" is closer to "*pakad*" – which might be translated as to "charge". Expressions such as "*sefer zikhronot*" (the "book of remembrances"), "*zikhron teru'ah*" (a "remembrance of sounding" the shofar), "*mazkeret avon*" (a "remembrance of iniquity"), "*le-hazkireni el Paro*" ("to remember me to Pharaoh") and others are interpreted in the sense of judgment and justice.¹² Therefore, for an understanding that hews more closely to the literal meaning of the text here, we might consult Ibn Ezra and Rashbam, who argue that "*zakhor*" and "*shamor*" mean the same thing, just like "*shav*" and "*sheker*" in the Ninth Commandment, "You shall not bear false witness..."¹³ Ramban attempts to balance the concept of Shabbat in its entirety on one single reason¹⁴ - the Creation of the world, arguing that the Exodus from Egypt also testifies to the Creation. However, the simple meaning of the text seems far removed from this interpretation.

We are therefore left with no choice but to come back to the definitions proposed by Hazal, which alone succeed in transcending the contradictions, such that the two reasons are perceived as two sides of the same coin. Each of the two aspects looks and sounds, to many people, like a whole world, leaving no room for the other. Different groups among Am Yisrael and other nations build their world-view and their way of life upon **one** of the two perceptions.¹⁵ **Secular** Bible criticism asserts that the discrepancies in the reasons given for Shabbat reflect not two different aspects of the command, but rather two separate sources.¹⁶ However, "the root of faith is the same root that leads to heresy."¹⁷ The supreme sanctity of the Torah, given by God, is manifest in the fact that these two aspects – each complete and absolute in its own right – are nothing more than two sides of the same coin.¹⁸ Man is limited in his intellect and is unable to take in both sides simultaneously. But God's word revealed both sides of the coin – "*zakhor*" and "*shamor*", the act of Creation and the Exodus from Egypt, "cosmic religion" and "social morality" – in a single Divine utterance. No human could speak in this way, and no human ear could take it in.

b. Reasons for Shabbat in Sefer Shemot

In fact, the two aspects of Shabbat are both presented in Sefer Shemot itself, with the command appearing with dual and repeated justifications on four different occasions, which are actually six instances: in Eilim in the wilderness of Sin, with the descent of the manna (chapter 16); in the Ten Commandments (20); at the end of parshat Mishpatim (23:12); at the end of the command concerning the Mishkan (31:12-17); at the renewal of the covenant following the sin of the golden

calf (34:21), and at the beginning of the building of the Mishkan (35:1-3). A careful comparison between the different appearances of the command concerning Shabbat in Sefer Shemot gives rise to the following schematic conclusion:

	Eilim- Wilderness of Sin (16)	Ten Commandments (20)
Essence of Shabbat	Shabbat for Israel – Shabbat day already familiar	Shabbat day already familiar.
Objective	Rest: “Let each man remain in his place”	Shabbat unto God.
Prohibitions and Commands	Preparation from sixth day, double portion	Prohibition on all labor <u>Your</u> labor = profane labor!
Elaboration of prohibitions	Prohibition of labors of the home – baking and cooking – from sixth day; prohibitions on gathering and going out/taking out.	Prohibition applies to the Jew and to all those under his authority.
Source and reason	Exodus from Egypt and the manna in the wilderness (in the sense of Divine Providence)	Act of Creation (absolute reason)
Punishment	No punishment mentioned, but a test from God mentioned for both manna and Shabbat.	No punishment mentioned.

	End of Mishpatim / End of Ki Tisa (23:12; 34:21)	With the labor of the Mishkan (twice) (31:12-17; 35:1-3)
Essence of Shabbat	Positive commandment: “You shall desist”	Shabbat – sanctified for Israel and sanctified for God; Shabbat-Shabbaton
Prohibitions and commandments	Desisting from all labor of the field (“in plowing and in harvesting you shall desist”); (“your actions” – “which you sow in the field”)	Absolute prohibition on all labor, <u>including labor for the sake of heaven</u> (Mishkan). Special verse prohibiting lighting fire on Shabbat anywhere, as

		example of prohibited labor that is easy to perform
Punishment	No punishment mentioned	“ <i>karet</i> ” and death penalty
Source and reason	Exodus from Egypt, from slavery to freedom (pay attention to Shemot 23:9, 15)	Creation
Purpose	“ <u>in order that your ox and your donkey may rest</u> , and that the son of your <u>handmaiden</u> as well as the stranger may be refreshed”	Significance: eternal covenant, eternal sign between God and Israel, absolute sanctity (which pushes aside the construction of the Mishkan)

Clearly, the concept of Shabbat as it is presented in Sefer Devarim is predated already in Sefer Shemot, at the end of parshat Mishpatim, as manifest in the expression “in order that your ox and your donkey may rest”. It is likewise clear that the source for the reason and the commandment of Shabbat is twofold – the Creation and the Exodus from Egypt – and it appears alternatively: in the section on the manna, Shabbat is connected to the Exodus; in the Ten Commandments, it is related to Creation; at the end of parshat Mishpatim it is once again presented in the context of the Exodus; at the end of the command concerning the Mishkan it goes back to Creation; at the end of Ki-Tisa it recalls the Exodus, and at the beginning of Vayakhel – the Creation.

