

**SABBATH OBSERVANCE: SOCIAL ANALYSIS IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNITY WELFARE****Antonius Dwiky Mulyono, Alwyn C. Hendriks**

Universitas Advent Indonesia, Indonesia

Email: antoniusdwikymulyono@gmail.com

**Abstract**

Discusses the importance of Sabbath observance in both social and spiritual contexts. Sabbath, the day of rest ordained by the Law of God, provides time for humans to rest, worship, and connect with others. The practice of Sabbath observance not only holds spiritual implications but also economic and social ones. Sabbath observance restricts economic activities, thus aiding in reducing social disparities temporarily. Furthermore, Sabbath strengthens brotherhood and unity within communities. The concepts of the Sabbatical Year and the Year of Jubilee also bring forth positive social implications, including debt release and emancipation of slaves, providing opportunities for the less fortunate. Hence, Sabbath observance has a positive impact on societal well-being.

Keywords: Sabbath, societal well-being, social disparities, Sabbatical Year, Year of Jubilee, religious practice

**INTRODUCTION**

Humans are social creatures. Humans have a need to interact and communicate with fellow humans to meet their social needs, such as the need for affection, friendship, and belonging. Humans need each other and need to interact with others (Iffah & Yasni, 2022).

Humans also influence each other, both positively and negatively, and they share the values, cultures, and traditions that shape the identity of the society in which they live (Santoso, 2016). Human needs to socialize and interact with others also influence the development of their behavior, culture, and language. Therefore, humans can be said to be social creatures who rely heavily on interaction with others to survive and thrive (Soekanto, 2007).

As social beings, humans need a state of well-being. Prosperity in Poerwadarminta view Poerwadarminta, (1966) is a peaceful, safe, and prosperous condition. In other words, if the needs for security, safety, and prosperity are met, prosperity will be realized. Based on Law Number 11 of 2009, concerning Community Welfare. Social Welfare is a condition of meeting the material, spiritual, and social needs of citizens in order to live a decent life and be able to develop themselves, so that they can carry out their social functions.

---

<b>How to cite:</b>	Antonius Dwiky Mulyono, Alwyn C. Hendriks (2024) Sabbath Observance: Social Analysis in the Context of Community Welfare , (06) 04, <a href="https://doi.org/10.36418/syntax-idea.v3i6.1227">https://doi.org/10.36418/syntax-idea.v3i6.1227</a>
---------------------	---

<b>E-ISSN:</b>	<a href="https://doi.org/10.36418/syntax-idea.v3i6.1227">2684-883X</a>
----------------	--

<b>Published by:</b>	<a href="#">Ridwan Institute</a>
----------------------	----------------------------------

---

Social Welfare formulated by Law number 11 of 2009 includes the fulfillment of material, spiritual, and social needs. Spiritual needs can develop through religious approaches and relate also to their social impact.

Unfortunately, not all humans use these social skills for others. It obviously causes imbalances in life together. Imbalance leads to injustice. The injustice received by a society can be interpreted as social inequality. Social inequality in the inequality of distribution of community resources and opportunities, resulting in differences in social, economic, educational, and health status between groups in society (Sukmana, 2005). The problem of disparities is a matter of justice, related to social problems

Social inequality is evident in many areas of life such as income, education, health care, access to public services and access to decent work. By looking at the current state of society, then what is the view as religious people seeing this phenomenon? In general, religions emphasize the importance of respecting human values, fighting for equality, and avoiding actions that harm others. Therefore, they often promote the reduction of social inequality and fight for social justice as part of the moral duty that their followers must fulfill.

The Bible repeatedly defends the rights of people who experience oppression, injustice, and poverty. In the Old Testament the prophet Habakkuk preached a message from God against oppression.

Woe to him who takes unlawful profit for the purposes of his home, to place his nest on high ground, with the intention of escaping himself from the grasp of catastrophe! Woe to the one who founded the city on blood and laid the foundation of the fortress above injustice. (Habakkuk 2:9,12)

Through these verses it can be understood that God strongly opposes acts of injustice and oppression. Further in the New Testament view, Jesus Christ emphasized the importance of compassion, justice, and concern for those in need. Jesus said that acts of compassion and concern for others are like loving God Himself. Therefore, Christianity also emphasizes the importance of reducing social inequality and fighting for human rights. The Bible as a guide to the Christian faith has provided an understanding and solution to social phenomena that have always occurred even now.

