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**SHABBAT, IMITATIO DEI, AND SLAVERY**

~ I ~

Shabbat is introduced very early in the Torah. God creates the world in six days, rests on the seventh day, and, the verse states, “God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He ceased from all His work which God created to do” (Gen. 2:3).¹ Surprisingly, however, we see no further mention of Shabbat for more than two millennia, that is, until immediately after the Exodus from Egypt, at which point Shabbat suddenly bursts onto the scene.

Why is Shabbat thus reintroduced immediately following the Exodus? I shall argue that Shabbat played a critical role in the Israelites’ metamorphosis from Egyptian slaves to God’s servants. The service of God is grounded in the idea of imitatio Dei, imitation or emulation of the Divine, and, this, I suggest, is the “message of Shabbat”; hence, its reintroduction immediately following the Exodus. This focus on imitatio Dei leads to a novel approach to reconciling well-known differences between the texts of the fourth commandment in Yitro and Va-Ethanan. Several of the ideas advanced are tethered to Hizkuni’s commentary and help justify a puzzling remark of his concerning the dibberot. Finally, as I suggest in a note, the approach offers an understanding of the proposition that Shabbat is a day of rest that may be both compared and contrasted with the treatment of that proposition in the writings of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch and Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik.

* This article originated as a *devar Torah* delivered at a se’udah shelishit at The Young Israel of Century City in Los Angeles, marking the yahrzeit of my beloved daughter Miriam a”h (1980-2009).

Let us recall the sequence of events as laid out in the early part of the Book of Exodus. *Benei Yisrael* leave Egypt on *Pesah* eve, cross the Sea several days later, and sing the Song of the Sea, the *Shirat ha-Yam*, praising God for His mighty victory over the Egyptians. This is followed by two episodes: in the first, at Mara, the Israelites complain about a lack of fresh water to drink (Ex. 15:23-24), while, in the second, they complain about the lack of food to eat (Ex. 16:2-3). God responds to this second complaint by bringing the *selav* (pheasant or quail) and the manna (Ex. 16:11-36). Both these events (Mara and manna) preceded the giving of the Ten Commandments at Sinai (Ex. 19).

It is in the context of the manna that *Shabbat* reenters biblical history. *Shabbat* plays a central role in the entire manna episode: the manna fell on six days, but not on *Shabbat* (Ex. 16:26); *Shabbat* is described as “a rest day, a holy Sabbath to the Lord” (Ex. 16:23); and the Israelites were told not to “leave their place” on *Shabbat* (Ex. 16:29).2 While *Shabbat* appears explicitly in the manna episode, Hazal date its reintroduction earlier, specifically, to the episode at Mara (Ex. 15:22-26). Towards the end of the Mara episode, the Torah states: “There He established for [the nation] a statute and a judgment, and there He tested it” (Ex. 15:25). That is to say, certain unspecified laws were given to the Israelites at Mara, some weeks prior to *Mattan Torah*. While there is some question as to which laws these were, it is generally accepted that *Shabbat* was among them.

R. Yehuda (Sanhedrin 56b) derives that *Shabbat* was among the statutes imparted at Mara from the phrase “as Hashem your God commanded you” (Deut. 5:12), which appears in the opening sentence of the fourth (*Shabbat*) and fifth (*kibbud av va-em*) commandments, in the Deuteronomy version of the commandments. This phrase suggests that these commandments were given to the Israelites prior to Sinai; ergo the conclusion that they were among those laws imparted at Mara.3 R. Yehuda’s analysis

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2 Rashi indicates that the admonition not to “leave one’s place” is a reference to the halakha of *tehum Shabbat*, that one is forbidden to travel more than two thousand *amot* on *Shabbat* (Ex. 16:29, Rashi s.v. *al yetsei ish mi-mekomo*).