It should further be noted that the concept of Shabbat as arising by virtue of the Exodus from Egypt embodies, in itself, dual significance: it is an outstanding expression of Divine Providence guiding Israel and of the assurance of their welfare, on one hand (the section on the manna), and at the same time it establishes the standards of rest based on liberty, freedom from servitude, and a limitation on the right to subjugate in general (“in order that... may rest, and the son of your handmaid and the stranger shall be refreshed”, in parshat Mishpatim).

From the point of view of the literal text of the Torah, in the section on the manna Shabbat is bound up with the concept of miracle and test: “God said to Moshe, Behold, I bring down bread for you from the heavens, and the people shall go out and gather each day’s rations, in order that I may test them (*lema’an anasenu*) [to see]

whether they will follow My teaching or not. And it shall be, on the sixth day, that they shall prepare that which they bring, and it shall be double that which they gather on each day” (Shemot 16:4-5). The test here concerns the daily descent of the manna, as well as the prohibition on leaving any of it until the morning (16:19-20), the gathering of a double portion on the sixth day, and the command not to go out to gather on Shabbat. All of these elements entail mutual tests: God tests Israel with the waters of Mara: “There He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He tested them (*ve-sham nisehu*)” (16:25)¹⁹, and Israel test God at Refidim: “And there he called the place *Masa* u-Meriva, over the strife of Bnei Yisrael, and over their testing (*nasotam*) of God, saying, Is God in our midst or not?” (17:7).

God’s commands here are characterized as tests and challenge – along with their rewards, as we read at the end of the “statute and ordinance” and the test at Mara: “And he said, If you will diligently obey the Lord your God, and do what is proper in His eyes, and listen to His commandments, and observe all of His statutes, then all of the sickness which I placed upon Egypt I shall not place upon you, for I am the Lord, your Healer” (15:26). In Sefer Devarim, too, the manna is explained in the overall sense as a test: “In order to afflict you to test you, to know what is in your hearts, whether you will observe His commandments or not. And (so) He afflicted you and caused you to be hungry, and fed you manna which you had not known, and which your fathers had not known, in order to make it known to you that it is not by bread alone that man lives, but by all that emerges from God’s mouth that man exists” (Devarim 8:-2-3,16). The commandments of Shabbat appear here within the context of questions of Divine Providence and religious consciousness. The absolute command of Shabbat - with no relation to a test, to Divine Providence, or to reward and punishment - actually appears only in the Ten Commandments and then again in the building of the Mishkan.

In the first sense of Shabbat, in the section on the manna, household labor is forbidden (Shemot 16), while in the second sense – of parshat Mishpatim – it is the labors of the field, usually performed by workers, that are forbidden. In both senses what we have is essentially a positive commandment, and a prohibition that arises by virtue of this obligation.²⁰ The second sense is what we find at the end of Mishpatim, and this represents the foundation of the Ten Commandments in Devarim. The commandments of Shabbat in the section on the manna are related to the home, and not to labors of the field, because manna is the opposite of the produce of the field (“heavenly bread”, Tehillim 105:40); the only labor outside of the home that is involved is gathering and bringing it in – i.e., carrying from one domain to another.

All the rest of the *melakhot* related to manna involve its preparation, baking, and cooking.²¹

In contrast, the commandments of Shabbat at the end of parshat Mishpatim are focused on the field – the place where laborers and animals usually work: “your ox”, “your donkey”, “the son of your handmaid”, “the stranger”. The same image arises from two comparisons in the same chapter:

“Six years you shall sow your land...” (23:10)

Contrasting with:

“Six days you shall perform your actions...” (23:12)

And:

“Six days shall you perform **your actions** (*ma’asekha*)...” (ibid.)

Contrasting with:

“And the festival of the ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in **your actions** (work) from the field (*ma’asekha min ha-sadeh*)” (23:16).”

We see the same idea arising from a comparison of this section to the parallel one in parshat Ki-Tisa:

“Six days shall you perform your actions, and on the seventh day you shall desist, in order that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the sons of your maidservant may rest, and the stranger” (23:12).

