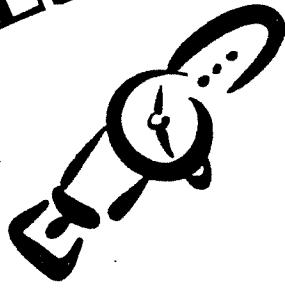


Time is of the Essence



Source Materials  
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①  
JERUSALEM  
TALMUD  
(HAGIGA 1:7)

Judaism stresses action far more than faith. The Talmud attributes to God a declaration which is probably unique among religious writings: "Better that they [the Jews] abandon Me, but follow My laws" (for, the Talmud adds, by practicing Judaism's laws, the Jews will return to God, Jerusalem Talmud Haggigah 1:7).

## ② GENESIS (1:32)

וַיְבָلֹם הָשָׁמִים וּהָאָרֶץ וְכָל־צְבָאָם: וַיְגַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְׁבִּיעִי מְלָאכָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיְשַׁבֵּט בַּיּוֹם הַשְׁבִּיעִי מְכֻל־מְלָאכָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת יּוֹם הַשְׁבִּיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת טוֹב שְׁבָת מְכֻל־מְלָאכָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר־ בָּרוּא אֱלֹהִים לְעַשׂוֹת:

<sup>1</sup> Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all their array. <sup>2</sup> By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He abstained on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. <sup>3</sup> God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He abstained from all His work which God created to make.

*makom*. Without the idea of place consciousness, the state of *k'dusha*, sanctity, can never be acquired or held. For the approach to God is only through the application of place consciousness. When one implants himself in the cultural sphere of the Torah and merges with its intrinsic trends, he may claim that he has found God. Without the all-enveloping and all-inclusive space intuition, the ideation of divinity is almost impossible. Even the atheist experiences, at times, the mysterious feeling of the pantheist, of being enveloped by God.

לֹא אָכַל לְנֹרֶה שָׁמָר שְׁמָר [Exodus 22:30]. The definition of *t'reifa* was given by the Sages as any object that transcends its own boundaries. Such a one is a torn body, a soul bereft of place. The Jewish attitude denies self-transcendence of *k'dusha*. It requires of holiness to be space- and boundary-conscious. Place consciousness is a basic condition for the realization of the *k'dusha* ideal.

### 3. Time Consciousness

The other dimension or principle of *k'dusha* is *z'man*, "time consciousness." Bergson's tremendous influence upon modern philosophy is partly due to the fact that he formulated a new interpretation of time, the so-called pure "durée," duration. He contrasted this concept of time with that of the physicist, which is pure chronometry, time quantified and frozen in geometric space, time associated with space in motion and, in modern physics, with the time-space continuum.

Thus, Bergson speaks of fleeting time, living and immeasurable, beyond the scientist's mesh. No clock can be applied to this qualitative time, which is transient, intangible, and evanescent, and, on the other hand, creative, dynamic, and self-emerging. In this "time" there are no milestones separating past, present, and future. It is not unidimensional,

as is physical time, but multidimensional, compenetrating and overlapping past, present, and future.

With this qualitative time, Bergson contrasts quantitative time. This is time measured by the clock, by the rotation of the Earth on its axis, and by its revolution about the sun. This "time" is uniform, empty and noncreative.

While Bergson limited himself to a philosophical and metaphysical analysis of time, we may proceed further and posit this dualistic time concept as the prime norm of human life that carries with it practical implications and ethical aspects. Man encounters the alternative of molding time in a quantitative or qualitative pattern.

There are some people who live in quantitative, dead time. They measure time by the clock and by the calendar. For them there is no merger of the past and the future. The present itself is a lost moment. A year is endless. How much more so centuries and tens of centuries! These people are deprived of an historical consciousness; for history is the living experience of time.

The man, however, who lives in qualitative time has a different criterion of the experience of time than the quantitative experience. He measures time not by length-extensio but by pure quality, creativity, and accomplishment. While for the man with a quantitative apprehension all fractions of time are equal because all represent physical "t's"; for the man of qualitative apprehension, there is no equality among temporal fractions of time. Moments are heterogeneous. One may live an entire lifespan quantitatively, not having lived even a moment qualitatively. And, contrariwise, one may have lived a moment quantitatively and have lived through an eternity qualitatively. The alternative is up to man himself. The time norm is the highest criterion by which man, life, and actions should be judged.

Oriental history has given us the best example of such an alternative. Oriental culture and technology is much older than that of Europe or America. Yet qualitatively America is—as regards technology certainly—older than China, for America has created more in one hundred fifty years than China in five thousand. History is concerned not with quantity but with accomplishment. History ultimately is not a composite of calendar time but a qualitative living entity. Wherein did the Orient fail until recently in keeping “time” with the Occident? There is one answer: in the differing time consciousness of these two civilizations. China apprehended time as a fact while America envisaged it as a norm.

Those historians who fell in love with the Orient for its Stoic calmness and indifference to the passage of time and who felt the breath of eternity there have misapprehended time and eternity. Eternity is to be conceived not in quantitative uniformity but in qualitative creativity and mutability.

What is true for entire cultures is equally true for individual personalities. There are some people who are always “time-thirsty.” There are others, however, who are “time-saturated.” One who fathoms the spirit of time becomes a *yotzer olamot*, a creative personality. The problem of the creative personality today is one of time; it is too short. The finite character of time is one of the most crying tragedies of men’s life. Yet, if a man lives by quantitative measurements, the problem of time is reversed; he is forfeited by it.