3 Thus, following its foreshadowing in Bereishit, *Shabbat* was introduced first at Mara, then during the manna episode, and finally at Sinai. R. Elchanan Adler’s *Sefer Mitsvot Ha-Shabbat Mi-Mara ad Sinai* (Teaneck, NJ: HaDaF Typesetting, 2008) addresses the question of what was conveyed at each stage. Of particular note is his discussion of Mara vs. Alush (the location where the manna commenced falling), in the context of which he discusses two ways to understand what occurred at Mara (26-34). The first approach, attributed to Ramban, asserts that, while *Shabbat* was revealed to *Benei Yisrael* at Mara, they were not yet under obligation to observe it.
presumes that the Deuteronomy version of the Decalogue was a part of the initial revelation at Sinai. This is consistent with some, but certainly not all, traditional approaches to understanding this second (Va-Ethanan) version. It is worth noting that the “common” understanding, namely, that the two versions of the Decalogue correspond to what was written on the two sets of luhot, is, if anything, a minority opinion.4

Even among the early commandments given to the Israelites after the Exodus, Shabbat stands out in that the Torah provides reasons for it: In Exodus, Shabbat commemorates creation — zekher le-ma’aseh Bereshit (Ex. 20:11), while in Deuteronomy it commemorates the Exodus — zekher li-yetsi’at Mitsrayim (Deut. 5:16). The Rabbinitic tradition deals with the differing reasons in myriad ways, and we shall have reason to return to it.

Of greater interest at this juncture is an even more basic observation of the Hizkuni:

Their observance prior to Alush was as one who obeys a commandment though not obligated to do so. The second approach, attributed to the Vilna Gaon, posits that the Shabbat commandment was conveyed to Moses at Mara, but that he did not convey it to the Israelites until Alush. R. Adler raises many serious problems with the Gra’s approach and struggles to defend it.

4 Rashi and Ibn Ezra have varying approaches to the Deuteronomy Decalogue text, leading to different understandings of “as Hashem your God commanded you.” Neither advocates the arguably simplest approach — that the Yitro text appeared on the first luhot (which were shattered by Moses), and the Va-Ethanan text appeared on the second (replacement) luhot. (While neither Rashi nor Ibn Ezra adopts this approach, others do; this is addressed further in n. 15.) Rashi asserts that the va-Ethanan text was given to Moses at Sinai (as was the earlier version), while Ibn Ezra posits that the second version represents Moses’s paraphrasing of the actual text given at Sinai, which, per Ibn Ezra, is the text appearing in Yitro. According to Rashi, then, the phrase “as Hashem your God commanded you” was uttered by God at Sinai, and thus necessarily referenced a time prior to Sinai. Rashi therefore embraces the interpretation of R. Yehuda to the effect that Shabbat was given at Mara. Rashi was aware of the approach later taken by Ibn Ezra and rejected it outright, based on his assertion that the second version of the commandments was not Moses’s own words, but a repetition of what Moses heard from God at Sinai (Sanhedrin 56b; s. v. ka’asher tsivvekha Hashem E-lokekha).

Ibn Ezra (Ex. 20:1, s.v. va-yedabber Hashem) tackles the overall problem of inconsistencies between the Decalogue texts. He lays out a number of principles, including the assertion, already noted, that the Yitro text is what appeared on the luhot (both the first and second sets), and that the Va-Ethanan text reflects Moses’s paraphrase. This paraphrased text incorporates a number of explanatory comments, and “As Hashem your God commanded you” is just such a comment, a reference by Moses to the fact that Shabbat had been given at Sinai. Ibn Ezra rejects R. Yehuda’s approach in its entirety. In fact, Ibn Ezra sees the phrase “as Hashem your God commanded you” as proof positive of his position that the Deuteronomy version of the commandments were Moses’s words, not God’s.
... it [the Torah] provides a reason for remembering the Sabbath more so than for the other commandments, as it says, ‘for six days, etc.’, because a person is obligated to observe them [the commandments] from reasoning (shikkul ha-da’at), [that is,] — except for the Sabbath (Ex. 20:7, s.v. zakhor et Yom ha-Shabbat).

Hizkuni (implicitly) is asking why the Torah found it necessary to provide a reason for Shabbat (arguably two different reasons), when it provides no such reason for any of the remaining nine commandments. His response is that the other commandments all can be derived from reason, whereas Shabbat is something novel, something which human beings would never have derived from pure reason.⁵

Having established the novelty of Shabbat, and having noted that it was among the very first mitsvot given to the Israelites after the Exodus, we confront a question — what was the message that Shabbat was meant to convey, a message that was apparently so time-critical that God could not wait until Mattan Torah to impart it?