“Six days shall you work, and on the seventh day you shall desist; you shall desist from plowing and from harvesting” (34:21).

Hence, there are two obligations involved in Shabbat as a positive commandment: desisting (from work) in the home – prior to the giving of the Torah, and desisting (from work) in the field – afterwards. In the Ten Commandments at Sinai the Torah speaks of “all labor”, with no distinction, applying the absolute prohibition “you shall not perform” to all of them.

These definitions help us to understand the distinction that the Torah draws between the “labor of work” (*melekhet avoda*) that is forbidden on the festivals (Vayikra 23), and that “which every person must eat” (*asher ye’aseh le-khol nefesh*) – referred to by Hazal as “*okhel nefesh*” (food that is necessary for the day of the festival) – which may be prepared. “*Melekhet avoda*” means work in the field; it denotes the physical work usually associated with laborers and slaves (as Ramban interprets it; Vayikra 23:7). The work involved in “*okhel nefesh*”, on the other hand, refers to the activities involved in preparing food, usually performed inside the house. Since the desisting from gathering and preparing the manna appears in the Torah – on the literal level of the text – only in relation to Shabbat, not the festivals²², there is no obligation on the festivals to desist from gathering and from transferring from one domain to another, nor to desist from cooking and baking. This perspective afforded by the literal text offers a very simple explanation for the labors permissible on Yom Tov, and solves numerous questions arising from the halakha.²³

The concept of Shabbat arising from the Creation likewise has two aspects: The first, reflected in the Ten Commandments, is the absolute prohibition on **all profane labor** (“*melakhtekha*”); the second, manifest in the command concerning the Mishkan, is the absolute prohibition on **all labor whatsoever**, including for sacred purposes (including the building of the Mishkan).²⁴ Only the second aspect establishes the absolute sanctity of Shabbat, as a “*Shabbat shabbaton*”, overriding the importance of any type of labor, where “those who desecrate it shall surely be put to death”. Hence, the punishment for desecrating Shabbat appears only in the sections dealing with the Mishkan.

c. The extra reason for Shabbat that appears in Sefer Devarim

In light of the connection that we have found between the concept of Shabbat as it is presented at the end of parshat Mishpatim and Shabbat as presented in the Ten Commandments in Sefer Devarim, we might ask what new element is added in the latter source.

It would seem that the contribution of the Ten Commandments to the concept of Shabbat comprises three main elements: firstly, at the end of parshat Mishpatim (Shemot 23:14) there is no negative commandment. In Sefer Shemot, the Exodus from Egypt demands a Shabbat with rest for workers of the field, as a positive commandment, but not with any aspect of prohibition – since the absolute prohibition on labor arises from the Creation. In Devarim, the source of the command as arising from the Exodus is bound up with the absolute prohibition of “You shall not

perform any labor...”. Secondly, the word “*kamokha*” (“like you”) defines the rest that is freedom from the subjugation of work on Shabbat on the basis of equality of human worth, which transcends social strata and the value of the work involved. Therefore, in Sefer Devarim, the ox and the donkey are separated from the “stranger and the maidservant”, mentioned instead in a position place more appropriate to them – just prior to “all of your animals”:

Shemot (23 as well as 34): “Six days you shall perform your actions [in chapter 34: shall you work] (in the field) and on the seventh day you shall rest, in order that your **ox and your donkey may rest** (physical rest) and the son of your handmaid and the servant be refreshed (physical rest).”

Devarim (5): “Six days shall you work and perform all of your labor. And the seventh day is a Shabbat to the Lord your God; you shall do no labor – you, and your son and your daughter, and your manservant and your maidservant, your **ox and your donkey** and **all of your animals**, and the stranger who is in your gates – **in order that your manservant and maidservant may rest like you.**”

Freedom and rest are arranged from the bottom upward in accordance with the various strata at the end of Mishpatim: first animals and then man; first servant and then stranger – corresponding to the arrangement that appears in many of the ‘mishpatim’ themselves.²⁵ In Sefer Devarim, there is a change: the ox and the donkey will not labor, as part of the overall prohibition, but the manservant and the maidservant and the stranger will rest “**like you**”.

The third – and most important – new element in Devarim is that the invocation of the Exodus from Egypt as the source for the commandment of Shabbat becomes overarching and absolute: “**Therefore** the Lord your God has commanded you to make the Shabbat day”.

d. Reasons for Shemitta

In the commandment of Shemitta the same two perceptions are easily discerned. The first is to be found at the end of Mishpatim, continuing on from the prohibition against oppressing a stranger: “for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (23:9). There we are told, “And six years you shall sow your land, and gather its produce. But the seventh [year] you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the destitute of your people may eat, and what they leave – the beasts of the field shall eat; so shall you do with your vineyard and your olive grove” (23:10-11).