Through God's wisdom, God's Law was revealed as the direction and guide for mankind. The law governs human behavior and life. In the law it governs the relationship between God, neighbor, and nature.

The Sabbath is a law that governs the rhythm and timing of each individual. This law is unique in that it provides an opportunity for humans to stop and take a break from a hectic routine. Barbara claims that keeping the Sabbath provides time for rest and deep attention, allowing humans to listen to the good and wise actions to be done in a confusing and ever-changing world (Speedling, 2019).

This law also governs a harmonious relationship with God and others. Not only centered on worship, but also training sensitivity to others and concern for the community.

The Sabbath is a tool that calls mankind to look beyond the origin of humanity. With Sabbath observance, people gain a better understanding of spending time and giving relief and freedom to themselves, others and nature.

Therefore, the author is interested to see the harmony and relationship between the two ideas regarding Sabbath-keeping and their impact on the welfare of society.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research used qualitative research methods of literature review. The research method used is to collect data, information obtained from various literature (Adlini, Dinda, Yulinda, Chotimah, & Merliyana, 2022). Researchers use Bibles related to the Sabbath and accompanied by secular manuscripts and journals (Rusandi & Muhammad Rusli, 2021). The research was conducted in order to determine the relevance of the Bible to today's social life.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Social Definition

According to the Big Dictionary Indonesian, the term "social" refers to things related to social life. The word "social" comes from the Latin "*socius*" meaning friend. From this understanding, it can be seen that the social concept is related to the interaction between individuals. Other definitions reflect human nature that pays attention to the needs of others. Therefore, more than that it can be understood that social nature is something inherent in the human being, reflecting its conditions and nature.

### Sabbath and its observance

Sabbath is a day of rest, the word Sabbath is taken from Hebrew (שַׁבָּת *shabbāt*, *Shabbat*) which means "rest", "stop working". Genesis 2:1 is the first verse in the Bible that states the Sabbath. From the beginning the Sabbath has been a marker of time (Lintang, Perutu, & Eunike, 2022). In human history, time is important in human life. The start time of the sabbath is from evening to evening. The first chapter in the creation story in Genesis says, "be evening and be morning." From this, the reader can conclude that a day begins with one night, that is, at sunset (Soewignjo, 2021).

The Sabbath is God's gift to man. Periscilla Lintang agrees that the Sabbath is a gift that God gives to man to worship Him. By observing the Sabbath, people not only rest from work but to enjoy the joy of all God's gifts and worship Him (Lewar, 2023). It is clear that in the beginning the Sabbath was not about commandments alone, but began with an example. The proof of this can be seen in Genesis 2:2-3

When God on the seventh day had finished the work He had done, He stopped on the seventh day from all the work He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for it was on that day that He ceased from all the work of creation which He had made. **(Genesis 2:2-3)**

The Sabbath gives a picture of how God ceased, blessed and sanctified Him. The implications of the sabbath are profound for God and the Creation of man. Unfortunately, after the fall of man into sin, the sabbath and its meaning became forgotten. It can be seen from the background of the Israelites yang tertindas dalam perbudakan bangsa Mesir. Perbudakan merupakan titik nol bangsa This covenant of God is to the knowledge of truth. Oppressive and oppressive slavery left them with no awareness of the Sabbath.

Therefore the Lord sought to affirm the importance of the Sabbath to mankind. The Ten Commandments give more details about the Sabbath and its keeping. Exodus 20:8-11 introduces the Sabbath more broadly according to the context of fallen man.

