



THE DREAM OF ALIYAH

A.D.Gordon, *The Return to the Land* (1944)

Listen to me, my brother, and hear me too, sister, and remember that you both have also dreamed just like me.

And in my dream, I come to Eretz Israel. The land is abandoned and deserted, ruled by foreigners. The ruins blur the light of its face and wither its spirit. Far and estranged from me has become the land of my ancestors, and I, too, have become distanced and alienated from it. The only bond left is that of a mother and a son, for my soul, too, is isolated like the land; my soul, too, was captured by foreign hands trying to demolish and desecrate it. I feel the destruction, I see the ruins in every fraction of my soul, in all the 248 members of my being and each of my 365 nerves.... A voice emerges from the ruins and proclaims:

“Son of Man! Oversee these ruins, pay attention and do not take your eyes off them. Then you will know, by adding realization to your knowledge, that this ruin is the ruin of your soul; its destruction is your own destruction that reigns your life in foreign lands, the destruction to which you have adhered until this day. Keep in mind that your destiny depends on it! And if you sharpen your observation, you will see that underneath these ruins, orphan embers still burn, miraculously saved, as the land’s breath strives to revive it. And if you happen to completely abandon the life forged for you by others, the way that you abandoned their land, and come here to build a new life, a life of your own, you will then revive the embers, recovering its flames. Then, you will return to life, and your people and land will be revived.”

I violently shake off that life. I restart everything. I start from scratch. And the first thing that my heart opens to in this life I never knew is work; not work as a mean of subsistence, not work as a duty, but work as a life purpose, work on which a new light shines – the light that I have envisioned and that forms a part of the deepest roots of life. It is here that I work.

Deep and wonderful is the meaning of my work. Difficult, remote and hidden is the path I chose. Many are those who murmur, shake their heads with pity and offer their opinion from afar:

“Where are you going, miserable man? Your path is a path of darkness, chaos and disorder. Or do you intend to change the world order, break the universal laws that cannot be infringed? Will you say to a man ‘you are a God and not a man made of clay?’ Look, you are alone, and you will be deceived by your imagination and fantasies.”



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Yet I continue observing, as I was ordered in the light of the smut whose flame keeps shining. And while I continue to struggle and suffer, not a drop of blood, nor a fragment of my strength or intelligence are lost in vain, since every drop is a path of fire and all my muscular or mental effort is a spark of light for my reborn soul.

In a short while, you, too, my brother, will be with me working and living. And eventually, our sister, whom I have not seen since the Jewish people have awakened, will also come. And seeing both of you united, working and living together, will revive my spirit. And I will call:

"You will build the home of Israel! You will find the path so longed for by the Jewish people in the past, the path to which your spirit will take you in the days to come. You will live the life of Israel: life will be like a spring vigorously gushing forth, a stream of overflowing waters. And life will continue to advance and renew itself, always flowing forward, forward, forward."