The ‘seventh’ here is Shemitta – i.e., desisting or leaving for the sake of the poor of the nation – and, according to the literal text, also for the benefit of the beasts of the field.²⁶ The crux of the verse comes to negate the landowner’s ownership of the ingathering. This is meant for the benefit of the poor²⁷, and as a positive commandment.

In parshat Emor (Vayikra 23:1-3), the commandment of Shabbat resembles the presentation of it at the end of Sefer Shemot (35:1-3) – i.e., the Shabbat of the Mishkan, where the sanctity of Shabbat is absolute. In parshat Emor we read, “*Shabbat shabbaton mikra kodesh*” (a Shabbat of Shabbats, a holy convocation), corresponding to the commandment in the unit relating to the Mishkan: “*Shabbat shabbaton kodesh la-Hashem*” (a Shabbat of Shabbats, holy to God), and the justification given goes back to the Creation (31:17). Likewise in the commandment of Shemitta in Sefer Vayikra (25:1-7): “And the land shall rest a Shabbat unto God... and in the seventh year the land shall have a *Shabbat Shabbaton*, a Shabbat to God; you shall not sow your field, nor shall you prune your vineyard.”

We see here clearly a “seventh” of sanctity, a “*Shabbat shabbaton*” – and specifically in relation to the prohibitions of sowing and pruning, as manifestations of the sanctity of this absolute *Shabbaton* (in the prohibitions of gathering we read, “the land shall have a “*shenat shabbaton*” - **year of *Shabbaton***”, as opposed to the “*Shabbat shabbaton*” in relation to sowing and pruning). It must be acknowledged that this unit in Vayikra presents the sanctity of the Shemitta year as arising by virtue of the Creation. Parshat Mishpatim, in contrast, bases the commandment on the benefit that it brings to the poor, and as arising by virtue of the Exodus from Egypt, although the source in Vayikra also mentions the benefit to the weaker sectors of society: “And the Shabbat [produce] of the land shall be for you to eat – for you and for your manservant and for your maidservant and for your hired worker and for your stranger who sojourns with you, and for your cattle and for the beasts that are in your land shall all of its produce be as food” (Vayikra 25:6-7). This is the result – and perhaps also an aim – of the “Shabbat” of the land, but it is specifically the Creation that is the source from which arise the sanctity of the Shemitta year and its prohibitions, and especially the severity of the punishment mentioned in its regard (Vayikra 26:34-35).

In the unit on Shemitta in Vayikra, both perceptions appear and are emphasized (verse 7 also seems similar to the value of equality in the expression “like you”), but the **source** of the command is the sanctity of Shabbat, whose foundation is the Creation of the world.

In Sefer Devarim, we encounter not a “*Shabbat shabbaton*”, but rather a Shemitta that is wholly for the benefit of the poor: “This is the manner of the Shemitta (release): every creditor who lends to his neighbor shall release it; he shall not demand it of his neighbor or of his brother, for he has proclaimed a release unto God.... But there shall be practically no poor among you... if you will only obey...” (Devarim 15:2-6).

The release of monetary debts (*shemittat kesafim*) is wholly bound up with our acknowledgment of the Lord our God Who brought us out of Egypt, Who saves and redeems from slavery to freedom, and Who therefore forbids us outright to subjugate our fellows, who are also His children. There is no mention here of a “*Shabbaton*” with prohibitions on types of labor, but rather a Shemitta that consists entirely of obligations,²⁸ as a commandment that applies to society as a whole. Clearly, the purpose of the Exodus from Egypt was the building of an Israelite **society** along God’s guidelines, in contrast to a personal, cosmic religiosity. Hence the centrality of the social commandments in Sefer Devarim, as well as in the exhortations and rebukes of the prophets.