Remember and keep the Sabbath day holy: **six days** shalt thou work and do all thy works, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; then do not do any work, neither thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy male servant, nor thy female servant, nor thy animal nor any stranger in thy dwelling place. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything in them, and he rested on the seventh day; that is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and kept it holy. (Keluaran 20:8-11)

From this verse, the reader can see that God deepens the meaning of the Sabbath, not as a warning but as an ongoing system. Clearly, the post-slavery Israelites needed a new system that gave them the opportunity to be equal human beings. The Sabbath became an antidote to the busyness and density of work. Yongky Karman states that the inclusion of the fourth commandment in the ten commandments was important in the life of the Israelites, namely the belief in God's presence and omnipotence against the background of the life of the Israelites as slaves in Egypt who had to work without ceasing (Rahman, 2021).

In addition to the Bible, the concept of the sabbath is also accepted in various civilizations of nations, in his book *Babel und Bibel* published in 1902 *Friederich Delitzsch* affirms that *šabbāt* is a special day that originated in Babylon. On the 15th day of every month people are forbidden to work because it is a feast day where people have to pray and ask for forgiveness. The day is called *um nuh libbi* (Day of rest of gods and goddesses) or *šabbātum* (Stanislaus & Cap, 2008). It is clear that the concept of the Sabbath is very universally accepted by the average world. It is an indication that the sabbath came from the same source throughout history.

The Sabbath is inseparable from its time and practice. Sabbath practice has a fundamental value over man's need to rest on human busyness. Human life is not only about working to manage nature and rest to gather new energy to continue the work, but also to enjoy compassion and thank God. This shows that the purpose of human creation is for them to be part of a perfected creation, participate in the care of nature, grow in communion with God, enjoy rest with Him, and worship Him along with the rest of creation (Stanislaus & Cap, 2019).

The Sabbath is also connected to how to keep it, in Leviticus 23:1-3 explains the importance of stopping work on the Sabbath so people can gather and have holy

meeting. Thus *sabbath* describes a religious pattern, which is celebrating the celebration of worship for God (Im 23:3).

### **Sabbath in society**

The Sabbath has a close relationship with social circumstances. As a newly formed nation, God's law was declared a constitution that dealt not only with theological, but also social issues. Evident in Deuteronomy 5:14-15

But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God; then do not do any work, neither thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy daughter, or Your male servant, or your female servant, or your oxen, or your donkey, or any of your animals, or any stranger in your dwelling place, so that your male servant and your female servant cease to be like you also.

For thou shalt remember, that thou art once a slave in the land of Egypt, and thou wast brought out of it by the LORD thy God with strong hands and outstretched arms; that is why the Lord your God commands you to observe the Sabbath. (Deuteronomy 5:14-15)

Deuteronomy 5:14-15 is a repetition of the Sabbath commandment in the Ten Commandments. The difference, in Exodus, is that this law is socially motivated. It is about reminding the Israelites of how they were freed from slavery in Egypt. They used to live as slaves who continued to work nonstop, but now they can celebrate and enjoy freedom by resting on the Sabbath (Surip, 2001).

From this the reader can see how the seventh-day Sabbath not only has religious importance but also impacts social matters, such as work and relationships. So the sabbath is not only remembered but also celebrated by not doing work and financial transactions.

The Sabbath in Judaism has a strong link to social inequality. Because the Sabbath offers the poorer or socially disadvantaged the opportunity to enjoy leisure time and spend the holy day with the richer or more influential.

The Sabbath enacted rules that restricted economic activities such as trade and employment, so that everyone, rich and poor, was expected to have free time to think, pray, and spend time with family and friends. In practice, this meant that on the Sabbath the social disparities that normally existed in Jewish society could be reduced, at least for now.

In addition, the Sabbath provided an opportunity for Jews to strengthen their brotherhood and unity as a community. In his book "*The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*", Abraham Joshua Heschel, a well-known Jewish theologian, stated that the Sabbath could help reduce social inequality. According to him, the Sabbath provides an opportunity for economically and socially disadvantaged people to experience the same happiness and spiritual richness as those who are more well-off. He also said that the Sabbath can help strengthen unity and brotherhood among Jews, because on the Sabbath, everyone gathers together in the synagogue and celebrates the holy day together (Herberg, 1952).

On the Sabbath, people from all walks of life and social classes gather in a synagogue to worship together and celebrate the holy day. This can help strengthen social cohesion and reduce existing social inequalities.