~ III ~

There are situations where Beit Din, the local court, assumes responsibility for liquidating assets belonging to a private person.⁶ The Mishnah

⁵ It is worth noting, in this regard, that, while deniers of Torah mi-Sinai have attempted to link various biblical laws and historical passages to non-biblical sources, they have been singularly unsuccessful in finding a non-biblical analogue to the Sabbath.

“The consensus among modern scholars is that the religious or economic cycles of Israel’s neighbors that were viewed by early twentieth-century scholars as the roots of the Sabbatical week — cycles re-discovered with the rise in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of modern archaeology — are either (a) unrelated to the Sabbatical week and/or (b) more in the nature of contrasts than parallels and cannot be seen as the inspiration for that concept.” (Allen Friedman, “Unnatural Time: Its History and Theological Significance,” The Torah u-Madda Journal 15 (2008-09), 104.) Similarly, Prof. Sid Leiman writes: “Scholars have not succeeded in tracing the origin of the seven-day week, nor can they account for the origin of the Sabbath. A seven-day week does not accord well with either a solar or lunar calendar. Some scholars, pointing to the Akkadian term shapattu, suggest a Babylonian origin for the seven-day week and the Sabbath. But shapattu, which refers to the day of the Full Moon and is nowhere described as a day of rest, has little in common with the Jewish Sabbath. It appears that the notion of the Sabbath as a holy day of rest, linking God to his people and recurring every seventh day, was unique to ancient Israel. [Italics added.] See Sid Z. Leiman, “Jewish Religious Year: The Sabbath,” Brittanica.com, last updated 4-4-2008). See also the various sources cited by Friedman, most notably Hallo and Tigay.

⁶ An example is a case where a property inherited by a minor orphan must be sold to pay off creditors with liens on the estate.
(Ketubbot 11:5) discusses laws relating to such situations and, in the gemara’s ensuing discussion, it emerges that Beit Din routinely announces such sales in advance (hakhraza), to help secure the best (highest) possible price. However, the gemara (without attribution) adds the caveat that the sales of certain assets were never announced in advance: “And these are the things about which we do not announce in advance of the sale: slaves, movables, and notes of indebtedness” (Ketubbot 100b). The gemara proceeds to explain why, in each of these three instances, there is no advance announcement. For the case of slaves, in particular, the reason presented is “Lest they hear that they are about to be sold and run away to escape being subject to a new master.” Clearly, the Talmud considered being sold to a new owner a very frightening prospect for a slave.

Compare the situation in which the Israelites found themselves, when told they were to leave the service of the Egyptians and go to serve God, to the situation of the lone slave in the case discussed above in the gemara in Ketubbot. Whereas the Talmud’s case presumably involves (or at least includes the case of) an isolated individual slave who will be passed from one master to another within an existing community, the Israelites were faced with leaving, en masse, the only home they and their ancestors had known for generations. Moreover, they were to leave the relatively fertile Egypt for the inhospitable Sinai desert. And what, after all, did they know of their new master? When God first instructs Moses to approach the people on His behalf, Moses responds: “when ... they say to me, ‘What is His Name?’ — what shall I say to them?” (Ex. 3:13). At that point, the people apparently knew nothing of God. True, by the time they left Egypt, they knew a good deal more, but a lot of what they learned could hardly be termed heartening. They had borne witness to the ten horrible plagues God inflicted on the Egyptians, and later to the annihilation of the Egyptian armies in the Sea. If the isolated slave of the Talmud in Ketubbot was terrified at the prospect of a new master, then kal va-homer, the Israelites would have been terrified at the prospect of leaving Egypt to serve such a deity! Their complaints — We have nothing to drink! We have nothing to eat! We were better off in Egypt! — reflect their apprehension regarding their new situation.