The commandment of Shemitta in Devarim, together with the units adjacent to it – the “tithe for the poor” that precedes it, charity and the obligation of giving a loan, and the freeing of indentured servants along with gifts that follows – are all connected to and explained on the basis of the same verse: “You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this matter today” (15:15). This verse clearly parallels the commandment of Shabbat in the Ten Commandments at the beginning of the Sefer (Devarim 5:15 – “Therefore...”), and it also indicates that chapter 15 in its entirety, along with most of chapter 16 (including the matters related to the firstborn and to the pilgrim festivals) are an elaboration of the command to “Guard the Shabbat day to sanctify it”, in the special sense of Shabbat in Sefer Devarim. The emphases in the section on the pilgrim festivals (16:1,3-6, 12) are likewise directed to remembrance of the Exodus (“In order that you will remember the day you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life”) more than to the connection between the festivals and the land and its sanctity, as emphasized in Sefer Vayikra (23).²⁹ The reason given for the festival of Shavuot is most explicit in this regard: “And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall observe and perform these statutes” (verse 12).³⁰ The name “festival of Sukkot” instead of “festival of the ingathering” (as it appears in Sefer Shemot) likewise shows that the main emphasis in Sefer Devarim is on the commandment of the sukka, “for I caused Bnei Yisrael to dwell in sukkot when I brought them out of the land of Egypt” (Vayikra 23:43), while when it comes to the commandment of the Four Species, the *shabbaton* and the “festival unto God” are

mentioned only in Vayikra (23:39-41).³¹ To this we must of course add the repeated emphasis, in Shavuot and Sukkot, on the full and equal participation of the manservant and the maidservant, the stranger and the Levi, the orphan and the widow, together with the homeowner of means and his family (16:11,14).

Summary

Sefer Devarim bases the idea of Shabbat entirely and absolutely on the foundation of the Exodus as the source of freedom and of equality of Bnei Yisrael before God Who brought them from slavery to eternal freedom.

The values of freedom and even of equality, which have become so widespread and popular in recent generations, unquestionably have their foundation in the Exodus from Egypt, and they are set forth in the Torah that God gave to Israel by the hand of Moshe – and specifically in Sefer Devarim. (Only idolatry and its related phenomena are given no freedom in Sefer Devarim, since true freedom is granted only by God.)

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- My thanks to the editors of Megadim for their comments.

¹ “*Zakhor*’ (Remember) and ‘*Shamor*’ (Guard) were said in a single utterance – which a [human] mouth cannot speak, nor can a [human] ear absorb it” (Rosh ha-Shana 27a; Shevuot 20b; Mekhilta de-Rashbi, Yitro, 20:5-8; and with slightly different wording and different examples in the Yerushalmi, Nedarim, chapter 3, halakha 2, and Mekhilta Yitro 7.)

² The following are the differences in the Ten Commandments as they appear in Sefer Devarim, in relation to Sefer Shemot (aside from the reasoning for the commandment of Shabbat, which is the most major difference; these are enumerated by Ibn Ezra in his commentary on Shemot 20:1): a. Three different placements of the letter ‘*vav*’ (meaning ‘and’) in the second Commandment, two of which “cancel each other out” (“*ve-khol temuna*” as against “*ve-al shileshim*”); one appears only in the written text but is not voiced (we read the word as “*mitzvota*”, but what we pronounce as the ‘*yud*’ at the end of the word is written as a ‘*vav*’). See Ramban on Shemot 20:8.

b. Addition of “as the Lord your God has commanded you” in the fourth and fifth Commandments, and the addition of “In order that it may be good for you” in the fifth Commandment (“Honor your father...”).

c. Addition of a ‘*vav*’ at the beginning of the final four Commandments (from the seventh to the tenth); in the ninth commandment - “*ed shav*” (false witness) in Devarim as opposed to “*ed sheker*” in Shemot; in the tenth Commandment - “You shall not desire your neighbor’s house” instead of “You shall not covet”, and an exchange of the order of “your neighbor’s

house” and “your neighbor’s wife”; omission of the ‘vav’ from “*ve-shoro*” (‘and’ his ox and his donkey), and the addition of “*sadehu*” (his field).

³ Berakhot 20a. In Pesahim 106a the command “*Zakhor*” is interpreted as referring to sanctification of the day (as in Pesahim 117b) while in Beitza 15b it is understood as referring to the preparations for the day, perhaps an allusion to the custom of Shammai the Elder - who would keep something good that he found during the week – even from Sunday - for Shabbat; *ibid*, 16a. Both interpretations are mentioned in the Mekhilta (Yitro 7), and in the Mekhilta de-Rashbi there is also mention of “*kevod Shabbat*” (honoring Shabbat) and counting the days until Shabbat. However, see Ramban on Shemot 20:8, and see Ibn Ezra on Devarim 5:5 and Rashbam on Shemot 20 and Devarim 5: they maintain that “*zakhor*” and “*shamor*” mean the same thing, as do “*shav*” and “*sheker*” (the aforementioned discrepancy in the ninth Commandment).

⁴ Perhaps also for the Shabbat in the wilderness of Sin; see below.