The individual who measures time in purely quantitative terms is an essentially passive personality. He is a recipient and not a giver, a creature rather than a creator. His prototype is the slave. The slave has no time consciousness of his own, for he has no time of his own. The awareness of *now*, the full intuition of the qualitative moment, is alien to him. Absolved by homogenous, changeable time, he lacks affinity for a duty whose execution depends solely on time,

on a “now” and “not later”; upon a “today” and “not tomorrow,” upon a night whose dawn cancels the opportunity, upon a day whose sunset eliminates the possibility. He does not understand the full impact of such dicta as “*וְאַתָּה נֹתֵן תְּעִדָּה*” (“If not now, then when?”) [Avot 1:14] and “*וְאַתָּה נֹתֵן תְּעִדָּה בְּעֵת תְּעִדָּה*” (“If the hour beckons, do not delay”).

The basic criterion which distinguishes freeman from slave is the kind of relationship each has with time and its experience. Bondage is identical with passive intuition and reception of an empty, formal time stream.

When the Jews were delivered from the Egyptian oppression and Moses rose to undertake the almost impossible task of metamorphosing a tribe of slaves into a “nation of priests” [Exodus 19:16], he was told by God that the path leading from the holiday of Pesah to Shavu’ot, from initial liberation to consummate freedom (*Gittui Shekhina*, Revelation), leads through the medium of time. The commandment of *s’fira* was entrusted the Jew; the wondrous test of counting forty-nine successive days was put to him. These forty-nine days must be whole. If one day be missed, the act of numeration is invalidated.

A slave who is capable of appreciating each day, of grasping its meaning and worth, of weaving every thread of time into a glorious fabric, quantitatively stretching over the period of seven weeks but qualitatively forming the warp and woof of centuries of change, is eligible for Torah. He has achieved freedom.

We may say then that qualitative-time consciousness is comprised of two elements: First, the appreciation of the enormous implications inherent in the fleeting moments of the present. No fraction of time, however infinite, should slip through the fingers, left unexploited; for eternity may depend upon the brief moment. Secondly, the vicarious experience, while in the present, of the past and future. No

(4)

SIDDOVR

(ו) **עַל** הָנִסִּים, וְעַל הַפְּרָקָן, וְעַל הַכְּבָרוֹת, וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת, וְעַל  
הַמְּלֻחָמוֹת, שָׁאַשְׁר לְאַבּוֹתֵינוּ בָּיִם בָּזֶם הַזֶּה.\*

'racles,\* and for the salvation, and for the mighty deeds, and  
and for the battles which You performed for our forefathers  
time.\*

(5)

ECCLESIASTES

לְכָל זָמָן וְעַת לְכָל-חַפֵּץ תְּמַת הַשְׁמִינִים:

וְעַת לְמִזְמֹות  
וְעַת לְעַקּוֹר נְטוּעָה:  
וְעַת לְרִפּוֹא  
וְעַת לְבָנֹות:  
וְעַת לְשָׁחוֹק  
וְעַת רְקוּד:  
וְעַת כְּנוֹס אֲבָנִים  
וְעַת לְרַתִּיק מְחַבֶּק:  
וְעַת לְאָבֵר  
וְעַת לְהַשְׁלִיחָה:  
וְעַת לְתִפּוֹר  
וְעַת לְדָבָר:  
וְעַת לְשָׁנוֹ  
וְעַת שְׁלוֹם:

עת לְלַחַת  
עת לְלַטְעָה  
עת לְהַרְגוֹ  
עת לְפִרוֹז  
עת לְבָבוֹת  
עת סְפּוֹד  
עת לְהַשְׁלִיךְ אֲבָנִים  
עת לְחַבּוֹק  
עת לְבִקְשָׁה  
עת לְשִׁמְעוֹר  
עת לְקָרוּעָה  
עת לְחַשׂוֹת  
עת לְאַהֲבָה  
עת מְלֻחָמָה

Everything has its season, and there is a time for everything under the

- heaven:
- 2 A time to be born  
a time to plant
- 3 A time to kill\*  
a time to wreck
- 4 A time to weep  
a time to wail
- 5 A time to scatter stones  
a time to embrace
- 6 A time to seek  
a time to keep
- 7 A time to rend  
a time to be silent
- 8 A time to love  
a time for war

and a time to die;\*  
and a time to uproot the planted.  
and a time to heal;  
and a time to build.  
and a time to laugh;  
and a time to dance.  
and a time to gather stones;  
and a time to shun embraces.  
and a time to lose;  
and a time to discard.  
and a time to mend;\*and a time to speak.  
and a time to hate;  
and a time for peace.

## Around the Jewish Year

### **1. Nissan**

- Passover (12<sup>th</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup>)

### **2. Iyar**

- Yom Ha'Atzmaut (5<sup>th</sup>)
- Lag Ba'Omer (18<sup>th</sup>)
- Yom Yerushalayim (22<sup>nd</sup>)

### **3. Sivan**

- Shavuos (6<sup>th</sup> –7<sup>th</sup>)

### **4. Tamuz**

- Fast day, beginning of 3 weeks (17<sup>th</sup>)

### **5. Av**

- Tisha B'av (9<sup>th</sup>)
- Tu B'av (15<sup>th</sup>)

### **6. Elul**

### **7. Tishrei**

- Rosh Hashana (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>)
- Fast of Gedalya (3<sup>rd</sup>)
- Yom Kippur (10<sup>th</sup>)
- Sukkos (15<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>)

### **8. Cheshvan**

### **9. Kislev**

- Chanukah (24<sup>th</sup> –1<sup>st</sup> of Teveis)

### **10. Teveis**

- Chanukah (1<sup>st</sup>)
- Fast (10<sup>th</sup>)

### **11. Shevat**

- Tu B'Shevat (15<sup>th</sup>)

### **12. Adar**

- Fast of Esther (13<sup>th</sup>)
- Purim (14<sup>th</sup>)
- Shushan Purim (15<sup>th</sup>)