Given the people’s fear, it was of paramount importance that, at the earliest possible moment, they be made aware that, while the term avodah may have been used with regard to the service of God as it had been with regard to the service of the Egyptians, that is where the similarity ended. Avodat Hashem and avodat Pharaoh were fundamentally different. Avodat Hashem can best be summed up by the celebrated expression *imitatio
Dei, imitation or emulation of the Divine.\textsuperscript{7} To the Egyptian slave-owner, the notion of an Israelite slave emulating his master, trying to become like his master, would have been anathema, even inconceivable. As detailed in the early part of Exodus, the whole point of enslaving the Israelites was to isolate them and thereby prevent them from serving as a fifth column (Ex. 1:8-10). God, on the other hand, wanted precisely that His servants emulate Him to the maximum extent practicable.

How was God to communicate the concept of \textit{imitatio Dei} to a people who had known nothing but the day-in day-out drudgery of slavery for hundreds of years? He would have to use the only language that was meaningful and familiar to them, that of labor. God tells the Israelites that they labor only when their master God labors. He spent six days on the creation of the world and rested on the seventh day; and so they, too, need only labor for six days and would rest — as it were, along with God — on Shabbat. This message, the message of \textit{imitatio Dei} integral to the whole idea of Shabbat,\textsuperscript{8} was one that the Israelites needed to hear the moment they left Egypt.\textsuperscript{9} Shabbat is a day of rest; but rest, in this context, as noted by R. Samson Raphael Hirsch and R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, is not

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\textsuperscript{7} While it is argued here that the Sabbath conveys the message of \textit{imitatio Dei}, the commandment to emulate God’s ways is based on the verse “to go in all His ways” (Deut. 11:22), upon which Rashi comments (based on the Sifrei): “He is merciful, so you should be merciful; He bestows kindnesses so you should bestow kindnesses.” The theme of going (or walking) in God’s ways also appears in Deut. 8:6, 10:12, 13:5, 19:9; Zech. 3:7; Mic. 4:2, and Ps. 37:34, 119:3, 128:1. See also R. Hama b. R. Hanina’s exegesis of Deut. 13:5 (\textit{Sota} 14a), albeit his focus is on God’s actions (e.g., clothing the naked, visiting the sick) rather than on His attributes. Imitating God’s holiness is prescribed by Lev. 19:2.

\textsuperscript{8} The observation that Shabbat, as presented in \textit{Yitro}, is an example of — arguably, the quintessential example of — \textit{imitatio Dei} is, of course, not new. A particularly interesting approach to the interplay between \textit{imitatio Dei} and the idea of rest on Shabbat is to be found in R. Adin Steinsaltz’s talk on \textit{Va-Yakkel} (\textit{Talks on the Parsha}, R. Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz [Shefa-Maggid: New Milford and Jerusalem, 2015], 175-81). R. Steinsaltz posits that man’s primary obligation under \textit{imitatio Dei} is to complete the creation, begun by God during the Six Days of Creation. Shabbat, then, serves as a transition point between God’s and man’s creation, a time to reflect on what has been accomplished and to replenish one’s energies, in preparation for the task ahead. See also R. Yaakov Bieler’s discussion of Steinsaltz’s approach (R. Yaakov Bieler Blogpost, 3/19/2017: “Conceptualizing the Mitzva of Shabbat.”)

\textsuperscript{9} This argument assumes, quite reasonably, that it was the \textit{Yitro} version of the Shabbat commandment that was given to the Israelites at Mara. As discussed in n. 4, there are two approaches to what happened at Mara. The already problematic second approach — that Moses forgot to convey the message of Shabbat he received at Mara until Alush — becomes even more difficult with the idea I present here, that the Israelites could not afford to wait to hear the message of Shabbat.
a banal, utilitarian concept. Rather, it is shot through with theological significance and importance in the history of the people.10

～IV～

With the understanding we have developed of Shabbat — that Shabbat conveyed to the newly emancipated Israelites a novel model for service, a model grounded in the concept of imitatio Dei — we can explain an otherwise cryptic statement by Hizkuni. While there are several differences

10 This approach allows for a middle ground between what have been viewed as two starkly different views of Shabbat — a day of cessation of work and a day infused with spirituality. While the Rav and R. Hirsch have similarly proposed methods of infusing cessation of labor with an element of theological significance, my approach assigns to rest a more foundational theological role.