⁵ See Rambam, Moreh Nevukhim, part II, chapter 31. See also Ramban’s questions in his commentary on Devarim 5:15 and his attempt to gather everything into a single reason, although in his comment on the previous verse he himself offers an explanation similar to that formulated by the Rambam. In this article I have attempted to present the problem according to the logic of the Rambam, but its halakhic solution in accordance with the well-known teaching of Hazal concerning “*zakhor*” and “*shamor*”.

6. See below, note 7.

⁷ Kuzari, lecture 1, 11-13:

“The Rabbi answered him: I believe in the God of Avraham, Yitzhak and Yaakov, Who brought Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt with signs and miracles...”

The Kuzari said: ... Now should you, O Jew, not have said that you believe in the Creator of the world, its Governor and Guide, He Who created you and Who provides your sustenance, and such Divine attributes which serve as evidence for every believer, and for the sake of which he pursues truth and justice, in his quest to resemble the Creator in His wisdom and justice?

The Rabbi replied: That which you describe is true in relation to a religion based on [human] logic, and pertains to political leadership – religion that arises, admittedly, from thought, but is subject to many doubts...” [this would apply to Christianity and Islam as well, but seems to refer principally to the religion of the philosophers.]

⁸ Shabbat 119b: “Anyone who prays on Shabbat eve and recites “*va-yekhulu*” is regarded as being a partner of the Holy One, blessed be He, in the act of Creation.”

⁹ Read Yishayahu chapter 2, chapter 10, chapter 13 and more!

¹⁰ The most striking difference between the biblical perception of freedom and the modern one arises from the fact that in the latter view, freedom flows from man himself, from his rights and from his natural status; therefore, he may choose to subjugate himself – but not others. Biblical freedom, in contrast, arises from the freedom that God bestowed on Israel at the time of the Exodus; it is right, obligation, and destiny all together. Therefore, a free person may not subjugate even himself, because this contradicts the principle of freedom. For this reason, “There is no free person except for one who engages in study and in Torah” (Avot 6,2). Likewise, “Do not read [the word used for the engraving on the Tablets as] ‘*harut*’ (engraved),

but rather '*herut*' (freedom)" (Eruvin 54a; see Rashi ad loc.). Also, "Only a servant of God is truly free" (Rabbi Yehuda ha-Levi's liturgical poems, Yarden Edition, 4, 399, p. 1173).

¹¹ These are the most typical beasts of the field; in Devarim they are emphasized through mention in their own right along with "all of your beasts".

¹² See Rashi on Shmuel II 8:16 and on Melakhim I 4:4. See article by H. von Reventlow's article on the position of "Secretary" ("*mazkir*") in the kingdom of Judea, Hebrew translation in: "Sugiot mi-Tekufat ha-Melukha be-Yisrael", Academon Edition, Jerusalem, 5728.

¹³ See above, note 2.

¹⁴ See above, note 5.

¹⁵ See "Sefer ha-Shabbat" in memory of Haim Nahman Bialik, Oneg-Shabbat publishers, Tel Aviv, with the various emphases by contemporary philosophers. See especially the words of Hermann Cohen (pp. 134-137), D. Neimark (pp. 138-139), M. Berdichevsky (pp. 373-376) and other writers (pp. 473-514).

¹⁶ "Shabbat", Biblical Encyclopedia (Heb.), vol. VII, p. 598; article by M. Weinfeld, Tarbitz 37 (5728), pp. 127-139, 109-110.

¹⁷ . Kuzari, first essay, 77-79.

¹⁸ See Orot ha-Kodesh, vol. 1, Hokhmat ha-Kodesh, 8-12

¹⁹ The approach of biblical scholarship, which views the matter of rest alone as the reason for Shabbat in parshat Mishpatim (Shemot 23:12) is incorrect. The entire unit deals with religious, moral and social commandments related to the Exodus from Egypt, starting with the prohibition on oppressing a stranger and ending with Pesach and the pilgrim festivals. Therefore, Shabbat and *Shemittah*, too, in this context, are related to this background, as they are in Sefer Devarim.

²⁰ Perhaps this is the source for the well-known midrash which teaches that the commandment of Shabbat was given at Mara; see Rashi ad loc.

²¹ The command to rest, in both senses – the requirement to prepare in advance for Shabbat, including baking and cooking, and the command that each person remain in his place, as well as all the prohibitions arising from these, are all positive commandments, except for, "Let no person come out of his place on the seventh day" (Shemot 16:29). This is a negative commandment, and the Sages are divided in their understanding of its reading and its penalty: see Eruvin 17b and Tosfot.

²² This is also the essence of the commandment of Shabbat for a family that engages in neither agriculture nor production: such a family buys food from outside sources and brings this food home and prepares "*lehem mishneh*", in the sense of a doubled quantity of cooking and baking.

