

CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF CHAUTAUQUA

23 Vincent Avenue Chautauqua, NY 14722 T: (716) 357 - 3467 W: www.cocweb.org E: rabbi@cocweb.org

Maimonides – “Guide to the Perplexed” – Week 5 – 2020

1. Now the heavens and the earth were completed and all their host.
And G-d completed on the seventh day His work that He did, and He abstained [rested – Va-yishbot] on the seventh day from all His work that He did.
And G-d blessed the seventh day and He hallowed it, for thereon He abstained [rested - Shovat] from all His work that G-d created to do. (Genesis 2:1-3)

2. And he named him Noah, saying, "This one will give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands from the ground, which the L-rd has cursed." (Ibid, 5:29)
 - a. RASHI: This one will give us rest: Heb. נִחַם מְנוּחָה. He will give us rest (נִחַם מְנוּחָה) from the toil of our hands. Before Noah came, they did not have plowshares, and he prepared [these tools] for them. And the land was producing thorns and thistles when they sowed wheat, because of the curse of the first man (Adam), but in Noah’s time, it [the curse] subsided. This is the meaning of נִחַם מְנוּחָה. If you do not explain it that way, however (but from the root (נחם), the sense of the word does not fit the name, [נח], and you would have to name him Menachem. — [See Gen. Rabbah 25:2] [i.e., If we explain the word according to its apparent meaning, “this one will console us,” the child should have been called Menachem, the consoler.]

3. Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it...
For [in] six days the L-rd made the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and He rested [va-yonach] on the seventh day. Therefore, the L-rd blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it. (Exodus 20:9-11)
 - a. RASHI: and He rested on the seventh day: As if [it were] possible, He ascribed rest [even] to Himself to teach (as an example) from Him of kal vachomer [a fortiori] reasoning for man, whose work is with toil and fatigue, that he must rest on the Sabbath. [I.e., although G-d does not and did not actually rest, He had His cessation of creating recorded as rest, so that humans would learn that if G-d, Whose work is accomplished without any toil or fatigue, rested on the Sabbath, surely people, whose work is accomplished only with hard work and fatigue, must rest on the Sabbath.]-[from Mechilta]

4. Keep [Guard] the Sabbath day to sanctify it...
And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and that the L-rd your G-d took you out from there with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm; therefore, the L-rd, your G-d, commanded you to observe the Sabbath day. (Deuteronomy 5:12-15)

5. Thus shall the children of Israel observe the Sabbath, to make the Sabbath throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant.
Between Me and the children of Israel, it is forever a sign that [in] six days The L-rd created the heaven and the earth, and on the seventh day He ceased and rested." (Exodus 31:16-17)
 - a. RASHI: and rested: Heb. וַיִּנּוּחַ. [va’yinofash]. As the Targum [Onkelos] renders: נָחַח, [vi-noch] and rested. Now every expression of וַיִּנּוּחַ, rest, is an expression of נַפְשׁ, soul, for one regains one’s soul and one’s breath when one rests from the toil of work. He about Whom it is written: “He neither tires nor wearies” (Isaiah 40:28), and Whose every act is performed by speech [alone, without physical effort], dictated rest in reference to Himself [only] in order to make it understood to the [human] ear with words that it can understand.

6. PART I - Chapter 67

SINCE the verb "to say" has been figuratively used to express the will of the Creator in the account of all the things created in the six days of the beginning, and the phrase "And he said" has repeatedly been employed, therefore, the expression "to rest" has likewise been figuratively applied to G-d in reference to the Sabbath-day, on which there was no creation; it is therefore said, "And he rested (va-yishbot) on the seventh day" (Genesis 2:2). For the cessation from speaking is, in Hebrew, likewise expressed by the same verb – resting (shevita), as, e.g., "So these three men ceased (va-yishbetu) to answer Job" (Job 32:1).

Also, the cessation from speaking is, in Hebrew, is likewise expressed by the verb *nichah*, as, in "They spoke to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased (va-yanuchu)" (Samuel I, 25:9). In my opinion, (va-yanuchu) means "they ceased to speak," and waited until they will hear the answer; for no allusion to exertion whatever having previously been mentioned, the words, va-yanuchu - "and they rested," [in its primary signification,] would have been entirely out of place in that narrative [of their conversation], even if the young men who spoke had really used some exertion [earlier, in their travels].

The author relates that having delivered that whole speech, which, as you find, consisted of gentle expressions, they were silent, that is to say, they did not add any word or act that would cause such a reply of Nabal: it being the object of the entire passage to represent Nabal's conduct as extremely reprehensible. In that sense ["to cease," or "to leave off"] the verb *noach* is used in the verse (exodus 20) "And he ceased (va-yanah) on the seventh day."

