

Dear Chavraya,

How wide do our arms need to reach to hold all there is to hold?

And how wide do our souls need to stretch, and our hearts to open?

“The water is wide, I cannot get over, and neither have I wings to fly...”

“Build me a boat that can carry two, and both shall row my love and I...”

Of songs that sing of universal search, so too there comes to me in Judy Collins’ younger voice: “If you can’t go on any longer, take the hand held by another...”

It was all said long before American folk began to sing its song of love and peace

Offered to a people a-borning, a folk not yet joined as one in the Song of Torah

Wisdom proffered by the Midianite sage and priest, father-in-law of Moses,

Yitro went out and saw his Rabbi son-in-law at work among the folk and said it is too much

Share the burden, decentralize, “you will surely become weary, you, as well as this people..., you cannot carry it alone...”

As in taking the hand held by another, he said, appoint *anshei chayil/people of valor*, not in the way the word so often used, not as soldiers or people of might, but as people mighty in mitzvot, people who revere God, people of truth, people who hate unjust gain, the fruits of violence...

So a new way in the ways of community, one community to reflect that ways of the world as the world might be

If we so live it, so shall it be, *k’ilu/as if*, living now *as if* it were so, and so then it shall be and come to be so, a teaching in this parsha of how to come into Shabbos, *k’ilu/as if* all of our work is done, as if the world has been redeemed and made whole, and so living we make it so...

But each one is needed to cross the wide water, to traverse the span from here to there, from now to then; each one needed to take the hand of another

Only then, as Yitro said, shall each one come to their place in peace, *al m’komo yavo v’shalom*, spoken not as we do at a funeral for the sake of the dead, but for the living, for us, to guide us on with offer of song, to life, to life, *l’chayim*, and so may it be....

Shabbat shalom,  
Rabbi Victor