²³ However, see Mekhilta on Shemot 16:26, as well as Rashi, Tosfot and the other Rishonim on Beitza 2b, concluding that the manna fell on festivals as well.

²⁴ This explanation offers a simple solution to many difficult questions arising from the discussion on the *melakha* (labor) permitted on Yom Tov and the understanding of the related laws:

a. Why is there a need for two explicit verses in order to teach the *melakha* of "*hotza'a*" (carrying from one domain to another) on Shabbat – one concerning the manna and the other concerning the Mishkan (Shemot 36:4-7)? See Tosfot on Shabbat 2b.

b. Why is "*hotza'a*" permitted on Yom Tov, whether it is absolutely necessary or not, along with preparation of food for that day? "*Hotza'a*" appears in the context of the manna, both according to the literal reading (16:27-29) and on the level of "*derash*": "Let no man come out of his place on the seventh day" – he should not bring out", see Eruvin, 17b, and Tosfot ad

loc. However, see the discussion in Beitza 12a, which concludes from Yirmiyahu (17:21-22) that there is no “*hotza’a*” on Yom Tov, because in addition to the prohibition that appears in the context of the manna, the Torah also mentions “*hotza’a*” in the context of the labor of the Mishkan, at the stage where the materials are brought to the Mishkan (Shemot 26:4-7). Therefore, the prophet’s teaching is necessary in order for us to understand that the concepts of “taking out” and “bringing in” are labors that apply and are prohibited only on Shabbat. In any event, the basis for the license to prepare food on Yom Tov is to be found in the unit on the manna, in accordance with the literal reading of the text.

c. Why are the labors of the field not permitted on Yom Tov, along with labors performed by workers, when they are for the purpose of food for Yom Tov? The Magid Mishneh on the Rambam (Laws of Yom Tov 1,5) writes as follows:

“I maintain that ‘*melekhet avoda*’ (labor of work) includes all that a servant usually does for his master, and which most people do not do for themselves but rather hire someone else to do for them, because we are warned concerning these labors to remember that we were slaves, and we used to perform these labors for our masters. But concerning any labor which most people usually perform in their homes for themselves, we are not warned (concerning it *on Yom Tov!*) because it is not the labor of servants, but rather even masters perform it. Furthermore, any labor which a person usually performs for benefit over a long period, is usually performed by others, such as sorting, harvesting, grinding, and sifting. However, baking and kneading and slaughtering and cooking are not usually performed in preparation for a long period, and most people perform these labors themselves. So it appears to me, but the matter requires further study.”

Ramban (on Vayikra 23:7) offers a similar interpretation, but neither of these two commentators discusses the difference between the unit on the manna (home) and the unit from parshat Mishpatim (field); this difference might absolve the need for the “further study” – see Lehem Mishneh on the Rambam ad loc, questioning the matter of picking vegetation.

d. What is the basis for such controversy concerning preparation of food on Yom Tov (Beitza 2)? Clearly, the literal text forbids preparation on Shabbat, not on festivals. The Mekhilta interprets the prohibition as extending to festivals as well, but the interpretations are divided (Tosfot, Beitza 2b). However, preparation for a long period (as we learn from the Magid Mishneh), even at home, is considered “*melekhet avoda*”, since it is usually performed by servants. Therefore, it is specifically the act of preparation whose prohibition is transferred from Shabbat to Yom Tov, according to the opinion of Rabba (Beitza 2b). Even though the Rambam rules in accordance with Rabba, his view seems to be that preparation on Yom Tov is not an absolute law from the Torah, but rather a branch of the laws of “*muktzeh*” concerning which the Sages were stringent on Yom Tov (Rambam, Laws of Yom Tov 1:17-20). His position is easily understood in light of our explanation above – that the unit of the manna does not apply to Yom Tov, according to the literal text. See the booklet on “Preparation” by Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Rabinowitz-Teomim, on the end of Massekhet Beitza, with Rav Kook’s “Halakha Berura” (chapter 6).

This suggests that there is indeed a type of preparation that is “*melekhet avoda*”, and there is preparation that is regular house labor. Since guests may drop in, and in every household it is customary to prepare for such a possibility, using whatever there is in the house (and not from something created for that purpose – see the discussion in Pesahim 46b and 48a, as well as Eruvin 38b), therefore even Rabba would agree that not all preparation is prohibited by the Torah on Yom Tov, since preparation for guests is a normal sort of activity that goes on in the home, and therefore may be permitted through an *Eruv Tavshilin* (see Tosfot on Beitza 2b, and Tosfot on Pesahim 46b). The inference to *Eruvei Tavshilin* from the unit on the manna (Beitza 15b) makes sense from the perspective that views Yom Tov and Shabbat as equivalent concerning the manna. The scope of this article does not allow for further discussion of this point.