Our Sages, and some of the Commentators, took, however, *noach* in its primary sense "to rest," but as a transitive form (*hiphil*), explaining the phrase thus: "and he gave rest to the world on the seventh day," i.e., no further act of creation took place on that day.

It is possible that the word *va-yanach* is derived either from *yanach*, [a verb of the class *pe*], or *naḥah*, [a verb of the class *lamed*], and has this meaning: "he left it" or "he continued" [i.e. didn't change] the Universe in accordance with the properties it possessed on the seventh day"; that is to say, while on each of the six days events took place contrary to [-beyond] the natural laws [that are stable and] now in operation throughout the Universe, on the seventh day the Universe was merely upheld and left in the condition in which it continues to exist.

...The same root is also found as a verb [‘ayin’] in the sense "to place" and "to set," as e.g., "and it shall be established and she shall be placed (ve-hinnichah) there upon her own base" (Zecharia 5:11), and "she suffered neither the birds of the air to settle (la-nuach) on them" (Samuel II, 21:10). According to my opinion, the verb has the same signification in Habakkuk 3:16, "that I might remain firm (anuach) in the day of trouble."

The word (*va-yinnafash*) is a verb derived from *nefesh* (-soul), the homonymity of which we have already explained (chapter 41), namely, that it has the signification of intention/purpose or will, (*va-yinnafash*) accordingly means: "that which he desired was accomplished, and all what he wished had come into existence."

7. PART II - Chapter 31

... The commandment of the Sabbath is the third from the commandment concerning the existence and the unity of G-d. For the commandment not to worship any other being is merely an explanation of the first.

You know already from what I have said, that no opinions retain their vitality except those which are confirmed, published, and by certain actions constantly revived among the people. Therefore, we are told in the Torah to sanctify this day; in order to confirm thereby the principle of Creation which will spread in the world, when all peoples keep Sabbath on the same day. For when the question is asked, why this is done, the answer is given: "For in six days the L-rd hath made," etc. (Exodus 20:11).

Two different reasons are given for this commandment, because of two different objects. In the Decalogue in Exodus, the following reason is given for distinguishing the Sabbath: "For in six days," etc. But in Deuteronomy (5:15) the reason is given: "And thou shalt remember that thou hast been a slave in the land of Egypt, etc., therefore the L-rd thy G-d commanded thee," etc.

This difference can easily be explained. In the former, the cause of the honor and sanctification of the day is given; comp. "Therefore, the L-rd hath blessed the day of the Sabbath and sanctified it" (Exodus 20:10), and the cause for this is, "For in six days," etc. But the fact that G-d has given us the law of the Sabbath and commanded us to guard it [i.e. refrain from working], is the consequence of our having been slaves; for then our work did not depend on our will, nor could we choose the time for it; and we could not rest. Thus, G-d commanded us regarding Shabbat [and to abstain from work on the Sabbath,] and to rest, for two purposes; namely, (1) That we might confirm the true concept, that of the Creation, which at once and clearly leads to the existence of G-d. (2) That we might remember how kind G-d has been in freeing us from the burden of the Egyptians.

The Sabbath is therefore a double blessing: it gives us correct notions, and also promotes the well-being of our bodies.

8. ...There is a different energy present in the air on the Sabbath than there is during the week. It is for this reason that the Jewish mystics describe the Sabbath as being on a higher plane of existence. Chassidic thought explains that the G-dly energy that sustains the world on the Sabbath is loftier than the weekday. This is because it comes from Divine "thought" as opposed to Divine "speech", as the Torah describes G-d refraining from creating [through speech] on the Sabbath. Because of this more refined energy, it is easier to perceive the Divine in the world on the Sabbath, (Sefer Hasichos 5751, vol. 2, pg. 551)
9. *Rabbi Yehuda – the prince, was a childhood friend of Mark Anthony, the Roman High in command. One Friday night Rav Yehuda invited Anthony. Anthony was amazed and delighted at the delicious food that he had at the meal. He asked Rav Yehuda: "This is the most delicious. What's the recipe? Rav Yehuda replied: "If you'd like – my chefs will give over to your chefs the recipe after Shabbat". After Shabbat Rav Yehuda's chefs did exactly as instructed. Six Months later, though, Mark Anthony visited Rav Yehuda, however he was very cold and distant. Rav Yehuda asked: "What's wrong?" Anthony replied: "I could not duplicate the delicious taste. Even though my chefs duplicated the exact instructions. What was the missing ingredient?" Rav Yehuda smiled and said: "The missing ingredient is Shabbat!" (Midrash B.R. 11:4)*

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