

Dear Chavraya,

Such a small phrase that holds so much promise and possibility, it is all of two words in English, and but one in Hebrew. Often spoken lightly, quickly left behind without realizing their depth and fullness, *as if/k'ilu*. In the realm of children, words used in relation to behavior, at times to discourage, hopefully more often to encourage, "you are behaving *as if*...", or, so much better to say and hear, "spread your arms and soar, *as if you are an eagle*." In the realm of the positive and hopeful, these are simple words for planting seeds of imagination, *as if/k'ilu*.

In the fullness of imagination begins the vibrant stirrings of soaring vision. It is how we want our children to be, free to imagine, to strive and to soar. It is not only about children, though, a gift for all of us to imagine, in the way of *as if*. *As if* consciousness emerges as deep and simple teaching from this week's Torah portion, *Parashat Yitro*. Standing at Sinai, a time and place apart, yet ever near, the Ten Commandments are given. The fourth commandment is to make Shabbos, *Remember the Sabbath day to make it holy/Zachor et yom ha'Shabbat l'kadsho*. And then we are told: *Six days shall you serve and do all your creating work/sheshet yamim ta'avod v'asita kol m'lachtecha*. The rabbis focus on that little word, *all*, and ask so simply, as fully aware of time and its challenges as we are, *is it possible for a person to do all of their work in six days?* It is our question too, how can we ever be finished with all there is to do? The rabbis then answer, *rest on Shabbos as if/k'ilu all your work was done* (Mechilta).

From this profoundly important teaching, we learn to live in the realm of *k'ilu/as if* consciousness. Of two realms, in relation to our selves and in relation to the world all around, it is a way of creating a sense of place and possibility, of rest and renewal from which great things can emerge. In order to receive the gift of Shabbos and be refreshed, we need to be able to breathe with fullness of breath and being, unfettered by all that remains yet to be done. In the way of *k'ilu* consciousness, we learn to let go, to step back and pause *as if* all were complete. It is beautiful advice as it comes to us through time, a way of softening the rough edges of our own lives. It is also about the future, though, a gentle challenge and guide toward softening the rough edges of the world and imagining another way, another time, a challenge to behave *as if* that other time had already arrived, *k'ilu*.

Shabbos offers a model of the world as it might be, setting before us the vision and the way. Stepping back in order to be more fully present, relationships are deepened, meals are shared, words of prayer rising as one from many hearts. Putting aside money and ways of competition and strife, even anger to be avoided on Shabbos, another way begins to emerge. It is not the way of day to day, and yet it is meant to be. We pray on Shabbos for the day that is all Shabbos, *yom she'kulo Shabbos*. One seventh of all of our days are lived *as if/k'ilu* it is another time, *as if* we are already there. Rehearsing the ways of another time, we become familiar with what it is like, with what could be. If we can do it for one day, then why can we not do it every day? With *Havdallah* at the end of each Shabbos, we draw from the essence of a day its way of shalom, seeking to infuse

that essence into the days of the coming week. As ripples flowing out in time, we come ever closer to the day that is all Shabbos.

If we are to get there, we need to bring *k'ilu* consciousness into the turning of world and time. We cannot rely on the old ways that block the way. In our own lives, it means to live *as if* we are already there, using ways of conflict resolution that serve to join rather than to divide. It means to be in the world *as if* it really is the garden it was and ever is meant to be. It means to find ways of pause, of stopping long enough to see and affirm God's face in our selves and in each other. It means to cry out and act to end the way of war and weapons as the way of peoples and nations. It is to cry out against all that denies humanity, and to live with love and in the way of harmony *as if* we are already there, when such Shabbos peace shall be the way of every day. If we live each day *as if/k'ilu*, then some day what seemed for so long to be *as if* shall be as it is. When the vision and the way become as one, we shall have arrived.

Shabbat shalom,  
Rabbi Victor