²⁵ From here we understand the duality of explanations concerning the *melakhot* of Shabbat. The Mishna (Shabbat 7, 2) enumerates them in their natural order, as labors that serve man's needs ("*melakhtekha*" – **your** labor) – preparing food, preparing clothing, preparing books, writing, the home, fire, finishing any labor, and carrying. This list, in its order and in its character, has nothing to do with the labor of the Mishkan, but rather relates to normal day-to-day activity. At the same time, both the Mishna (Shabbat, chapters 11-12) and the Gemara (Shabbat 73a-75b; 96b-99a) explain the *melakhot* in relation to the labor of the Mishkan. This dual explanation arises from the midrash halakha which addresses the dual prohibition on labor on Shabbat in the Ten Commandments ("*melakhtekha*") and in the context of the Mishkan (sacred labor). There are, of course, many differences between the labors performed for man's needs and the *melakhot* performed for sacred purposes, and both types are relevant. We shall not elaborate further here.

²⁶ Mainly in chapter 21, from verse 12, in descending (!) order: man – servant – passers-through – animals.

²⁷ Halakha views the expression "eaten by the beasts of the field" as the definition of the time-frame for the commandment of '*biur*' of the household stores. See Rashi and Sifra ad loc; Ta'anit 6b. However, the rights of the animals to the produce still exist.

²⁸ Only through midrash-halakha (Rashi) or on the basis of the parallel between the two parts of the verse (Ramban: "*tishtametna*" – from being sown; "*ve-natashta*" – from being gathered) can we learn from Shemot 23:6-11 the prohibition on sowing (as a negative that is deduced from a law formulated in the positive). See the article by Rabbi Z. Witman, "Ha-Ma'ayan".

²⁹ The special stringency in the prohibitions of Shemitta produce in Sefer Vayikra – and especially the severity of the punishment involved: exile as atonement for failure to observe Shemitta – bestow special significance on Shemitta, the "Shabbat of the land", as the only positive commandments whose punishment, where it is not fulfilled, is exile, and equal to the three most serious prohibitions: idolatry, murder, and sexual immorality. Hence the stringent approach of Hazal to Shemitta, and likewise the passion of the controversy concerning this issue in our times. Only an understanding of Shemitta as the "Shabbat of Creation" in relation to the land can explain these phenomena.

³⁰ It should be noted that money, and the relationship that it creates, is not part of Creation and the natural world, but rather an aspect of the social, artificial world created by man. Therefore, money matters can be commanded only by virtue of the Exodus from Egypt, and by virtue of the society of free people that received the Torah. For this reason, a person whose religious faith is bound up only with belief in the Creation, and for whom the Exodus is not a major factor of his consciousness, excludes money from the sphere of his fear of Heaven; he will not relate to money matters with the same fear of sin that characterizes other aspects of his behavior. This represents some measure of heresy towards God Who delivered us from slavery to freedom – in that generation and in our own.

³¹ Admittedly, Devarim 16 makes mention of the spring, the harvest and the ingathering, and the commandment of the pilgrim festivals "at the place where God will choose to cause His Name to dwell", and all of these are commandments related to agriculture in Eretz Yisrael – and agricultural produce and the commandments related to it are connected to the Creation of the world and to nature more than they are to the Exodus from Egypt. It is specifically for this reason, and because of the ever-present danger that the inhabitants of the land, in all generations, may come to forget the Exodus (see Shemot 13 and Devarim chapters 6, 8), that the Torah makes the commandment of the pilgrim festivals subservient to the memory of the Exodus, just as it makes the natural calendar, starting in Tishrei, subservient to the miraculous Israelite calendar, starting in Nissan – the time of the Exodus. The source of this subservience is to be found in Sefer Shemot (12-13), and its pinnacle is in Sefer Devarim (16). We shall not elaborate further.

³² The Written Law offers no explicit record of any historical event on Shavuot; the giving of the Torah is hinted to in the words, "in the third month" (Shemot 19:1). However, the Torah cannot contain a festival that is altogether religio-natural, without any mention of the Exodus

from Egypt. Hence this explicit emphasis in Sefer Devarim, as the moral, social significance of the festival.

33. The festival of the ingathering as a festival to God, and its special commandment – the four species, are really bound up with the sanctity of the land and of the Temple, thereby expressing the religio-natural aspect whose foundation is the Creation of the world and the natural order. In contrast, the festival of Sukkot at the time of the ingathering is a remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt, and all that that entails. See Rashbam on Vayikra 23:43.