The Rav is uncharacteristically critical of Maimonides for his “rationalization of the commandment” of Shabbat along utilitarian lines, though he embraces Maimonides’ secondary reason for Shabbat — the incarnation of the mystery of creation. Commenting on Maimonides’ discussion of Shabbat in Guide of the Perplexed (III:43), the Rav states:

Maimonides here offers two possible aspects from which the Sabbath may be viewed. ... The first, yields a purely pragmatic interpretation; the goal of the Sabbath is hedonic ... Thus the Sabbath idea is dispossessed of its breadth and warmth... Yet, the second interpretation, envisaging the Sabbath as the incarnation of the mystery of creation, penetrates infinity itself ... It is superfluous to state that the homo religiousus finds delight in such an interpretation, ... (The Halakhic Mind, New York: Seth Press, 1986, 97-98).

R. Samson Raphael Hirsch is similarly critical of the purely hedonic view of Shabbat:

If, for instance, the sole intent of the prohibition of labor on Shabbos is to enable man to rest and recover from the toil of the week, ..., in order to give some scope to the mind as well ..., who, then, would not consider it mere pettiness and hair-splitting to fill an entire folio with investigation about what activities are forbidden on Shabbos? (The Nineteen Letters with a Comprehensive Commentary by Joseph Elias, trans. Karen Paritzky [New York and Jerusalem, 1996], 270)

While both the Rav and R. Hirsch accept the idea of rest (in the hedonic sense) as an element of Shabbat observance, they do so reluctantly and with qualification, ascribing to it a secondary or limited role in our overall concept of Shabbat. At the same time, they do ascribe to the rest element of Shabbat an element of theological significance: the Rav, by portraying rest as a manifestation of divine benevolence, and R. Hirsch, by describing rest as affording an opportunity to “give some scope to the mind.” My thesis, while by no means suggesting that Shabbat is entirely — or even primarily — about (labor followed by) cessation of labor, ascribes to rest a more foundational theological role, insofar as it constitutes an important instantiation of imitatio dei, the very message Shabbat is meant to convey.
between the Exodus and Deuteronomy versions of the fourth commandment, two have received the most attention. The first, as discussed above, is that Shabbat is associated with Creation in Exodus — zekher le-ma’aseh Bereshit — and with the Exodus in Deuteronomy — zekher li-yetsi’at Mitsrayim. The other is the opening of the commandment: Zakhor et yom ha-Shabbat le-kaddesho — “Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it” (Ex. 20:8) in parashat Yitro, and Shamor et yom ha-Shabbat le-kaddesho — “Guard the Sabbath day to sanctify it” in Va-Ethanan (Deut. 5:12). Rashi, in Exodus (20:8), comments that zekhor ve-shamor be-dibbur ehad ne’emru — “Remember the day of Shabbos” and “Guard the day of Shabbos” were said by God simultaneously in one statement.1112

Hizkuni (commenting on Ex. 20:7) offers an alternative explanation for the use of zakhor and shamor. He ties the use of the term zakhor in Yitro and shamor in Va-Ethanan to the differing reasons given for Shabbat in the two versions of the Ten Commandments. The word zakhor — “Remember” — says Hizkuni, is used when referring to the past. Therefore, when the Torah, in Yitro, ties Shabbat to the days of creation, an event most certainly in the past, it uses the word zakhor. In Va-Ethanan, the Torah uses the future-oriented word shamor — “Guard” — because the reason given there for Shabbat is le-ma’an yanuah ... — “In order that, etc.,” which is future tensed. Hizkuni’s assertion is highly problematic. Isn’t the reason given in Va-Ethanan for Shabbat the Exodus from Egypt, zekher li-yetsiat Mitsrayim? And, if so, then the reason given in Va-Ethanan is also in the past — admittedly in the recent past, unlike ma’aseh Bereshit, which is in the primordial past, but the past nonetheless — and so the Torah should have again used the term “zakhor.”

To understand Hizkuni, we must first examine the phrase “le-ma’an yanu’ah ...” The phrase appears in the conclusion of the third verse of the Va-Ethanan version of the Shabbat commandment. The verse lists all those included in the prohibition on performing labor (issur melakha) on Shabbat: “but the seventh day is Sabbath to Hashem, your God; you shall not do any work — you and your son and your daughter and your slave

11 The gemara in Shevu’ot (20b) derives from this the halakha that women are included in the positive commandment to verbally greet Shabbat, notwithstanding the fact that women are generally exempt from time-dependent positive commandments.