### **Wisdom in the Sabbath Law**

Sabbath keeping was not only a weekly celebration, but the Law defined the sabbath as a rhythm that also took place annually. From this term it became known as the Sabbath Year. The Sabbath year or sheviit (Hebrew: שביעטה, *Shmita*, literally: "deliverance"; English: *Sabbath year* or *Sabbatical year* or *sheviit* (Hebrew: שביעית, literally: (sequence) "seventh") is the seventh year of the seven-year agricultural cycle commanded in the Torah of the Hebrew Bible and the Old Testament of the Christian Bible for the land of Israel. In every year the seven fields, vineyards, and olive groves must remain uncultivated, the produce they produce is naturally not collected by the owner, but left to the poor. The terms in which the statute is stated make it uncertain whether (as it is generally considered) a year common to the whole land is intended (Nurhidayah, Gunani, Ramdhanie, & Hidayati, 2020).

A detailed description of the Sabbath year celebration can be found in Leviticus 25:4–9. The reader can see that the sabbath year will be repeated continuously every seventh year. The Sabbath year rule in Leviticus 25:2b-7 is a growing consequence of the old norms and the more fundamental basis in Ex. 23:10-12. The norm about the Sabbath year is also related to the norm about the seventh year, such as Deuteronomy 15:1-3, which tells of the elimination of debt in the seventh year; Exodus 21:1-6 and its parallels (Deut. 15:12-18), which indicate the liberation of Hebrew slaves in the seventh year; and Ul. 31:10-13, which speaks of the reading of the Law before all the people of Israel at the end of the seventh year (Santoso, 2016).

The Sabbath year consisted of three norms: land rest, debt write-off, and the release of slaves. The three patokans that cause the year of the Sabbath are referred to as the Year of the Land of Stops (Kel 23:10-12; Im 25:2b-7), Year of Elimination (Ul 15:1-11), and Year of Freed Boy (Kel 21:2-6; Ul 15:12-18) (Stanislaus, 2019).

The Sabbath year declares that God is the owner of heaven and earth. He is the source of blessings, and the Preserver. Doing this command clearly provides strong evidence of the Israelites' faith and trust in their God. God's relationship with man is very clear as they dare not sow and cultivate their land for a whole year. This form of wholehearted surrender is expressed also in relationships with others.

The Sabbath year also has a social significance, namely by giving land produce to the poor and needy. The commandment to rest the land was a universal commandment to the nation of Israel. Leviticus 25:2-7 makes it specifically clear that the sabbath year is for all people. It clearly shows the implication that there is no individual ownership forever, because in the results they have there are other people's rights as well that they need to return.

In this case it can be explained that the surplus land yield for six years will be the right of the poor and needy. This has a clear economic impact that there is a re-*"reset"*

of economic growth. So complex is God in revealing His commands as the basis of society. Humanity is clearly highlighted here not only through words of comfort, but also through actions organized in a complex system.

In addition to dividing the produce of their land, the sabbath year also provided opportunities for slaves. The atonement of the Hebrew slave is of paramount importance and rich in meaning according to its context and theological significance

Workers and laborers today experience a lot of "oppression" in contrast to slaves. They are often played with their rights. In a long time history records the traces of civilization in managing workers and laborers.

The workers' struggle for their rights starting from working hours and contract guarantees has always been the theme of their struggle. The Bible actually gives a revolutionary view of his day. Slaves were obviously more inhumane compared to today's workers and laborers. Slavery is a human culture that has long been passed down from generation to generation. However, the God of the Old Testament did not completely eliminate slaves, but it can be seen that there was a human side to treating slaves, such as giving them the opportunity to choose freedom or remain in service to their masters. It is very rare to find in the cultural thinking of that era. Exemption refers to their right to their changing social status.

The Jubilee Year is an ongoing pattern of the Sabbath Year. The Jubilee Year is the Year of Deliverance. The term *yôbēl* is closely related to the cult of the jubilee year celebrated on the tenth day of the seventh month, the day of the Restoration or Atonement (Lev 23:27; 25:9). Jubilee celebrations are marked by the sound of trumpets or trumpets, which are musical instruments made from the horns of rams (*sofar*).