12 An alternative view of zakhor and shamor, offered by R. Harold Kanatopsky (“The Sabbath,” in Gesher [1968]: 52-55), and based primarily on the Ramban, sees zakhor as reflecting the love of God and shamor, the fear of God, with the two in tension with each other. One the one hand, by resting on Shabbat, we emulate God and thereby show our love for Him. On the other, by refraining from work on Shabbat, we leave only His forces in operation, showing our worthlessness and fear in the presence of his omnipotence.
and your maidservant ..., in order that your slave and your maidservant may rest like you” (Deut. 5:14). The verse includes the slave and maidservant in the initial list but then lists them again in the rather perplexing phrase — “in order that your slave and your maidservant may rest like you.” It is this phrase that Hizkuni cites as the reason given for Shabbat in Va-Ethanan.

At first glance, this is quite puzzling — does Hizkuni really mean to suggest that the reason for refraining from labor on Shabbat is so that one’s slave and maidservant can rest along with him? However, with our understanding of Shabbat as conveying a message of imitatio Dei, Hizkuni’s assertion makes perfect sense. This message is conveyed in Yitro in terms of the Israelites’ labor — when God labors, they labor; when God rests, they rest. This very same message is conveyed in Va-Ethanan by taking imitatio Dei a logical step further. If the Israelites are to truly emulate God, then it’s not enough that when He rests, they rest; they must also assure that their servants rest along with them, just as God has His servants — the Israelites — rest along with Him. The Yitro text introduces the concept of imitatio Dei in terms of the Israelites own (cessation of) labor. The text in Va-Ethanan is simply taking this imitatio Dei concept laid out in Yitro to its logical conclusion.

An important feature of this understanding of the two Shabbat texts is that, while the reasons given for Shabbat in Yitro and Va-Ethanan (even according to Hizkuni) may be seen as independent — attestation to creation, ethical conduct toward slaves — they are both, in fact, closely related aspects of the emulation of God. Additionally, while it has been suggested that the Yitro and Va-Ethanan texts may be characterized as providing, respectively, universalistic and particularistic reasons for Shabbat, they are, as understood here, both universalistic, though, in the latter case, a universalistic objective — emulation of God’s ethical treatment of servants — is cast in particularistic, historical terms (the Exodus from Egypt).

~V~

We return now to the question of how to reconcile the fact that, in Yitro, Shabbat is tied to Creation — zekher le-ma’aseh Bereshit — while in va-Ethanan, it is tied to the Exodus — zekher li-yetsi’at Mitsrayim. Our goal is to show how these are really one and the same reason, though tailored to different audiences. Consistent with our discussion above, we assume

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13 See Bieler, “Conceptualizing the Mitzvah of Shabbat,” 3.
that, while the reason for *Shabbat* given in *Yitro* is wholly contained in the final verse of the *dibberah*, the reason given in *Va-Ethanan* begins slightly earlier, with the phrase *le-ma’an yanu’ah avdekha va-amtekha kamokha* in the preceding verse. Note that this is supported by the text itself: in *Yitro*, the last verse of the commandment begins with the word *ki* — because — which is to say, one must refrain from work on the Sabbath *because* God rested on the seventh day of creation. The last verse of the commandment in *Va-Ethanan* does not begin with *ki* or an equivalent; rather it begins *ve-zakharta* — “and you shall remember.” The *Va-Ethanan* version does, however, include an equivalent to *ki* in the word *le-ma’an* — “in order that.” Thus, one may properly understand the message to be that we, and our animals and slaves, must refrain from labor on the Sabbath “*in order that*” our slaves and maidservants rest along with us, and in so doing we will commemorate the exodus from Egypt.

As we saw earlier, the message of *imitatio Dei* was most appropriately communicated to the freed Israelite slaves through the medium of labor: they would labor when God labored and they would rest when He rested. Thus, it was entirely appropriate for the associated *Yitro* version of the text to cite *ma’aseh Bereshit*. However, the audience for the *Va-Ethanan* version was completely different. The generation that had left Egypt had largely died out during the forty years in the desert and Moses was addressing their descendants who would leave the desert and conquer Canaan.\(^{14}\) This

\(^{14}\) The approaches of Rashi and Ibn Ezra to the differing *Yitro* and *Va-Ethanan* texts were addressed in n. 4. Ibn Ezra posits that the *Va-Ethanan* text represents Moses’s paraphrase of the *Yitro* text. Assuming this, Moses tailored the message to his audience. Rashi (on the *gemara*) posits that both texts were given to Moses at Sinai, though it is unclear whether his intent is that they were both part of the commandments as heard by the entire assembled Israelite people. Working with Rashi’s assumption, while both texts were given to Moses at Sinai, they were recorded in accordance with the focus that was most relevant to the respective audiences.

There is another approach to the differing texts, that the *Yitro* text appeared on the first *lubot* and the *Va-Ethanan* text on the second. This approach is implicit in a *gemara in Bava Kamma* (54a-55b), which raises a question about the differing texts and provides an answer about the two sets of *lubot*. A similar approach was adopted by R. Shlomo Ephraim ben Aaron of Luntschitz, *Keli Yakar*. He raises the problem of the inconsistencies between the two Decalogue texts and proposes a single unified solution to all the inconsistencies (Ex. 20:8, s.v. *Zakhor et yom ba-Shabbat le-kaddesh*), a solution which presupposes association of the two texts with the two sets of *lubot*. This approach was also taken by R. Naphtali Zvi Yehuda Berlin (*Humash Ha’Amek Davar*, Deut. 5:19, s.v. *va-yikhtereim al shenei lubot avanim*.) Assuming this approach, the *Va-Ethanan* text, while received by Moses some forty days after the revelation at Sinai, was not recorded in the Torah until some forty years later, when Moses is recounting the events at Sinai, because this text was particularly apropos to this audience.
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generation had never experienced slavery firsthand. Moreover, they had lived during the one time and in the one place, since the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, that humanity didn’t have to labor to put bread on the table. God’s edict of “By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread” (Gen. 3:19) was suspended, insofar as food fell as manna from heaven. There were no slaves nor was there a need for slaves, since no one needed to work the land. To tell these people that they would get a “day off” hardly carried the import that it did when it was told to their parents who left Egypt.

All, however, was about to change. The forty years of wandering in Sinai were drawing to a close, the manna would cease to fall, the Israelites would enter Canaan and become conquerors and builders. There would be labor to do: to till soil, plant crops, etc. And there was a serious risk that, as conquerors, the invading Israelites would themselves become slave-masters, and, in so doing, recreate Egyptian society in Canaan, with the Israelites playing the role of the Egyptians. To these people, the appropriate form of the message was that, to emulate God, they must assure that as God treats His servants, so must they treat theirs. Only when the Israelites had fully absorbed the message of Shabbat by assuring that their servants rest when they do, could it truly be said that they have left Egypt behind — that not only have they left Egypt but that Egypt has left them.

And so the form that the imitatio Dei message takes in Va-Ethanane is a combined one: your slave and your maidservant must rest with you, and only then may it truly be said that the Israelites have fully internalized what yetsiat Mitsrayim is all about.15 At the end of the day, whether Shabbat is portrayed as zekher le-ma’aseh Bereshit or as le-ma’an yanu’ah avdekha va-ametekha kamokha coupled with zekher li-yetsiat Mitsrayim, the reason behind Shabbat is ultimately the same: emulating God’s ways and leaving the ways of Mitsrayim forever behind.16

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15 Ramban and Ibn Ezra present contrasting views of the connection of Shabbat to the Exodus. Ibn Ezra (Deut. 5:14, s.v. ve-zakharta ki eved) understands the Exodus connection narrowly, explaining why the slave and maidservant must rest on Shabbat. Seeing them rest reminds us that God allowed us to rest, by freeing us from Egyptian bondage. Ramban (Deut. 5:14, s.v al kein tsivvekha) interprets the Exodus connection more broadly, as a testimony to the fact that God is the Creator. Recalling God’s miracles over the course of the Exodus should allay any doubt that He is the Creator and Enabler of all. My approach provides an arguably greater role for allowing the slave to rest on Shabbat, in that it is an essential element and the completion of the redemption process.

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