Like the Sabbath year, the jubilee year is closely associated with the time of sowing seeds or reaping crops and picking grapes. Therefore, "seven times seven years" i.e. seven Sabbath years is a jubilee year. But seven times seven is forty-nine and not fifty as it says in Leviticus 25:10-11

The socio-theological impact of the celebration of the Jubilee Year on society is expressed in several ways, such as the liberation of land and the redemption of slaves from debt. This is the reason why the celebration of the Jubilee Year is so important. There are several theological reasons in favor of the liberation of slaves.

First, since all the Hebrews had been freed from slavery in Egypt and given an equal share of Canaanite lands, the practice of lending at interest that resulted in social inequality had to end in the jubilee year. Therefore, those who help without asking for flowers are pleasing to God (see Psalm 15:5; Deuteronomy 23:20; Nehemiah 5:6-10; Jeremiah 15:10; Amos 8:8; Luke 3:12-14).

The Jubilee Year is an ongoing pattern of the Sabbath Year. The Jubilee Year is the Year of Deliverance. The term *yôbēl* is closely related to the cult of the jubilee year celebrated on the tenth day of the seventh month, the day of the Restoration or Atonement (Lev 23:27; 25:9). Jubilee celebrations are marked by the sound of trumpets or trumpets, which are musical instruments made from the horns of rams (*sofar*).

Like the Sabbath year, the jubilee year is closely associated with the time of sowing seeds or reaping crops and picking grapes. Therefore, "seven times seven years" i.e. seven Sabbath years is a jubilee year. But seven times seven is forty-nine and not fifty as it says in Leviticus 25:10-11

The socio-theological impact of the celebration of the Jubilee Year on society is expressed in several ways, such as the liberation of land and the redemption of slaves from debt. This is the reason why the celebration of the Jubilee Year is so important. There are several theological reasons in favor of the liberation of slaves.

First, since all the Hebrews had been freed from slavery in Egypt and given an equal share of Canaanite lands, the practice of lending at interest that resulted in social inequality had to end in the jubilee year. Therefore, those who help without asking for flowers are pleasing to God (see Psalm 15:5; Deuteronomy 23:20; Nehemiah 5:6-10; Jeremiah 15:10; Amos 8:8; Luke 3:12-14).

### **Social Benefits of Sabbath-Keeping**

When the faithful observe the Sabbath day in their lives today, it ensures the creation of harmonious relationships with others because Sabbath celebrations often involve communion among the faithful. They develop spiritually and show concern for others. Similarly, when the Israelites celebrated the Sabbath, they did so together, both with their families and with their neighbors, demonstrating close social relationships in their lives (Waruwu, 2020). Martin Luther (Luther, 1959) viewed the Sabbath as a time and opportunity to interact together in worship, listen to the word of God, and praise and pray together. For him, the Sabbath day is not only concerned with a vertical relationship with God, but also plays a role in building social relations among fellow believers.

### **CONCLUSION**

The idea of Sabbath-keeping, weekly and yearly, was God's gift to the Israelites. This is not just a utopian delusion of an ideal and prosperous society. History records that these are real practices. The Sabbath provided opportunities for people to rest, gather with family and friends, and worship together. This helps reduce social inequality and strengthens brotherhood in the community.

Implications of the Sabbath on Public Well-being: Sabbath-keeping has not only spiritual, but also economic and social implications. Sabbath practice restricted economic activities such as trade and employment, which in turn helped reduce social inequality, at least temporarily. In addition, the Sabbath also provides an opportunity for the economically disadvantaged to enjoy leisure time and strengthen unity in the community.

This provides strong evidence that the Sabbath is not only a theological law, but also governs human relations. It provides an implied norm regarding how humans relate to the Creator and fellow human beings, animals and plants. This concern is clearly seen in the writings of the Torah which are still held as God's revelations in modern times. The truth remains the same even though times have changed. In the sabbath there are



not only commandments, and descriptive explanations. But also the sabbath gives a promise of a God who cares about His people.

### BIBLIOGRAFI

- Adlini, Miza Nina, Dinda, Anisya Hanifa, Yulinda, Sarah, Chotimah, Octavia, & Merliyana, Sauda Julia. (2022). Qualitative research methods literature study. *Edumaspul: Journal of Education*, 6(1), 974–980.
- Herberg, Will. (1952). Heschel, Abraham Joshua. *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (Book Review). *Commentary*, 13, 610.
- Iffah, Fadhillah, & Yasni, Yuni Fitri. (2022). Manusia Sebagai Makhluk Sosial. *Lathaif: Literasi Tafsir, Hadis Dan Filologi*, 1(1), 38–47.
- Lewar, Paulus Pati. (2023). Bersama Maria, kita Bermetanoia Bersama Tuhan Yesus. *Rekoleksi Bulanan*.
- Lintang, Periskila Netty, Perutu, Yordan, & Eunike, Eirene. (2022). Konsep Sabat bagi Orang Percaya di Masa Kini: Sebuah Kritik Teks Matius 12: 1-8. *EPIGRAPHE: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pelayanan Kristiani*, 6(2), 265–276.
- Luther, Martin. (1959). *The Large Catechism of Martin Luther*. Fortress Press.
- Nurhidayah, Ikeu, Gunani, Ranti Gilar, Ramdhanie, Gusgus Gharaha, & Hidayati, Nuroktavia. (2020). Deteksi Dan Stimulasi Perkembangan Sosial Pada Anak Prasekolah: Literatur Review. *Jurnal Ilmu Keperawatan Anak*, 3(2), 42–58. <https://doi.org/10.32584/jika.v3i2.786>
- Poerwadarminta, Wilfridus Josephus Sabarija. (1966). *Kamus umum bahasa Indonesia*. (No Title).
- Rahman, Herliati. (2021). *Bunga Rampai Proses Industri Kimia*. Universitas Jayabaya.
- Rusandi, & Muhammad Rusli. (2021). Merancang Penelitian Kualitatif Dasar/Deskriptif dan Studi Kasus. *Al-Ubudiyah: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Studi Islam*, 2(1), 48–60. <https://doi.org/10.55623/au.v2i1.18>
- Santoso, Meilanny Budiarti. (2016). Kesehatan mental dalam perspektif pekerjaan sosial. *Share: Social Work Journal*, 6(1).
- Soekanto, Soerjono. (2007). *Sosiologi Suatu Pengantar--Ed. Baru--41*. Jakarta (ID): PT Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Soewignjo, Santosa. (2021). *Tahu Jadi Seru, Ingat Tambah Mantap: Penuntun Untuk Anak Mengenal, mengingat, dan Melakukan Firman*. PBMR ANDI.
- Speedling, Barbara Baker. (2019). Celebrating Sabbath as a holistic health practice: The transformative power of a sanctuary in time. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 58(4), 1382–1400.
- Stanislaus, Surip. (2019). Merayakan Å Abbä t, Hari Sabat, Tahun Sabat & Tahun Yobel Inspirasi Biblis Peduli Ekologi. *Logos*, 16(1), 74–112.
- Stanislaus, Surip, & Cap, O. F. M. (2008). *Harmoni Kehidupan: Asal-Usul Alam Semesta-Mengembalikan Ciptaan*. PT Kanisius.
- Stanislaus, Surip, & Cap, O. F. M. (2019). *Mengelola dan Memelihara Taman Eden: Inspirasi Biblis Peduli Ekologi*. PT Kanisius.
- Sukmana, Oman. (2005). *Sosiologi dan politik ekonomi*. UMM Press.
- Surip, S. (2001). *Dari Sabat ke Dominica. Pergeseran Waktu Istirahat Dan Ibadat Dari Hari Sabtu Ke Hari Minggu*. Medan.
- Waruwu, Erlina. (2020). Peranan Hari Sabat Bagi Kehidupan Orang Percaya Masa Kini. *Fidei: Jurnal Teologi Sistematika Dan Praktika*, 3(2), 246–267.

**Copyright holder:**

Antonius Dwiky Mulyono, Alwyn C. Hendriks (2024)

**First publication right:**

[Syntax Idea](#)

**This article is licensed under:**

